

**COMBAT SYSTEMS OFFICER TRAINING
GRADUATION CEREMONY**



Friday, November 21st, 2025
National Naval Aviation Museum
Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

ENTRANCE OF OFFICIAL PARTY

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS
Eglin Honor Guard

NATIONAL ANTHEM
AIC Aja Copeland
451st Flying Training Squadron

INVOCATION
Chaplain CDR Jeremy Selitto

NARRATOR
MSgt Jared Padfield
479th Operations Support Squadron

OPENING REMARKS
Colonel Shane Muscato
Commander, 479th Flying Training Group

GUEST SPEAKER
Lieutenant General David A. Harris
Deputy Chief of Staff, Air Force Futures

PRESENTATION OF
AERONAUTICAL ORDERS AND WINGS

AWARDS

AIR FORCE SONG

DEPARTURE OF OFFICIAL PARTY

OFFICIAL PARTY

COL SHANE P. MUSCATO

COMMANDER,

479TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP

LT GENERAL DAVID A. HARRIS

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF,

AIR FORCE FUTURES, HEADQUARTERS AF



Colonel Shane P. Muscato

Colonel Shane P. Muscato is the Commander of the 479th Flying Training Group at Pensacola Naval Air Station, FL. The Group includes four squadrons, 500 personnel, and 24 T-6 Texan II and trains over 300 Combat Systems Officers each year for the U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard. Additionally, the Group supports over 1,500 Air Force personnel in the Pensacola, FL area.



Prior to joining the 479 FTG, Colonel Muscato was the Division Chief for the Special Operations Forces and Personnel Recovery Capability Development Team as a member of Air Force Futures, Headquarters United States Air Force at the Pentagon, Arlington, VA. As the leader of this team, he directed the establishment of requirements for the special operations and personnel recovery formations of the Air Force to meet future operational needs. Furthermore, his team conducted wargaming and analysis of these future capabilities and provided updates to the Air Force's future force design to enable affordable, timely, and accurate effects in future conflicts.

Colonel Muscato was commissioned via the United States Air Force Officer Training School, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. He is a master navigator with over 3,100 hours. He has deployed in support of numerous operations including ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, NEW DAWN, FREEDOM'S SENTINEL and INHERENT RESOLVE. Colonel Muscato has commanded at the squadron level, expeditionary squadron level, and as the Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component-Afghanistan Deputy Commander.

Lieutenant General David A. Harris

Lt. Gen. David A. Harris is the Deputy Chief of Staff, Air Force Futures, Headquarters, United States Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia. As the HAF A5/7, Lt. Gen. Harris is the senior Air Force leader responsible for Strategy, Integration, and Requirements. HAF A5/7 focuses on developing Air Force strategy and concepts, delivering an integrated force design, conducting strategic assessments of the operating environment through wargames and workshops, and achieving timely and effective operational capabilities required for tomorrow's Airmen to fight and win. Lt. Gen.



Harris received his commission from the University of Alabama in 1993. He is a master navigator and basic parachutist with 2,500 flying hours, having flown in support of operations Deliberate Force, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, and Inherent Resolve. Lt. Gen. Harris has commanded at the squadron, group, and wing level. He has served as the Vice Superintendent at the US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Deputy Director of Operations for Joint Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and the Director of Strategic Plans, Programs and Requirements for Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Prior to his current position, Lt. Gen. Harris was the Deputy Commander, Ninth Air Force (Air Forces Central), and Deputy, Combined Forces Air Component Commander, U.S. Central Command, Southwest Asia.



2d Lt David E. Bandell II

Hometown	Chandler, OK
Aircraft	OA-1K, WSO
Assignment	Oklahoma City, OK



1st Lt Ryan G. Barrick

Hometown	Bozeman, MT
Aircraft	F-15E, WSO
Assignment	Seymour Johnson AFB, NC



1st Lt Christopher E. Bernabe

Hometown	Fontana, CA
Aircraft	MPRIS
Assignment	Beale AFB, CA



1st Lt Gabriel T. Bohler

Hometown	Valparaiso, FL
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt Joseph J. Choi

Hometown	Santa Maria, CA
Aircraft	RC-135, NAV
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt Daniel Chon

Hometown	San Diego, CA
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt Albert E. Franke V

Hometown	San Antonio, TX
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



Capt Joseph R. Heinen

Hometown	Richmond, MN
Aircraft	C-130H, NAV
Assignment	Minneapolis ARS, MN



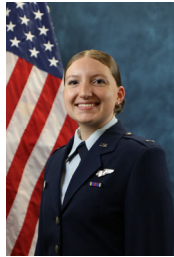
1st Lt Jonathan E. Jaquish

Hometown	Bellbrook, OH
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt Jacob M. Larson

Hometown	Evansville, IN
Aircraft	F-15E, WSO
Assignment	Seymour Johnson AFB, NC



1st Lt Carly A. MacKenzie

Hometown	Woodbridge, NJ
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt David E. Massoud

Hometown	Las Vegas, NV
Aircraft	F-15E, WSO
Assignment	Seymour Johnson AFB, NC



1st Lt John J. Miller

Hometown	Fort Worth, TX
Aircraft	RC-135, EWO
Assignment	Offutt AFB, NE



1st Lt Kiany G. Perez

Hometown	Miami, FL
Aircraft	F-15E, WSO
Assignment	Seymour Johnson AFB, NC



1st Lt Spencer J. Scardino

Hometown	Collierville, TN
Aircraft	MPRIS
Assignment	Beale AFB, CA



1st Lt Christopher R. Tanner

Hometown	Cortland, NY
Aircraft	EA-37B, EWO
Assignment	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



1st Lt Anthony Vargas

Hometown	Lacey, WA
Aircraft	MPRIS
Assignment	Beale AFB, CA



1st Lt Eric M. Wilson Jr.

Hometown	East Granby, CT
Aircraft	B-52H, WSO
Assignment	Barksdale AFB, LA



1st Lt Lucas O. Wilson

Hometown	Las Vegas, NV
Aircraft	EA-37B, EWO
Assignment	Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ



Outstanding Instructors

CSO Fundamentals Instructor	Capt Samuel Morehead
Electronic Warfare	Maj Robert Reynaud
T-96 Simulator Instructor (CSI)	Mr. David Galloway
T-6 Simulator (CSI)	Mr. Daniel Higgins
T-96 Transition Instructor	Capt Scott Wortman
T-96 MTR Instructor	Capt Theodore Westrick
MCSTS Instructor	Capt John Gluszek
T-96 Instructor Pilot	Mr. Doug Hayes
T-6 Instrument Instructor Pilot	Capt Ryan D'auteuil
T-6 Navigation Instructor Pilot	Maj Dan Derby
T-6 Formation Instructor Pilot	Maj Mitchell Mabee
Active Duty Academic Instructor	Capt Brett MacDonald
Civilian Academic Instructor (CAI)	Mr. Matthew Schelling
Active Duty Intel Instructor	SSgt Hanna Wingett

Squadron Commanders

479 STUS

Lt Col Austin Lohman

479 OSS

Lt Col Michael Matchett

455 FTS

Lt Col Benjamin Hoffman

451 FTS

Lt Col Joshua Lancaster

Graduate

Flight Commanders

Capt Brett MacDonald

Capt Logan Vannatta

Capt Tony Dagostino

Capt Kenny Nguyen

History of the 479th Flying Training Group

The 479th Flying Training Group (FTG) traces in lineage to World War II. In September 1943, Lt Col Leo Dusard was tasked with standing up a new fighter group. He began by selecting key personnel from the 329th Fighter Group (FG), and on October 15th the 479 FG was activated at Grand Central Air Terminal in California.

Following the reassignment of Lt Col Dusard, Lt Col Kyle Riddle took the reins of the 479 FG and quickly deployed the group to Europe. On April 16th 1944, 145 officers and 910 enlisted members deployed to Wattisham Royal Air Station near the village of Ipswich, England.

Only 11 days after arriving in Wattisham, the 479 FG participated in its first combat mission. Maj John H. Lowell led 34 P-38F *Lightnings* on a sweep over Holland and Belgium. On May 31st 1944, Capt Frank Keller of the 435th Fighter Squadron (FS) recorded the group's first kill by destroying a Junkers Ju-88 *Zerstorer* on the ground near Humfeld, France. Then, on July 29th, Capt Arthur Jeffrey made history as the first pilot to shoot down a rocket-propelled aircraft, a Messerschmitt Me-163 *Komet*, over Germany. On Thanksgiving Day 1945, the 479 FG boarded the *USS Enterprise* to return home to the United States. Upon return, the 479 FG was deactivated on December 1st 1945 at Camp Kilmer.

After World War II, the 479 FG was activated and deactivated several times:

- December 1952, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, George AFB, California, North American P-51 *Mustang*.
- June 1953, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, North American F-86F *Sabre*
- June 1954, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, F-100A *Super Sabre*
- October 1957, group deactivated
- 26 July 1991, 479th Fighter Group, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, AT-38 *Talon*
- November 1991, group deactivated
- November 1998, 479th Flying Training Group, Moody AFB, Georgia, AT-38C & T-6A *Texan II*
- 21 June 2007, group deactivated

Finally, on October 2nd, 2009, the 479 FTG was activated at NAS Pensacola, Florida, under the Command of Col Travis A. Willis. The unit's mission is to train the Air Force's next generation aviator, the Combat Systems Officer (CSO). The 479th uses the T-6A *Texan II* and multiple aircrew training devices to this end.

* The group's three fighter squadrons (434th, 435th, and 436th) aircraft didn't have cowling colored markings like other Eight Air Force fighter groups. Rather, the 479th *Lightnings* were distinguished only by their colored tail rudders.

The Evolution of the Combat Systems Officer

Combat Systems Officers (CSO) can follow their roots back to the advent of multi-crew bi-planes in WWI. During this time, CSOs fulfilled multiple roles to include navigators, observers, ordnance delivery, and intelligence gatherers on enemy positions across Europe. For many years, their duties on aircraft were not well defined. It wasn't until the historic "Southern Cross" flight across the Pacific Ocean in May of 1928 that the navigator's mission really began to take form.

Fourteen years after the historic "Southern Cross" flight, the United States entered World War II. In many World War II aircraft, to include the mighty B-26 flown by our 451st Bomber Squadron (BS) and 455th BS, the cockpit was designed for two crew members. As was typical with these aircraft, one seat was assigned to the navigator. In addition to navigation duties, the navigator also had bombardier responsibilities. This led to the affectionate term "bombigator", referring to this multi-purpose crew position.

After WWII, CSO aircrew duties were expanded to maximize U.S. Air Force aircraft combat capabilities. Vietnam-era aircraft and tactics paved the way for the three distinct aircrew roles CSOs perform today. These specialties include Weapon Systems Officer (specializing in weapons employment), Electronic Warfare Officer (expert in electromagnetic spectrum exploitation), and Panel Navigator (expert in aircraft positioning, time control, and orchestrating airdrop). Since their inception, these three separate aircrew specialties have sustained the U.S. Air Force's air superiority around the world. From OPERATION DESERT STORM, to OPERATION ALLIED FORCE, to OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, to OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, CSOs have been the backbone of the US Military's operational successes.

Today, the Combat Systems Officer title designates an aviator that is trained to perform duties either as an Electronic Warfare Officer, Weapon Systems Officer, or a Panel Navigator. And while the crew position's duties and name may have transformed over the years, its fundamental role to the lasting success of the United States Air Force has not. The demand for CSOs will only continue to grow in the 21st century as our nation upholds its global commitments and remains postured to defend our interests around the world.

As trained experts, Combat Systems Officers graduates project airpower in the interests of the United States in the following aircraft: AC-130J, B-1B, B-52, C-130H, EA-18G, EC-130, F-15E, HC-130J, MC-130J, RC-135, RQ-170, and U-28 aircraft.

The Air Force Song

by Robert Crawford

*Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em now, Give 'em the gun! (Give 'em the
gun!)*
*Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!*



For photos of today's events... Find us on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/479FTG>