



Biography

United States Air Force

315th Airlift Wing (AFRC)

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Public Affairs Division Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina 29404-4917

COLONEL DON LAMAR THIGPEN II

Colonel Don L. Thigpen is the Vice Commander, 315th Airlift Wing, Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina. He assists in the overall direction of Wing operations for over 2,100 personnel. The wing is a classic associate flying C-17s with missions including strategic airlift, airdrop, contingency response and aeromedical evacuation.

Answering his nation's call during DESERT SHIELD, Col. Thigpen began his military career as a Private in the US Army. He quickly rose to the rank of Sergeant, earning the Junior Leader of the Cycle award at Advanced Individual Training and the Army Expert Field Medical Badge. Prior to his departure from the Army, then, Sergeant Thigpen earned his Bachelors of Science degree and was a published scientific author.

Col Thigpen was commissioned through Officer Training School in 1997. He earned his wings from Laughlin AFB in 1998 while capturing the flying training award for class 98-13. Since then, Col. Thigpen has served in various capacities throughout the Air Force ranging from deployed Chief of Tactics to Air Operations Center Master Air Attack Planner to Contingency Response Element Commander. Prior to returning to the 315 AW his most recent assignment was on the Headquarters Air Staff as a Total Force Integration strategist and Requirements Manager working directly on capability requirements development for over 20 major weapon systems in a portfolio worth over \$122 billion.. In his civilian career, Col. Thigpen is a pilot for a major cargo airline.



ASSIGNMENTS

Feb 91 – Sep 94, Combat Medic/Supply NCO, USAMRIID, Ft. Detrick, MD
Sep 94 – Jun 95, Squad Leader/Combat Medical NCO, 129 Med Btn, Savannah, GA
Jun 95 – Nov 96, Information Resource Apprentice, 165 OSS, Savannah IAP, GA
Nov 96 – Jul 97, Pilot Trainee, 707 AS, Charleston AFB, SC
Jul 97 – Aug 98, Student Pilot, 47 FTW, Laughlin AFB, TX
Aug 98 – Oct 01, C-17 Pilot/Aircraft Commander, 317 AS, Charleston AFB, SC
Oct 01 – Mar 11, C-17 Instructor Aircraft Commander/Asst Flight Commander/Tactics Officer/Executive Officer, 317 AS Charleston AFB, SC
Mar 11 – Jun 12, Flight Commander/C-17 Instructor Aircraft Commander, 317 AS JB Charleston, SC
Jun 12 – Sep 13, ALCF Ops Officer/C-17 Instr Aircraft Commander, 315 ALCF JB Charleston, SC
Sep 13 – Jul 15, Commander, 315 Airlift Control Flight, Joint Base Charleston, SC
Jul 15 – Jun 16, United States Army War College Student, Carlisle Barracks, PA
Aug 16 – Mar 17, Total Force Integration Strategist, HAF A8XF, The Pentagon
Mar 17 – Mar 19, IMA to Mobility Requirements Division, HAF A5RM, The Pentagon
April 19 – Present, Vice Commander, 315 AW, Joint Base Charleston, SC

EDUCATION & PME

1990 Basic Combat Training, Ft Jackson, SC
1994 Bachelor of Science, Regents College, University of the State of New York, Albany, NY
1997 Officer Training School, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL
2003 Squadron Officer's School (Correspondence)
2008 Air Command and Staff College (Correspondence)
2011 USAF Advanced Instrument School
2013 Masters of Military Art and Science, Air University (ACSC OLMP)
2015 Mobility Commander Tactics Course, Rosecrans MAP, MO

2016 US Army War College/Masters of Strategic Studies, Carlisle Barracks, PA (Residence)
2017 Reserve Components National Security Strategy Course, Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C.
2018 Enterprise Leadership Seminar, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, Chapel Hill, NC
2020 Director of Mobility Forces Course, Hurlbert Field, FL

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Command Pilot Military Flight hours: 7000+
Military Aircraft Flown: T-37, T-1, C-17

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Meritorious Service Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with 1 silver and 1 bronze oak leaf cluster
Aerial Achievement Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters
Air Force Commendation Medal
Army Commendation Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster
Air Force Achievement Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters
Army Achievement Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters
Joint Meritorious Unit Award
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
Kosovo Campaign Medal with 2 service stars
Afghanistan Campaign Medal with 4 service stars
Iraq Campaign Medal with 1 silver and 1 bronze service star
Armed Forces Service Medal
Humanitarian Service Medal with 1 silver service star

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

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|--------------------|---------------|
| Second Lieutenant | 18 April 1997 |
| First Lieutenant | 18 April 1999 |
| Captain | 13 Sept 2001 |
| Major | 13 Sept 2005 |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 13 Sept 2012 |
| Colonel | 1 May 2017 |

(Current as of March 2020)