

Colonel Stephen J. Acosta



Stephen J. Acosta graduated from the United States Naval Academy in May of 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Ocean Engineering. He was commissioned a 2ndLt upon graduation and completed The Basic School in December 1995.

Following The Basic School, 2ndLt Acosta attended flight school at NAS Pensacola, FL and was designated a Naval Flight Officer in 1997. After completing FA-18 initial training at MCAS El Toro, CA, 1stLt Acosta was assigned to VMFA(AW)-224 at MCAS Beaufort, SC. While assigned to the Fighting Bengals, 1stLt Acosta served as the Powerline and Airframes Officer, Training Officer, completed two Western Pacific deployments and graduated from TOPGUN and Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course.

In 2002, Capt Acosta was assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) in Camp Pendleton, CA to serve as the Assistant Air Officer and Maritime Special Purpose Force Forward Air Controller. While assigned to the 15th MEU, Capt Acosta deployed in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003.

In 2003, Capt Acosta was assigned to Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One at MCAS Yuma, AZ, where he served as a FA-18 Instructor, Forward Air Controller, Cluster Weapons Subject Matter Expert (SME), Self-Escort Strike SME, Close Air Support SME, Forward Air Controller (Airborne) SME, and Air Officer Course instructor.

In 2005, Major Acosta was selected for pilot transition and was assigned to NAS Corpus Christi, TX and NAS Kingsville, TX, where he was designated a Naval Aviator in 2007. After completing FA-18 initial training at NAS Oceana, VA, Major Acosta was assigned to VMFA-122 at MCAS Beaufort from 2008-2011. While assigned to the Werewolves, Major Acosta served as the Operations Officer, Maintenance Officer, Executive Officer, and completed one deployment in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM and one deployment in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

In 2011, LtCol Acosta assumed command of Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, MCAS Beaufort. While in command, LtCol Acosta attained the qualification of UC-12M Huron Transport Pilot and Plane Commander. LtCol Acosta relinquished command in June of 2013.

In July 2013, LtCol Acosta attended the Naval War College in Newport, RI graduating with a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies in June 2014. Following graduation, LtCol Acosta reported to the Joint Staff for assignment as the Branch Chief of Strategic Plans and Integration, Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5). In June 2016, LtCol Acosta assumed the duties of the Administrative Aide to the Secretary of the Navy. In August 2017, LtCol Acosta assumed the duties of the Director of the Commandant of the Marine Corps Safety Division until reporting to VMFAT-101 in January 2018.

Personal awards earned include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (3 awards), Strike/Flight Air Medal (9 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, Joint Service Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.