

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**JOHNNY WHITAKER, USAFA '73**  
**Colonel, USAF (Retired)**  
**GS-15, USAF (Retired)**  
**Director, Lockheed Martin (Retired)**



Johnny Whitaker is retired after three careers spanning nearly 43 years, including active duty service in the United States Air Force, followed by five years as a Department of the Air Force senior civilian, and culminating with eight years as an executive with the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company.

Johnny was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1973. His military career encompassed a variety of assignments in public affairs and communications at all levels of the Air Force, including two tours on the Secretary of the Air Force's staff at Headquarters USAF in the Pentagon. He also served 19 months as a support group commander at Columbus AFB, Miss. While at U.S. Air Forces in Europe, he was a key spokesman for the bed-down of ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe, the repatriation of hostages from the hijacked TWA Flight 847, and Operation Eldorado Canyon, the U.S. air raid on Libya. At Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, Mr. Whitaker was lead spokesman for the casualty reception operations for injured military members evacuated to San Antonio military hospitals from Operation Just Cause in Panama. While in San Antonio, he also served as Director of Public Affairs for Air Education and Training Command. In two separate tours as Air Combat Command's Director of Public Affairs, his directorate was named the Air Force's best major command public affairs office three times. He also served as the Deputy Director of all Air Force Public Affairs operations from September 1998 to April 2001 in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force in the Pentagon. He retired as a colonel in February 2003 as the Director of Public Affairs for the Air Force's largest major command, Air Combat Command, at Langley AFB, Va.

Following retirement from active duty, from 2003-2008, he served as the first senior civilian Director of Communications for the United States Air Force Academy. In this role on the Superintendent's staff, he was the Academy's senior spokesman, and provided advice and counsel to the Superintendent, Commandant of Cadets, Dean of the Faculty and Director of Athletics on all communications and public affairs matters. He was also responsible for the Academy's alumni relations program and liaison activities with the Association of Graduates. Extremely visible situations that occurred during his tenure included a major sexual assault scandal, a significant violation of the Honor Code by numerous cadets, and outside allegations of religious respect issues involving Academy cadets and staff.

Johnny left the Academy in 2008 to become Director of Program and International Communications for the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. in Fort Worth, Texas. In 2011, he transferred to become Director of Communications for Lockheed Martin's second largest site in Marietta, Ga. During his eight years with Lockheed Martin, he led staffs responsible for all employee, executive and public communications; media relations; philanthropy, contributions and sponsorships; branding, marketing and advertising; and community relations programs. His team's communications responsibilities included the F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-22 Raptor, C-130J Super Hercules, LM-100J (C-130J commercial variant), center wing assembly production the F-35 Lightning II, C-5 Super Galaxy RERP, manufacture of new wings for the P-3 Orion, and the T-50A, the company's entry into the USAF's trainer replacement competition. He retired from Lockheed Martin in 2016.

Johnny and his wife, Nancy, have two sons: Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey N. "Nick" Whitaker, US Air Force (Retired) and Colonel Jonathan L. Whitaker, US Space Force. They have five grandchildren.

## **EDUCATION:**

- 1973 Bachelor of Science degree in Management, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 1980 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 1986 Master of Arts degree in Communication, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.
- 1987 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 1992 Air War College (seminar program)

## **MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS/CIVILIAN JOBS:**

1. August 1973-August 1977: Deputy Chief, later Chief of Information, 354<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, S.C.
2. August 1977-July 1978: Chief of Information, 12<sup>th</sup> Missile Warning Group, Thule Air Base, Greenland
3. August 1978-July 1979: Intern, USAF Education with Industry Program, Corporate Public Relations Dept., Ohio Bell Telephone, Cleveland, Ohio
4. July 1979-September 1980: Chief of Community Relations, later Deputy Director of Public Affairs, 76<sup>th</sup> Airlift Division, Andrews Air Force Base, Md.
5. October 1980-August 1984: Action officer, Media Relations Division, Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
6. August 1984-July 1986: Assistant Chief of Media Relations, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
7. July 1986-August 1987: Chief of Public Affairs, 316<sup>th</sup> Air Division, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
8. August 1987-July 1988: Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
9. July 1988-August 1991: Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Military Training Center, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
10. August 1991-July 1992: Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Air Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas
11. July 1992-June 1995: Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas
12. June 1995-January 1997: Commander, 14<sup>th</sup> Support Group, Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.
13. February 1997-October 1997: Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va.
14. November 1997-September 1998: Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va.
15. September 1998-April 2001: Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Pentagon, Washington, DC
16. April 2001-November 2002: Director of Public Affairs, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia
17. February 1, 2003: Retired from the Air Force after 29 years, 7 months and 29 days of active service.
18. September 2003-October 2008: Director of Communications, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado.
19. October 2008: Retired from federal civil service with the Dept. of the Air Force.
20. October 2008-August 2011: Director of Program & International Communications, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., Fort Worth, Texas
21. August 2011-August 2016: Director of Communications, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., Marietta, Georgia
22. August 2016: Retired from Lockheed Martin

## **MAJOR MILITARY & CIVILIAN AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:**

Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters  
Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters  
Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster  
National Defense Service Medal with two star devices  
Air Force Exemplary Civilian Service Award

*(Current as of January 2026)*