



**Lt. Col. Kevin Erker, USMC**  
**Commanding Officer**  
**Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23**

Lt. Col. Kevin Erker was born in Grand Island, N.Y. He graduated from the State University of New York Buffalo in 1996, earning a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering. He completed flight school in Meridian, Miss. and was designated a naval aviator Jan. 14, 2000.

After completing initial F/A-18 training at Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 106 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, Va., Lt. Col. Erker reported to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 312 in Beaufort, S.C. Lt. Col. Erker completed two combat deployments while in VMFA-312 in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. The first of the two deployments was with Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 on board USS Enterprise (CVN 65), and the second was as an Individual Augmentee (IA) to Iraq as part of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team training new Iraqi Air Force pilots.

Lt. Col. Erker was selected for the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School (USNTPS) cooperative education program in 2005 and was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. LtCol Erker graduated from USNTPS at Patuxent River, Md., with Class 132 in December 2007, while concurrently earning an M.S. in Aeronautical Engineering.

After USNTPS, LtCol Erker was then assigned to VX-23, where he served as the T-45 department head and F/A-18 project pilot. While serving at VX-23, Lt. Col. Erker was selected as the Naval Test Wing Atlantic (NTWL) Test Pilot of the Year for 2008. Under his leadership the T-45 test team earned the prestigious Society of Flight Test Engineers (SFTE) James S. McDonnell Flight Test Team of the Year award for 2009 for their efforts on the Hot Section Reliability Improvement Program (HSRIP).

In February 2010, Lt. Col. Erker was assigned to the Naval Mission Planning Systems Program (PMA 281). He served as the Joint Mission Planning System - Expeditionary (JMPS-E) Integrated Product Team (IPT) Lead and JMPS-Maritime Fleet Liaison. LtCol Erker facilitated completion of developmental and operational test resulting in Initial Operational Capability of JMPS-E, providing Naval Amphibious Squadron and Marine Expeditionary Unit staff planners with an unprecedented mission planning system.

Lt. Col. Erker was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps Aviation in July 2011, where he served as the U.S. Marine Corps F-35 test plans coordinator. Lt. Col. Erker coordinated between F-35 flight test activities, Naval Air Systems Command, the F-35 Joint Program Office, Defense Contract Management Agency and Marine Forces regarding various fleet integration efforts, aircraft deliveries, test support, manpower management and operational test and evaluation planning.

Lt. Col. Erker returned to NAS Patuxent River and VX-23 in September 2013 and served as chief test pilot. He assumed command of the squadron in May 2015.

LtCol Erker's awards include the Bronze Star, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (3), Meritorious Service Medal and Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal.