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The U.S. Department of Transportation Broadcast News Service for Friday, October 5 has excerpts of Federal Aviation Administrator Alexander Butterfield giving the Skylab I astronauts Space Mechanics Awards.

Federal Aviation Administrator Alexander Butterfield today designated the Skylab I astronauts as the world's first and only space mechanics. He likened Charles Conrad, Jr.; Joseph Kerwin; and Paul Weitz to the "shade tree" mechanics of the early twenties -- those men who used their ingenuity and bailing wire to repair primitive aircraft. Referring to the astronauts he said:

"If they hadn't had this ability -- if they hadn't had the perseverance and the dedication to their mission and the will to accomplish that mission successfully, they probably wouldn't have done what they did. The 'shade tree mechanic' title has a great deal of meaning. As I said, it took a four hour space walk by the mechanics to make the repairs. So, it is highly fitting that the FAA -- which for about ten years has promoted an annual Aviation Mechanics Awards Program -- publicize the vital role of the aviation mechanic and recognize you gentlemen."

"It is my pleasure to present first of all our Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic Certificates with spacecraft ratings to astronauts Conrad, Kerwin, and Weitz. The citation on the plaques, and let me read this if I may:

"In highest recognition for the successful repair of Skylab I, resulting in the completion of the first space station experiment by the United States of America presented by the Aviation Maintenance Foundation in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration -- United States Department of Transportation."

This has been the Transportation News Report.

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