

Jeannie Leavitt



Jeannie Leavitt grew up fascinated with airplanes and flying, but never had the opportunity to experience aviation until she flew on her first commercial flight after finishing high school. Jeannie entered the Air Force in 1992 after earning her bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Texas and her master's degree in aeronautics and astronautics from Stanford University. She earned her commission as a distinguished graduate of the Air Force ROTC program.

When Jeannie finished pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas in January of 1993, the law had recently changed to allow women in combat; however, the Department of Defense (DoD) maintained a combat exclusion policy for women. Finishing first in her pilot training class, she selected the F-15E Strike Eagle for her assignment which was initially denied due to the DoD policy.

In April of 1993, the DoD policy changed, and Jeannie became the Air Force's first female fighter pilot. She trained in the F-15E at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona and went to her first combat fighter squadron at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina. She also became the first female fighter pilot to attend and later instruct at the USAF Weapons School.

When Jeannie took command of the 4th Fighter Wing in 2012, she became the first woman to command an Air Force combat fighter wing. She went on to command the 57th Wing at Nellis Air Force Base, Air Force Recruiting Service, and the Air Force Safety Center.

Jeannie rose to the rank of 2-star general. She is a command pilot with more than 3,000 hours, including more than 300 hours in combat. Her operational experience includes Operations Southern Watch, Northern Watch, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Over the course of her Air Force career, Jeannie earned additional master's degrees from Auburn University, Air University and National Defense University. In 2019, she assisted the Captain Marvel production team with character development.

Jeannie is married to Craig Leavitt, an entrepreneur and retired Air Force F-16 fighter pilot, and they have 2 children.

