



John Torode

2025 Pathfinder Award Recipient in the Engineering and Manufacturing Categories

The Museum of Flight's Annual Pathfinder Awards honor individuals with ties to the Pacific Northwest who have made significant contributions to the development of the aerospace industry. Pathfinder Award recipients are selected by The Museum of Flight, the Pacific Northwest Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and representatives of other aviation and aerospace organizations and companies throughout the Northwest.



John Torode's passion for innovation and the aviation industry is apparent throughout his life. Born into a British military family, his early experiences around aircraft sparked an interest in aviation that carried into his career. While earning his Bachelor of Science in Physics

from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he made time to obtain his private pilot license. He then pursued his doctoral studies at the University of Washington earning a Ph.D in Computer Science in 1972. This educational background set him up for long-term success.

In his early career, he founded Digital Microsystems and IC Designs, two tech companies that specialized in microchips. IC Designs was acquired by Cyprus Semiconductor in 1993, and Torode was appointed the company's Chief Technology Officer in 1997. It was there that Torode led development of the first chips used in cell phone touchscreens—technology that has since been used in over one billion devices.

Through all this, his love of

aviation never faded. In 2000, he founded Dynon Avionics to create affordable avionics systems for general aviation. The systems have been installed in over 25,000 aircraft.

Torode recognized that the rising costs associated with flying risked shutting out the next generation of aviators. In response, he founded Vashon Aircraft, an aircraft manufacturing company based in Woodinville with a mission of reducing the cost of planes without sacrificing safety. More than 100 of the company's light-sport aircraft, the Vashon Ranger R7, have been delivered since 2018.

As a boundary-breaker within the aviation industry and tech industry, John Torode embodies the qualities of a Pathfinder.