



# BIOGRAPHY

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE EXPLORERS

### LT COL THOMAS H. BLOCK

Lt Colonel Thomas H. Block is Vice Commander, U.S. Air Force Explorers, Phoenix, Arizona. The Group is the organization that oversees U. S. Air Force Explorer units throughout the U.S. that prepares Young Adults as a U.S. Air Force & Military Officers. Specialty training includes including Airmanship, Special Tactics, and Air Intelligence as well as other training fields for young adults. The organization started with the establishment of the 396<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Squadron in March of 1999.

He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1967 as an Inventory Management Specialist at Patrick AFB, FL, had volunteered for duty in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and was assigned to Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, and then later to Grand Forks AFB, ND. In 1970, he was assigned to Charleston AFB, SC as a C-141A Aircraft Loadmaster. In 1973 he was reassigned to Peterson AFB, CO, where he served as a HQ Air Defense Command FTS / Loadmaster Instructor and Flight Examiner on C-118, C-131 and T-29 Aircraft. He was part of the Initial cadre that established Peterson AFB's first operational Air Freight / USAF LogAir Station, and served as its Training NCO until his Honorable Discharge in 1975.



In 1981 he re-enlisted in US Air Force Reserves at McChord AFB, WA. He completed C-141B Loadmaster Training at Altus AFB, OK and received recognition as a Distinguished Graduate, was upgraded to Aircraft Loadmaster in five missions after being out the aircraft over eight years. He was reassigned to Norton AFB, CA in 1988 and was mobilized and activated for Desert Shield / Desert Storm and was the Wing's initial cadre of Aircrew during both operations. He was also part of the Wing's review team of its IT Systems in preparing for a UEI. In 1992, the Wing transferred its operation to March AFB, CA, and he was part of the Aircrew and 16-Ship C-141B formation that landed at March AFB all within minutes. As the Wing transferred into the 1<sup>st</sup> and only AFRC unit equipped organization, the 452<sup>nd</sup> AMW, he became one of the Wing's only qualified Minuteman qualified Loadmaster. He graduated from the Air Force Reserve Leadership Development course and was elected its Class Leader. He became the NCOIC of Loadmaster Training: Logistics, and planned over 30 additional DOD Military Training Missions, including conducting several aircraft operational load training & test missions for Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST) at Los Alamos National Laboratory. He continued his aircraft and loadmaster proficiency by his qualification in the C-141C. He was a Command level Loadmaster Examiner and has flown more than 5,600 hours in the C-118A, VC-118A, VT-29C/D, C-131D/E, C-141A/B/C Aircraft. He was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Retired in 1999 with more than 25 years of Service in both the US Air Force and US Air Force Reserve, and has 42 Combat or Combat Support Missions during the Vietnam War, Cold War and Desert Shield/Desert Storm Operations.

He entered into service with the United States Air Force Explorers, 396<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Sq. in 2001, completed Officer Candidate School as an Advisor and was commissioned directly to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. He served as its Operations Officer, and Training Officer. In 2010 he was assigned to the 405th Aircrew Training Group as its Plans & Programs Officer. In 2014 he was assigned as the US Air Force Explorers Vice Commander.

#### EDUCATION

1968 USAF – Inventory Mgt Course, (*Class Leader*)  
1970 USAF – Basic Loadmaster Course  
1971 USAF – C-141A Loadmaster Course  
1971 USAF – Anti-Hijacking Training Course  
1971 USAF – Aircraft Wet Ditching Course  
1971 USAF – Basic Survival / POW School  
1972 USAF – NCO Leadership School – 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force  
1974 USAF – Water Survival Course  
1975 Associate's Degree (Business Administration) –  
Colorado State University  
1978 Bachelor's Degree (Business: Transportation Mgt) –  
University of Colorado

1982 USAF – C-141B Loadmaster School (*Distinguished Graduate*)  
1985 Graduate Work (MBA) – National University  
1988 USAF – Supervisor Safety Training Course  
1990 USAF NCO Academy – Air University  
1992 Associate's Degree (*Aircrew Operations*) –  
Community College of the Air Force  
1996 USAF – NCO Leadership Development Course  
(*Class Leader*)  
1998 USAF – Senior NCO Academy – Air University

#### ASSIGNMENTS

1. December 1967 – February, 1968, USAF Basic Training, Amarillo AFB, Texas
2. February 1968 – April, 1968, Inventory Mgt Training, Lowry AFB, Colorado

3. April 1968 – March 1969, 6550<sup>th</sup> Air Base Group, Patrick AFB, Florida
4. March 1969 – March 1970, 432<sup>nd</sup> Combat Support Group, Udorn RTAFB, Thailand
5. April 1970 – November 1970, 321 Strategic Missile Wing, Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota
6. November 1970 – January 1971, Basic Loadmaster Training, Sheppard AFB, Texas
7. January 1971 – April 1973, C-141A Loadmaster, 76th Military Airlift Squadron, Charleston AFB, South Carolina
8. April 1973 – May 1975, C-118/T-29/C-131 Instructor FTS/Loadmaster, Examiner FTS/Loadmaster, Peterson AFB, CO
9. May 1975 – December 1975, 4600 Transportation Sq, Air Freight Supervisor, Peterson AFB, Colorado
10. December 1981 – May 1988, 97<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron, C-141B Loadmaster, McChord AFB, Washington
11. April 1982 - May 1982, C-141B Loadmaster Training Altus AFB, Oklahoma
12. May 1988 – June 1992, C-141B Loadmaster 729<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron, Norton AFB, California
13. June 1992 – August 1999, C-141B/C Loadmaster, 729<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, March ARB, California
14. December 2001 – May 2002, (USAFX) Officer Training, 396<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Squadron, Phoenix, Arizona
15. May 2002 – May 2005, Operations & Training Officer, (USAFX) 396<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Squadron, Phoenix, Arizona
16. May 2005 – May, 2014, Plans & Projects Officer, (USAFX) 405<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Group, Phoenix, Arizona
17. May 2014 - Present, Vice Commander, U.S. Air Force Explorers, Phoenix, Arizona

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Chief Enlisted Aircrew Badge

Past Qualifications: Command Flight Examiner & Instructor FTS / Aircraft Loadmaster, Combat Aircrew

Flight Hours: 5,600+

Aircraft Flown: C-141A, VT-29C/D, C-118A, VC-118A, C-131D/E, C-141B/C

### MILITARY AWARDS and DECORATIONS

#### U.S. Air Force & U.S. Air Force Reserve

1. Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster
2. Air Medal
3. Air Force Commendation Medal
4. Air Force Presidential Unit Citation
5. Outstanding Unit Award with one silver leaf cluster, one gold leaf cluster, Gold Valor
6. Combat Readiness Medal with four oak leaf clusters
7. Air Force Good Conduct Medal with one oak leaf cluster
8. Air Reserve Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
9. National Defense Service Medal with service star
10. Vietnam Service Medal with two service stars
11. Southwest Asia Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
12. Overseas Service Ribbon-Short
13. Air Force Longevity Service Award with four oak leaf clusters
14. Armed Forces Reserve Medal with 'M' device
15. NCO Professional Military Education Graduate
16. Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with two service stars
17. Air Force Training Ribbon
18. Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation
19. Vietnam Campaign Medal

20. Kuwait Liberation Medal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
21. Kuwait Liberation Medal Government of Kuwait

#### U.S. Air Force Explorers

1. USAF Explorers Meritorious Service Medal
2. USAF Explorers Joint Service Commendation Medal
3. USAF Explorers Commendation Medal w/two bronze devices
4. USAF Explorers Achievement Medal w/one bronze device
5. USAF Explorers Outstanding Unit Award w/two silver and two bronze devices
6. USAF Explorers BSA Quality Unit Award w/two silver and two bronze devices
7. USAF Explorers Good Conduct Medal w/two bronze devices
8. USAF Explorers Air Intelligence Award w/one bronze device
9. USAF Explorers Recognition Award
10. USAF Explorers National Defense Medal w/two bronze devices
11. USAF Explorers POW-MIA Awareness Ribbon
12. USAF Explorers Community Service Award w/bronze device
13. USAF Explorers Longevity Ribbon w/two bronze devices
14. USAF Explorers Airmanship Career Field Award
15. USAF Explorers Professional Military Education Ribbon
16. USAF Explorers Officer Accession Training Award

### EFFECTIVE DATES of PROMOTION

#### U.S. Air Force & U.S. Air Force Reserve

JAN 1968	Airman
JUL 1968	Airman 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
JAN 1970	Sergeant
AUG 1971	Staff Sergeant
OCT 1986	Technical Sergeant
OCT 1996	Master Sergeant

#### U.S. Air Force Explorers

DEC 2001	CW4
MAY 2002	1LT
JAN 2005	CAPT
JAN 2011	MAJ
JAN 2016	LT COL

### CIVIC & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Norton-March Aircrew Association (*Founder & Life Member*)

Air Force Association (*Life Member*)

Professional Loadmasters Association (*Life Member*)

Knights of Columbus (*4th Degree*)

BSA - LFL: Exploring Program (*Adult Advisor*)

\*BSA - Troops 30 & 818, Phoenix, AZ (*Troop Committee, Religious Emblem Counselor*)

\*BSA - Grand Canyon Council, AZ (*Interfaith Committee on Scouting - Member*)

\*PhxDCCS - Phoenix Diocese Catholic Committee on Scouting (*Chairman-Religious Counselor Training*)

\*NCCS - National Catholic Committee on Scouting (*Training Committee Member*)

\*Inactive status

(Current as of Feb 2016)