



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

COLONEL ERIC D. STEELE

Col Eric D. Steele is the Commander of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Detachment 880 and the Professor of Aerospace Studies at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. He leads a team of ten active-duty and civilian personnel and is responsible for training, educating, and developing a cadet wing of more than 150 cadets into leaders and future Air Force and Space Force officers.

Col Steele entered active duty in 2001 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training program at Fresno State University in California. He has served in multiple operational tours and completed several deployments in support of United States geographic combatant commands and named operations to include Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Col Steele has served twice on the Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa staff, and he previously commanded at the squadron level with NATO's Alliance Ground Surveillance Force in Italy. He is a senior pilot with more than 1,900 flight hours, primarily in the RQ-4 Global Hawk and E-3 Sentry. Prior to his current assignment, Col Steele was the 319th Operations Group Commander at Grand Forks AFB in North Dakota.



EDUCATION

2000 Bachelor of Art, Political Science, California State University, Fresno
2008 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
2009 Master of Art, Organizational Leadership, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington
2010 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence
2018 Joint and Combined Warfighting School, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia
2020 Master of Art, Strategic Studies, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama

ASSIGNMENTS

1. January 2001-July 2001, Assistant Recruiting Officer, AFROTC Detachment 35, California State University, Fresno
2. July 2001-August 2002, Student Pilot, 47th Flying Training Wing, Laughlin AFB, Texas
3. September 2002-November 2006, Chief of Safety, 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron, Tinker AFB, Oklahoma
4. November 2006-March 2009, Flight Commander, 12th Reconnaissance Squadron, Beale AFB, California
5. April 2009-August 2011, Chief of RQ-4 Stan Eval, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, Beale AFB, California
6. August 2011-March 2013, Deputy Chief, ISR Operations Division, HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA A3/10, Ramstein AB, Germany
7. April 2013-November 2014, Deputy Chief of Staff, HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA, Ramstein AB, Germany
8. November 2014-October 2016, Inspector General, 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale AFB, California
9. November 2016-June 2019, Commander, Flying Squadron and U.S. Senior National Representative, NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance Force, Sigonella AB, Italy
10. July 2019-July 2020, Student, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
11. July 2020-July 2022, Deputy Chief, Future Plans, Strategy, Concepts and Capabilities Division, HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA A5/8/9, Ramstein AB, Germany
12. August 2022-May 2023, Chief, Command Exercise Division, HQ USAFE-AFAFRICA A3/10, Ramstein AB, Germany
13. June 2023-June 2025, Commander, 319th Operations Group, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota
14. July 2025-Present, Commander and Professor of Aerospace Studies, AFROTC Det 880, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. November 2016–June 2019, Commander, Flying Squadron and United States Senior National Representative (SNR), NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance Force, Sigonella AB, Italy as a lieutenant colonel

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: senior pilot

Hours: more than 1,900

Aircraft Flown: RQ-4A/B, E-3B/C, T-1, and T-37

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit

Defense Meritorious Service Medal

Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters

Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster

Air Force Commendation Medal

Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant January 16, 2001

First Lieutenant January 26, 2003

Captain January 26, 2005

Major November 1, 2010

Lieutenant Colonel March 1, 2016

Colonel July 1, 2022

(Current as of July 2025)