Aviation Center of Excellence



Flight School Graduation Ceremony



AH-64
Apache

UH-60
Black Hawk





CH-47
Chinook

C-12
Huron



Flight School Class 26-025

October 15, 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..... CW5 William J. McClain
Assault Branch Chief
Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization
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

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FIVE
WILLIAM J. McCLAIN

Assault Branch Chief

Directorate of Standardization and Evaluation

Chief Warrant Officer Five William "Bill" McClain is a native of Green Cove Springs, Florida, and a graduate of Florida State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. Upon graduation, he worked in Jacksonville, Florida; however, the attacks of September 11, 2001, profoundly changed his perspective and ultimately inspired him to serve. In 2003, he watched Army Aviation aircraft deploy from Jacksonville to Iraq. Motivated by his father—a Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot and lifelong role model—McClain applied for Army Warrant Officer Flight Training.

He began Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in February 2004, followed by Warrant Officer Candidate School and Initial Entry Rotary Wing training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. After graduating in 2005, he joined the 82nd Medical Company at Fort Riley, Kansas. Throughout the next seven years, he spent three years deployed to Iraq, providing medical evacuation support with the 82nd Medical Company and C Company, 2-1 DUSTOFF. During this period, he qualified as a Pilot in Command, Air Mission Commander, and Instructor Pilot.

CW5 McClain then returned to Fort Rucker to serve as a Flight School Instructor. After being recognized in this position, he was selected to serve as an Aviation Center of Excellence G3 Command Aviation Pilot, flying for senior military leaders and distinguished officials.

He was then assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he served as C Company, 2-82nd Assault's Company Standardization Pilot before becoming the regiment's Battalion Standardization Pilot for two years. He later served a one-year tour as the 2-2nd Aviation Regiment's Battalion Standardization Pilot at K-16 Airbase in Seoul, Korea. He is currently the Assault Branch Chief at the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization, supporting training, assessments, and evaluations across all Army Aviation components.

Throughout his time in the Army, he has logged more than 3,300 rotary-wing flight hours, including 900 combat hours and 1,100 night-vision-goggle hours. His career reflects a commitment to service, mentorship, and Army Aviation excellence.

Aviation Commissioned Officers

2LT Ballentine, John C.

1LT Black, Jacob P.

2LT Brown, Rylan D.

1LT Burns, Conor M.

1LT Coleman, Ethan P.

CPT Freeman, Ryan J.

2LT Hasson, Cameron N.

1LT Lagasca, Lui Jay L.

1LT Leyva, Zephan

2LT Nieters, Cody J.

2LT Ralston, Levi W.

2LT Ranaweera, Meth P.

2LT Reichert, Edward J.

2LT Remsberg, Adam J.

2LT Schneider, Benjamin W.



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

Aviation Warrant Officers

WO1 Araki, Isaac J.

WO1 Austin, Daniel G.

WO1 Brisbois, Mark J.

WO1 Cain, Albert R.

WO1 Caraballoandujar, Wallee O.

WO1 Cordero, Wilfredo J.

WO1 Cordova, Roy L.

WO1 Currier, Michael R.

WO1 Freeman, James M.

WO1 Frost, Jordan E.

WO1 Hamrick, Devan M.

WO1 Harkness, Morrison J.

WO1 Hart, Meredith M.

WO1 Hennes, Ryan J.

WO1 Hintze, Zachary T.

WO1 Hotze, Zachary O.

WO1 James, Jessica M.

WO1 Jestice, Joanna C.

WO1 Lagace, Connor J.

WO1 Lenertz, Tristian C.

WO1 Li, Yingle

WO1 McCauley, Brendan M.

WO1 Mellen, Jake W.

WO1 Millsaps, Dustin M.

WO1 Newby, Carter M.

WO1 Ornelas, Gilberto M.

WO1 Pinson, Cody L.

WO1 Plummer, Jacob P.

WO1 Reichert, Ryan J.

WO1 Toscano, Eyla C.

WO1 Webb, Nathaniel J.

WO1 Welsh, Cody D.

WO1 Yonce, Lloyd A.

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