



BIOGRAPHY

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

COLONEL CHRISTOPHER M. WELCH

Colonel Christopher M. Welch serves as the Commander of the 317th Airlift Wing, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. He commands 1,200 personnel and 28 C-130J aircraft engaged in worldwide combat aerial delivery and airland operations.

Colonel Welch received his commission in 2002 from the ROTC Detachment at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington. He initially served as a Logistics Readiness Officer at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas until February of 2005. He then completed his undergraduate pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma in 2006. He has served 24 years and is a command pilot with more than 3,500 flight hours in the KC-10A and C-130J, including over 1,300 combat hours in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, NEW DAWN, and INHERENT RESOLVE.

He has served in a variety of positions at the squadron, wing, and headquarters levels including Executive Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander United States European Command, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Mons, Belgium. Prior to his current position, Colonel Welch was the Commander, 19th Operations Group, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas.



EDUCATION

2002 Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations, Washington State University, Pullman, Wash.

2002 Aerospace Basic Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2009 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2012 Air Command and Staff College (Correspondence)

2012 Master of Arts in Military History, American Military University, Manassas, Vir.

2016 Spanish Joint Staff College, Madrid, Spain

2016 Master of Arts in Defense Policy and International Security, University Complutense of Madrid, Madrid, Spain

2022 Master of Strategic Studies with Grand Strategy Concentration, with Highest Academic Distinction, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama

ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 2002 – February 2005, Logistics Readiness Officer, 7th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas

2. February 2005 – April 2006, Student, pilot training, Vance AFB, Oklahoma

3. May 2006 – May 2010, Squadron Executive Officer and KC-10A Instructor Aircraft Commander, 6th Air Refueling Squadron, Travis AFB, California

4. May 2010 – March 2011, Director of Wing Strategic Communication and KC-10A Instructor Aircraft Commander, 60th Air Mobility Wing, Travis AFB, California

5. March 2011 – September 2011, Student, C-130J Pilot Initial Qualification Course, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas

6. September 2011 – September 2013, Director of Staff and C-130J Instructor Aircraft Commander, 41st Airlift Squadron, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas

7. October 2013 – July 2014, Chief, Wing Executive Officer and C-130J Evaluator Aircraft Commander, 19th Airlift Wing, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas



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8. August 2014 – May 2015, Student, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Presidio of Monterey, California
9. June 2015 – July 2016, Student, Spanish Joint Staff College, Madrid, Spain
10. July 2016 – October 2016, Western Hemisphere Country Director, Americas/Africa Division, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
11. November 2016 – July 2017, Country Director, Europe/NATO Division, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
12. July 2017 – April 2018, Chief of Safety, 19th Airlift Wing, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas
13. April 2018 – May 2020, Commander, 19th Operations Support Squadron, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas
14. June 2020 – July 2021, Director, Commander's Action Group, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Illinois
15. July 2021 – June 2022, Student, Air War College, Grand Strategy Seminar, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
16. June 2022 – June 2024, Executive Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander United States European Command, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Mons, Belgium
17. June 2024 – April 2026, Commander, 19th Operations Group, Little Rock AFB, Arkansas and Commander, 386th Expeditionary Air Base Group, Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait (October 2024 – April 2025)
18. July 2026 – Present, Commander, 317th Airlift Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 2022 – June 2024, Executive Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander United States European Command, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Mons, Belgium as a colonel

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Command Pilot
Flight hours: More than 3,500
Aircraft flown: KC-10A, C-130J

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Supreme Allied Commander Europe Recognition Award
Defense Superior Service Medal
Legion of Merit
Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with six oak leaf clusters

OCCUPATIONAL BADGES

Command Pilot Wings
Logistics Readiness Officer, Basic
Foreign Area Officer, Master

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant May 29 2002
First Lieutenant May 29 2004
Captain May 29 2006
Major June 1 2012
Lieutenant Colonel December 1 2016
Colonel July 1 2022

(Current as of July 2026)

