

Lt. Col. D. Thomas Fields

VX-31 Commanding Officer

Lt. Col. Tom Fields is a former resident of Atlanta, Georgia, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering from Virginia Tech. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps at the completion of Officer Candidates School in April 1998.

Fields completed The Basic School in October 1998 and reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, for Aviation Pre-Flight Indoctrination. He completed primary flight training in the T-34C with VT-2 in Milton, Florida, in August 1999. After completing intermediate flight training in the T-2C Buckeye and advanced flight training in the T-45C Goshawk, Fields was designated a naval aviator in December 2000.



In June 2002, he completed initial training in the F/A-18 Hornet with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron (VMFAT) 101 and reported to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan for service with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 212, the Marine Corps' only permanently forward-deployed fighter squadron. In November 2005, Fields reported to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for service with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. He deployed with the 24th MEU to the Middle East in June 2006 and supported operations in Lebanon, Jordan, Djibouti, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Iraq.

In January 2007, Fields reported to the "Gladiators" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 106, where he served as an instructor in the F/A-18 Fleet Replacement Squadron. During his time as an FRS instructor, he duties included: assistant training officer, basic fighter maneuvering standardization officer, strike standardization officer, fighter weapons standardization officer, night systems instructor, low altitude tactics training instructor, T-34C low safe pilot, and F/A-18 East Coast Demonstration Team pilot.

Fields reported to Edwards Air Force Base, California, in June 2009 to attend the USAF Test Pilot School. There he served as the class leader for Class 09B and earned a Masters of Science in Flight Test Engineering in June 2010. He subsequently served with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 in China Lake, California, working as a test pilot, project officer, and operations officer.

He reported to MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina, in August 2013 for service with the VMFA-122 Crusaders. There he served as the operations officer and the executive officer. In July 2015, Fields reported to NAS Patuxent River for service with the VX-23 "Salty Dogs." There he served as the F-35 operations officer and the F-35 government flight test director.

Fields reported to the AV-8B Program Office (PMA-257) in August 2017, where he served as the Propulsion Integrated Product Team (IPT) lead. He then joined the F/A-18 Program Office (PMA-265) for service as the F/A-18 A-D IPT lead.

He became VX-31's chief test pilot in January 2019; he took over as commanding officer in July 2020.

Fields has a DAWIA Level 3 Certification in Test and Evaluation. He is a graduate of the Navy Fighter Weapons School (Class 03-2004), and has a Certificate in Systems Engineering from the Naval Post Graduate School. Fields' personal decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Korean Defense Service Medal.