



UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND

Biography

General Anthony J. Cotton **Commander, USSTRATCOM**

General Anthony J. Cotton is the Commander, United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. He is responsible for one of 11 Unified Commands under the Department of Defense. USSTRATCOM is responsible for strategic deterrence, nuclear operations, global strike, nuclear command, control, and communications enterprise operations, joint electromagnetic spectrum operations, and missile threat assessment. USSTRATCOM is comprised of 41,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, and civilians who operate globally performing the command's missions. The command also provides the Secretary of Defense and President a range of options to deter adversaries and assure allies.



General Cotton entered the Air Force through the ROTC program in 1986 where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science from North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He has commanded at the squadron, group, wing, and major command levels. He has served as the Vice Commander and Commander of the 341st Missile Wing, Commander of the 45th Space Wing, Director of the Eastern Range, Patrick AFB, Florida, Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, Commander 20th Air Force, Commander and President of Air University, as well as, Deputy Commander Air Force Global Strike Command.

Prior to his current assignment, General Cotton served as the Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command and Commander, Air Forces Strategic – Air, USSTRATCOM, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana.

EDUCATION

1986 Bachelor of Science, Political Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh

1991 Master of Science, Administration, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant

1992 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

2001 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2005 U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

2006 Enterprise Leadership Seminar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

2007 Phase II PME, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va.

2009 Senior Managers Course on National Security, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

2014 AFSO 21 Executive Leadership Course, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

2017 Leadership Decision Making, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

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2018 Pinnacle Course, National Defense University, Ft McNair, Washington, D.C.
2018 The Harvard Seminar for New Presidents, Harvard Graduate School of Education,
Cambridge, Mass.
2018 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.
2020 Combined Forces Air Component Commander Course, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. October 1986 - July 1991, Missile Combat Crew Commander; Standardization/Evaluation
Missile Combat
Crew Commander; Chief, Standardization/Evaluation Operations/Procedures Branch and
Wing Executive
Officer, 91st Missile Wing, Minot Air Force Base, N.D.
2. July 1991 - April 1994, Command Operations Evaluator 3901st Missile Evaluation
Squadron and Chief of
Protocol, 20th Air Force, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
3. April 1994 - April 1997, Space Surveillance Crew Commander, Flight Commander,
Cheyenne Mountain
Air Force Station, Colo.
4. April 1997 - January 1999, Chief, Space Surveillance Optical Section; Space Surveillance
Program
Element Monitor; and Executive Officer to the Director of Operations, Headquarters Air Force
Space
Command, Peterson AFB, Colo.
5. January 1999 - June 2000, Executive Officer to the Commander, 14th Air Force,
Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
6. June 2000 - June 2001, Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
7. June 2001 - March 2004, Operations Officer, 45th Range Squadron; Commander, 3rd
Space Launch
Squadron; and Deputy Commander, 45th Operations Group, Patrick AFB, Fla.
8. March 2004 - June 2005, Student, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.
9. June 2005 - March 2008, Deputy Director, Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force
Executive Action
Group; Director, Preparation and Planning; and Senior Military Assistant to the Under
Secretary of Defense
for Intelligence, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
10. April 2008 - July 2009, Commander, Space Operations Group, Aerospace Data Facility-
East, Fort
Belvoir, Va.
11. July 2009 - May 2010, Vice Commander, 341st Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
12. May 2010 - August 2011, Commander, 341st Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
13. August 2011 - June 2013, Commander, 45th Space Wing, and Director, Eastern Range,
Patrick AFB,
Fla.
14. June 2013 - November 2015, Deputy Director, National Reconnaissance Office, Chantilly,
Va.
15. November 2015 - January 2018, Commander, 20th Air Force, Air Force Global Strike
Command,
Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyo.
16. February 2018 - October 2019, Commander and President, Air University, Air Education
and Training
Command, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

17. October 2019 - August 2021, Deputy Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command, and Deputy Commander, Air Forces Strategic - Air, U.S. Strategic Command, Barksdale AFB, La.
18. August 2021 - December 2022, Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command, and Commander, Air Forces Strategic - Air, U.S. Strategic Command, Barksdale AFB, La.
19. December 2022 - present, Commander, USSTRATCOM, Offutt AFB, Neb.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. March 2006 - June 2007, Director, Preparation and Planning; and Senior Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a colonel
2. June 2007 - April 2008, Senior Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a colonel
3. April 2008 - July 2009, Commander, Space Operations Group, Aerospace Data Facility-East, Fort Belvoir, Va. (National Reconnaissance Office), as a colonel
4. December 2022 - present, Commander, USSTRATCOM, Offutt AFB, Neb., as a general

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster
Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster
Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with oak leaf cluster
Combat Readiness Medal with oak leaf cluster
National Defense Service Medal with device
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
National Reconnaissance Office Medal of Distinguished Performance

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant June 7, 1986
First Lieutenant June 7, 1988
Captain June 7, 1990
Major March 1, 1998
Lieutenant Colonel March 1, 2002
Colonel Dec. 1, 2006
Brigadier General Nov. 10, 2011
Major General July 6, 2015
Lieutenant General Feb. 15, 2018
General Aug. 27, 2021

(Current as of August 2025)