

## COLONEL JOEL S. WESTA

Colonel Joel S. Westa is commander of the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. He is responsible for providing combat-ready B-52H Stratofortress aircraft, crews and associated combat support for deterrence, crisis response, global power projection, major theater war and maritime operations and Air and Space Expeditionary Force deployments. He also serves as the installation commander.

Colonel Westa previously served as vice commander of the 36th Wing, Andersen AFB, Guam. He has held a number of staff and flying assignments, including command of the 340th Weapons Squadron, Barksdale AFB, La., the B-52 squadron of the United States Air Force Weapons School. Other assignments include Deputy Chief, 12 AF Commander's Action Group, and Chief of Strategy, 12th Air Force Air and Space Operations Center, as well as Operations Officer for the 612th Combat Plans Squadron, all at Davis-Monthan AFB.

Colonel Westa is a graduate of Officer Training School, a Distinguished Graduate of Squadron Officer School, Outstanding Graduate from the USAF Weapons School, and is also a graduate of the US Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). He is a master navigator with more than 2,800 flying hours in the B-52 aircraft, including combat missions during Operation Desert Storm.

### EDUCATION:

1979 Bachelor of Science Degree, The King's College, N.Y.  
1983 Master's Degree, Penn State University, Pa.  
1991 Squadron Officer School (Distinguished Graduate)  
1992 USAF Weapons School (Outstanding Graduate)  
1998 Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.  
1999 Master of Military Arts and Sciences Degree, School of Advanced Military Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.  
2004 Master of Science, National Security and Strategic Studies, (Mahan Scholar); Naval War College, Newport, R.I.  
2009 Senior Leaders Executive Course, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

1. April 1985 - October 1985, student, Undergraduate Navigator Training, Mather AFB, Calif.
2. November 1985 - May 1986, student, B-52 Combat Crew Training School, Castle AFB, Calif.



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3. June 1986 - October 1991, navigator, instructor navigator, radar navigator, instructor radar navigator, evaluator, Chief of Tactics Branch, Wurtsmith AFB, Mich.
4. August 1990 - May 1991, Chief, Day Operations Planning Team, 1708 BW(P) Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
5. September 1991 - June 1992, student, USAF Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
6. August 1992 - June 1997, instructor, flight commander, Chief of Curriculum, USAF Weapons School B-52 Division, Ellsworth AFB, S.D. and Barksdale AFB, La.
7. July 1997 - June 1998, student, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
8. July 1998 - August 1999, student, US Army School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
9. September 1999 - July 2001, 12th AF Deputy Chief, Commander's Action Group, 612th Combat Plans Squadron Operations Officer, 12th AF AOC Chief of Strategy, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
10. July 2001 - June 2003, Commander, 340th Weapons Squadron, USAF Weapons School, Barksdale AFB, La.
11. July 2003 - June 2004, student, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
12. July 2004 - June 2006, Professor, National Security Decision Making Department, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
13. June 2006 - October 2007, Vice Commander, 36th Wing, Andersen AFB, Guam.
14. November 2007 - present, Commander, 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB, N.D.

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:**

Rating: Master Navigator  
Flight hours: 2,845  
Aircraft Flown: B-52  
Limited time in F-15, F-16, S-3

**MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:**

Legion of Merit  
Defense Meritorious Service Medal  
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters  
AF Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster  
AF Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster  
AF Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device and five oak leaf clusters  
Combat Readiness Medal with two devices  
National Defense Service Medal with device  
Southwest Asia Service Medal with two devices  
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal  
Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabian Government)

**EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION:**

Second Lieutenant April 5, 1985  
First Lieutenant April 5, 1987  
Captain April 5, 1989  
Major November 1, 1996  
Lieutenant Colonel April 1, 2001  
Colonel March 1, 2006

(Current as of April 2008)