



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOSEPH P. “PUMA” GONZALES

Lt Col Joseph P. Gonzales is the Director of Operations, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) Detachment 510, at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As an Associate Professor of Aerospace Studies, he is responsible for educating, training, and mentoring cadets to prepare them to commission as Second Lieutenants and serve as leaders in the United States Air Force and United States Space Force.

Lt Col Gonzales graduated from the University of New Mexico and earned his commission through AFROTC Detachment 510 in 2004. He has served as a mission-ready F-15E Strike Eagle Weapons Systems Officer and EA-18G Electronic Warfare Officer, holding various positions in three operational flying squadrons. As an Air Liaison Officer, he served as Assistant Director of Operations, Flight Commander, Air Liaison Officer Instructor, Airborne, and Joint Terminal Attack Controller. He also served as Director of Operations for the 548th Combat Training Squadron, Commander of Detachment 1, 20th Air Support Operations Squadron at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and Commander of Detachment 1, 6th Combat Training Squadron at Will Rogers Air National Guard Base, Oklahoma, and Operating Location – Alpha, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.



Prior to assuming his current position, Lt Col Gonzales served as Acting Deputy Chief of Aviation Safety, Chief of Aviation Safety Assurance, and Chief of Aviation Mishap Investigations for Headquarters Air Force Safety Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico.

EDUCATION

- 2004 Bachelor of Liberal Studies, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
- 2011 Squadron Officer School, in residence, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2012 Masters of Sports Administration, American Military University, Charles Town, WA
- 2018 Air Command and Staff College, in correspondence, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2026 Air War College, in correspondence, Maxwell AFB, AL

ASSIGNMENTS OR CAREER CHRONOLOGY

1. Jan 2005-Jun 2006, Student, Joint Specialized Undergraduate Navigator Training, TRAWING 6, NAS Pensacola, FL
2. Oct 2006-Jul 2007, Student, F-15E Formal Training Unit, 333rd Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, NC
3. Sep 2007-May 2010, Mobility Officer, later Mission Planning Officer and Standardization and Evaluation Officer, 389th Fighter Squadron, Mountain Home AFB, ID
- 4 Jun 2010-Jun 2013, Flight Commander, Air Liaison Officer- Instructor, Joint Terminal Attack Controller, Airborne, later Assistant Director of Operations, 14th Air Support Operations Squadron, Pope Army Airfield, NC
5. Sep 2013-Oct 2013, Student, F-15E Transition Course, 334th Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, NC
6. Nov 2013-Jun 2016, Wing Plans Officer/Wing Inspection Planner, 366th Fighter Wing, Mountain Home AFB, ID, later Chief of Range Operations, 366th Operational Support Squadron, Mountain Home AFB, ID
7. Sep 2016-Nov 2017, Student, EA-18G Fleet Replacement Squadron, Electronic Attack Squadron 129, NAS Whidbey Island, WA





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8. Dec 2017-May 2019, Assistant Director of Operations (Logistics/Safety Department Head), EA-18G EWO, 138 Electronic Attack Squadron/390th Electronic Control Squadron, NAS Whidbey Island, WA
9. Jun 2019-Mar 2020, Director of Operations, 548th Combat Training Squadron, Ft. Polk AIN, LA
10. May 2020-Jul 2021, Commander, Detachment 1, 20th Air Support Operations Squadron, Ft. Polk AIN, LA
11. Jul 2021-Jul 2023, Commander, Detachment 1, 6th Combat Training Squadron, WRANGB, OKC, OK and Operating Location – Alpha, Fort Sill, OK
12. Jul 2023-Jul 2026, Acting Chief, Aviation Safety, Chief, Aviation Safety Assurance, Chief, Aviation Mishap Investigations, Safety Investigator, Action Officer, Headquarters Air Force Safety Center, Kirtland AFB, NM
13. Jul 2026-Present, Director of Operations and Associate Professor of Aerospace Studies, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Detachment 510, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Senior Navigator and Basic Parachutist

Flight Hours: more than 1,200

Aircraft Flown: T-6A, T-1A, T-39, AT-38, F-15E, EA-18G

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters

Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf clusters

Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf clusters

Air Force Achievement Medal

Combat Readiness Medal

National Defense Service Medal

Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one service star

Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Korean Defense Service Medal

Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal

Navy Pistol Shot Medal

NATO Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant: 26 Dec 2004

First Lieutenant: 26 Dec 2006

Captain: 26 Dec 2008

Major: 1 Jun 2015

Lieutenant Colonel: 01 Sept 2023

(Current as of Oct 2026)

