

Aviation Center of Excellence



**Flight School
Graduation
Ceremony**



AH-64
APACHE

UH-60
BLACK HAWK



CH-47
CHINOOK

C-12
HURON



Flight School Class 27-001

October 29, 2026



**UNITED STATES ARMY
AVIATION CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FORT RUCKER, ALABAMA**

Order of Ceremony

Welcome..... Master of Ceremony

*** Invocation.....** Chaplain

*** *National Anthem*.....** Ceremonial Support Services

Music by John Stafford Smith, 1780

Lyrics by Francis Scott Key, 1814

Adopted as the National Anthem of the United States, 1931

Introduction of Guest Speaker..... LTC Andrew M. Bartlett

Commander

1st Battalion

223rd Aviation Regiment

Fort Rucker, Alabama

Address..... COL Michael H. Gourgues

Commander

1st Aviation Brigade

Fort Rucker, Alabama

Announcement of Graduates..... Master of Ceremony

Presentation of Wings.....LTC Bartlett

**** Above The Best, Aviation Branch Song**

Music and lyrics by Jo Johnston 1987

**** The Army Goes Rolling Along, The Army Song**

Music by John Phillip Sousa, 1917

Lyrics by Harold W. Arberg, 1956

Conclusion..... Master of Ceremony

** Please stand. Gentlemen, remove your headdress for the National Anthem.*

*** Lyrics on back cover.*

Guest Speaker

COLONEL MICHAEL H. GOURGUES

COMMANDER, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

Colonel Michael H. Gourgues commissioned into the U.S. Army Aviation branch from Tulane University in 2002. He holds a Master's in Business Administration from Webster University and a Master's of Strategic Studies from the Army War College.

Following Flight School, he served as an Attack Platoon Leader, Troop Executive Officer, and Squadron S1 with 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry, from 2004 through 2006. While deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09, he served as a Battalion Intelligence Officer and Company Commander with the 2-159th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, under the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) in Germany.

After attending the Maneuver Captain's Career Course, he became the Attack Observer/Controller-Trainer at the Joint Multinational Training Center. As a Field Grade Officer, he served as the Assistant G3 Air and Current Plans Officer for the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Following his professional schooling at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Colonel Gourgues served as the Operations and Executive Officer for the 3rd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Division (AD) CAB. During this assignment, he and his unit deployed to Operation Inherent Resolve. Following this experience, he served as the Air Cavalry Leader's Course Commandant and Tactics Director for the Directorate of Training and Doctrine at Fort Rucker. He also commanded the 3-6 Air Cavalry Squadron, 1AD CAB before attending the U.S. Army War College. Prior to his present assignment, he served as the Current Operations Director with the U.S. Africa Command.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (four Oak Leaf Clusters), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (one OLC), Army Achievement Medal (two OLC), the Master Aviator Badge, the Space Badge, Combat Action Badge, and the Parachutist Badge.

Colonel Gourgues and his wife, Emily, have three daughters: Luca, Remy, and Noel.

Aviation Commissioned Officers

2LT Dalesandro, Angela C.

2LT Dungey, Zachary T.

CPT Henderson, Remington H.

2LT Howard, Evan D.

1LT McComb, Lexi E.

2LT Ritsick, Johnathan G.

2LT Schumacher, Justin A.

2LT Trerotola, Elise O.

Class 27-001: Aviation Basic Officer Leader Course



*The engraved Sterling Silver Wings presented to the
Distinguished Graduates are provided by the
Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA).*

Aviation Warrant Officers

WO1 Benefield, Caleb O.
WO1 Cole, Chelssy B.
WO1 Dixon, Jessie L.
WO1 Eaves, Isaac A.
WO1 Fowler, Chase A.
WO1 Gilmore, Benjamin M.
WO1 Horton, Winston S.
WO1 Jones, Parker K.
WO1 Juliot, Joshua L.
WO1 Kannard, Nicholas O.
WO1 Lagace, Clinton K.
WO1 MacClary, Justin S.
WO1 McCarthy, Makayla L.
WO1 Morgan, Colton L.
WO1 Pagan, Rachael N.
WO1 Paglingayen, Andrei C.
WO1 Paz, Joseph A.
WO1 Towe, Zachary S.
WO1 Vernon, Andrew J.
WO1 Wallace, Brandon L.

Class 27-001: Aviation Warrant Officer Basic Course

AVIATION BRANCH SONG ABOVE THE BEST

High above the best. High above the best.
We are Army Aviation USA.
Proud and strong.
We meet the test.
Skies filled with thunder.
Wearing silver wings upon our chest.
We meet the needs of Ground Command
As we aid the Nation's quest.
Army Aviation, flying high above the best!

Lyrics and Music by Jo Johnston, 1987
Adopted as the official song of Army Aviation, 1987

THE ARMY SONG THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG

March along, sing our song, with the Army of the free.
Count the brave, count the true, who have fought to victory.
We're the Army and proud of our name!
We're the Army and proudly proclaim:
First to fight for the right,
And to build the Nation's might,
And The Army Goes Rolling Along.
Proud of all we have done,
Fighting till the battle's won,
And The Army Goes Rolling Along.
Then it's hi hi hey, the Army's on its way
Count off the cadence loud and strong
For where'er we go, you will always know
That The Army Goes Rolling Along.

Music by John Philip Sousa, 1917
Lyrics by Harold W. Arberg, 1956
Adopted as the official song of the Army, 1956