



# BIOGRAPHY

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

### COLONEL MARK A. VAVRA

Colonel Mark A. Vavra is the Vice Commander, Minnesota Air National Guard, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth, Minn. He is responsible for assisting the Commander in organizing, training, equipping and maintaining combat-ready forces, and in leading the 148th Fighter Wing Headquarters Group to effectively support over 1,000 Airmen.

Col. Vavra began his military career in April 1987 when he enlisted at the 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard and performed duties as a law enforcement specialist. His enlisted career progressed to the rank of technical sergeant, at which time he received his commission through the Academy of Military Science as a second lieutenant in 1993. His first duty assignment was as the 148th Fighter Wing Security Forces Operations Officer, where he assisted the Secret Service for Presidential visits to the wing. In November 1996, he assumed duties as the mission support officer while concurrently performing public affairs officer responsibilities. As a public affairs officer, he was on site for Minnesota Flood Fights in 1996 and 1997, coordinated all media following the crash of one of the unit's aircraft in 1997 and was the primary contact for Minnesota National Guard media relations for the Northern Part of Minnesota following the attacks of September 11, 2001. From 2004 through 2006 he performed duties as the wing antiterrorism officer, where he was responsible for oversight of new construction projects valued at over \$38 million were compliant with Department of Defense antiterrorism standards. In 2007, he commanded the services flight and while there pioneered the state's first ever Fatality Search and Recovery Team. From 2009 to 2014 he held positions as the force support squadron commander, military personnel management officer at Minnesota Joint Force Headquarters and 148th Fighter Wing Deputy Mission Support Group Commander as well as Maintenance Squadron Commander. From 2014 to 2019 he held the position of Mission Support Group Commander where he directly oversaw the operations of civil engineering, security forces, logistics, force support, contracting, communications and medical units. Under his oversight, all of these missions greatly enhanced the U.S. Air Force's capability to provide combat airpower to America's warfighting commands around the world.



#### EDUCATION

- 1992 Bachelors of Applied Arts Degree, Physical Education, University of Minnesota, Duluth
- 1993 Academy of Military Science, McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Knoxville, Tenn.
- 1998 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 2002 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence
- 2007 Intermediate Development Course, McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Knoxville, Tenn.
- 2008 Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence

#### ASSIGNMENTS

1. April 1987 – November 1992, Law Enforcement Specialist, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
2. December 1992 – August 1993, Law Enforcement Flight Sergeant, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
3. August 1993 – October 1996, Security Forces Operations Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
4. October 1995 – October 1996, Acting Security Forces Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
5. November 1996 – October 2000, Mission Support Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
6. November 2000 – November 2004, Public Affairs Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
7. November 2004 – April 2009, Wing Antiterrorism Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
8. November 2004 – December 2007, Wing Executive Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
9. December 2007 – April 2009, Services Flight Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
10. September 2008 – February 2013, Fatality Search and Recovery Team OIC (MN-CERF) FEMA Region V, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
11. April 2009 – October 2010, Force Support Operations Officer, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.

12. October 2009 – February 2013, Force Support Squadron Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
13. June 2011 – July 2012, Deputy Mission Support Group Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
14. June 2011 – December 2012, Military Personnel Management Officer – JFHQ, St Paul, Minn.
15. February 2013 – September 2014, Deputy Mission Support Group Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
16. September 2014 – April 2015, Maintenance Squadron Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
17. April 2015 – October 2019, Mission Support Group Commander, 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.
18. October 2019 – Current, Vice Wing Commander, 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Duluth ANGB, Minn.

#### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters  
Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster  
Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster  
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with six oak leaf clusters  
Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
National Defense Service Medal with bronze star  
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal  
Humanitarian Service Medal  
Air Force Longevity Service Award with six oak leaf clusters  
Armed Forces Reserve Medal with gold hourglass and three "M" devices  
Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with bronze star  
Air Force Training Ribbon with oak leaf cluster  
Air Force Legacy Service Award  
Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon

#### **STATE AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Minnesota Commendation Medal with pendant  
Minnesota Good Conduct Ribbon with gold star  
Minnesota State Active Duty Ribbon with gold star  
Minnesota Service Medal with three gold "X" devices  
Minnesota State Service Medal

#### **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

2005, Air Combat Command Inspector General Outstanding Performer, 148th Fighter Wing Unit Compliance Inspection  
2008, Leadership Duluth Graduate, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, Duluth, Minn.  
2009 – 2014, Emergency Operations Center and ICC Director for Readiness Inspections  
2013 – Present, Officer Development Team, Member, Minnesota National Guard

#### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

National Guard Association of the United States, Life Member  
National Guard Association of Minnesota, Life Member  
Air Force Association  
Minnesota National Guard Enlisted Association

#### **EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant Aug. 5, 1993  
First Lieutenant Sept. 28, 1995  
Captain Sept. 28, 1997  
Major Oct. 1, 2001  
Lieutenant Colonel Nov. 22, 2005  
Colonel March 26, 2015

(Current as of Dec 2019)