

James M. Patton, Jr.
Hampton, Virginia



Inducted in 2009, James M. Patton, Jr. began his career as Chief Research Pilot and Head of Flight Operations at NASA Langley Research Center in 1968. His perseverance in advocating research in long neglected areas of aeronautics, innovative program planning, and skillful conduct of flight tests and insightful analysis of data in these areas enabled NASA Langley to make dramatic, industry-wide critically acclaimed contributions to aircraft design and aviation safety. Patton initiated a 14 year long program which established NASA Langley as the national center of expertise in general aviation stall, spin and spin resistant behavior; multi-discipline test integration; and development of safe flight testing equipment and methods. These program findings led to significantly increased understanding of these flight regimes in both qualitative and quantifiable ways, improved aircraft design concepts and guidelines, development of an FAA spin resistant airplane certification category, the production of new airplanes which were spin resistant and improved flight training information, procedures and techniques. Patton retired in 1987 after producing more than 100 technical papers for NASA. His log books record flights in 157 types of aircraft during his 9000+ flight hours and 8,000 spin turns. He has received numerous NASA awards and was recognized by the EAA in 1992 for exceptional contributions in the development of flight research and technology in aircraft spin behavior.