



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



COLONEL ROBERT A. ATHAN

Colonel Robert A. Athan is Vice Wing Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing at the Joint Airport, Lincoln, Nebraska. The wing provides global reach airpower and deploys expeditionary forces in support of worldwide combat, contingency and humanitarian requirements. The wing operates eight KC-135R aircraft performing air refueling, airlift and aeromedical evacuation missions supporting U.S. and coalition contingency operations and the U.S. Strategic Command strategic deterrence missions. Col Athan commands more than 1000 full-time and traditional Guard Airmen. The 155th Air Refueling Wing is the host wing for several Army National Guard units and it provides support to the Nebraska Air National Guard's 170th Group at Offutt AFB and Joint Force Headquarters, Lincoln, Nebraska.



Col Athan enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in June of 1976, as an Avionics Sensor System Specialist servicing optical and infrared imaging sensors. Upon commissioning in November of 1979 through the ANG Academy of Military Science, he completed Undergraduate Navigator Training and RF-4C Initial Qualification Training and served as a Weapon Systems Officer. While a traditional guardsman, he worked as a production director for a Midwest graphics design firm. Upon graduation from the ANG Fighter Weapons School in 1987, he served as an Operational Testing and Evaluation Officer on the Navigation Weapons Delivery System (NWDS) program for the RF-4C Phantom at Eglin AFB, FL. He temporarily deployed to Choo Won Air Base South Korea where he instructed South Korean RF-4 aviators on NWDS. He accepted a full-time position with the 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Group in 1989 where he served in various positions as an Instructor/Evaluator Weapons System Officer, Photo Processing and Interpretation Facility Officer, Weapons and Tactics Officer, and Deputy Chief of Standardization/Evaluation. Completing KC-135R RTU and Instructor upgrade in 1994, he served as Wing Chief of Plans, Logistics Support Flight Commander, Operations Support Flight Commander, Maintenance Squadron Commander, and Operations Group Commander. He has participated in several combat and contingency operations to include Uphold Democracy, Decisive Endeavor, Deliberate Guard, Deliberate Forge, Allied Force, Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Col Athan volunteered for deployment as the Vice Commander, 376th Air Expeditionary Wing in May 2008, at Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, the premier air mobility hub for the International Security Assistance Force and Coalition military operations in Afghanistan.

Education:

- 1985- BFA in Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 1987- US Air Force Fighter Weapons School Graduate, Gowen Field, Boise, ID
- 1995- Air Command and Staff (Seminar program), Offutt AFB, NE
- 2001- Air War College (Seminar program), Offutt AFB, NE
- 2002- Aircraft Maintenance Officer Course, Sheppard AFB, TX
- 2004- Management and Leadership Graduate Studies, Doane College, Lincoln, NE

Assignments:

Jun 1976 - Nov 1979, Avionic Sensor Systems Specialist, 155th Tactical Recon Group, Lincoln, NE
Nov 1979 - Aug 1980, Undergraduate Navigator Trainee, 60th Flying Training Wing, Mather AFB, CA
Aug 1980 - Oct 1981, Student, RF-4C RTU, 16th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Shaw AFB, SC
Oct 1981 - Jul 1987, Navigator, 173d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Lincoln, NE
Jul 1987 - Oct 1987, Student, Fighter Weapons School, 124th Tac Reconnaissance Group, Boise, ID
Oct 1987 - Oct 1988, Tactics & Weapons Officer, 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Lincoln, NE
Oct 1988 - Mar 1989, Flight Evaluator, Det. 1, ANG Operational Testing and Eval Cntr, Eglin AFB, FL
Mar 1989 - Jan 1990, Deputy Chief of Tactics, 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Lincoln, NE
Jan 1990 - May 1993, Deputy Chief of Stan/Eval, 155th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Lincoln, NE
May 1993 - Aug 1993, Student, KC-135R RTU, 93 AREFS, Castle AFB, CA
Aug 1993 - Oct 1998, Deputy Chief of Plans, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE
Oct 1998 - Feb 2002, Chief of Wing Plans, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE
Feb 2002 - Sep 2002, Logistics Support Flight Commander, 155 Logistics Group, Lincoln, NE
Sep 2002 - Jul 2003, Operation Support Flight Commander, 155th Air Refueling Group, Lincoln, NE
Jul 2003 - May 2004, Maintenance Squadron Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE
May 2004 - Mar 2006, Vice Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE
Mar 2006 - Feb 2008, Operations Group Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE.
Feb 2008 - May 2008, Vice Wing Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE
May 2008 - Sep 2008, Vice Commander, 376th Air Expeditionary Wing , Manas, Kyrgyzstan
Sep 2008 - Present, Vice Wing Commander, 155th Air Refueling Wing, Lincoln, NE

Flight Information:

Rating: Master Navigator

Flight Hours: Over 4200 hours (244 Combat/Combat Support hours)

Aircraft Flown: T-37B, T-43, RF-4C, F4-C&E and KC-135R/E &T

Major Awards and Decorations

Bronze Star Medal

Meritorious Service Medal

Air Medal

Aerial Achievement Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster

Air Force Commendation Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters

Air Force Achievement Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster

Joint Meritorious Unit Award with 1 oak leaf cluster

Air Force Meritorious Unit Award

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 8 oak leaf clusters

Combat Readiness Medal with 11 oak leaf clusters

Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster

National Defense Service Medal with service star

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

Kosovo Campaign Medal

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Korean Defense Service Medal

Armed Forces Services Medal with service star

Humanitarian Service Medal

Major Awards and Decorations cont:

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Air Force Overseas Ribbon Short with 2 oak leaf clusters

Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border and 1 oak leaf cluster

AF Longevity Service Award with 5 oak leaf clusters

Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 1 GHG and 2 'M' Devices

Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with 1 oak leaf cluster

AF Training Ribbon with 1 oak leaf cluster

NATO (Yugoslavia) Medal

Effective Dates of Promotion

Second Lieutenant - 15 Nov 79

First Lieutenant - 15 Nov 82

Captain - 15 Nov 86

Major - 15 Nov 93

Lieutenant Colonel - 15 Mar 99

Colonel - 17 Mar 05

current as of 17 Mar 2009