



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT STEPHANIE A. CATES

CMSgt Stephanie A. Cates is the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Third Air Force, Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Third Air Force is the United States Air Forces in Europe's and the United States Air Forces in Africa's Numbered Air Force for the United States European Command and United States Africa Command, respectively. Third Air Force is comprised of ten active duty wings and ninety geographically-separated units, spanning more than 100 countries across two continents. As the Numbered Air Force's senior enlisted leader, Chief Cates advises the commander on issues affecting the readiness, organization, training, health, welfare, morale, development, and utilization of 30,000 Airmen.

Chief Cates grew up as an Air Force dependent and enlisted in the Air Force in May 1996. She attended Imagery Analysis Apprentice Training at Goodfellow AFB, Texas and graduated in December of 1996. Her assignments include bases in California, Virginia, Texas, Ohio, Washington, D.C., Germany, and New Mexico. She has deployed to Italy, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Turkey.

Prior to assuming her current position, she served as the Command Chief for the 377th Air Base Wing at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico.



EDUCATION

- 2001 Airman Leadership School, Beale, Air Force Base, California
- 2001 Associates degree, Communications Applications Technology, CCAF
- 2006 NCO Academy, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama
- 2009 Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course, National Defense University
- 2010 Senior Enlisted Intelligence Master Skills Course, Goodfellow AFB, Texas
- 2011 Senior NCO Academy, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Alabama
- 2016 Command Chief Candidate Orientation Course, Randolph AFB, Texas
- 2017 Senior Enlisted Legal Orientation Course, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
- 2019 Continuous Process Improvement for Executives, Crystal City, Virginia
- 2020 Next Jump Leadership Academy, New York City, New York
- 2020 Enterprise Leadership Seminar, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, Chapel Hill North Carolina
- 2021 Eurasia Seminar, Alan L. Freed Associates, Washington, D.C.
- 2022 Transnational Issues Seminar, Alan L. Freed Associates, Washington, D.C.
- 2022 Enterprise Perspective Seminar, Alan L. Freed Associates, Washington, D.C.
- 2022 Artificial Intelligence for National Security Leaders, MIT Sloan School of Management, Cambridge, Massachusetts

ASSIGNMENTS

1. May 1996 – June 1996, Student, Basic Military Training, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
2. June 1996 – December 1996, Student, Imagery Analysis Course, Goodfellow AFB, Texas
3. January 1997 – December 2003, Imagery Mission Supervisor, 13th Intelligence Squadron, Beale AFB, Calif.
4. December 2003 – September 2004, Senior Imagery Evaluator, 548th Intelligence Group, Beale AFB, Calif.
5. September 2004 – August 2007, NCOIC, Imagery Standardization and Evaluations, 480th Intelligence Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
6. August 2007 – August 2008, Night Shift Lead, Imagery Support Element, Combined Air and Space Operations Center, Al Udeid AB, Qatar
7. October 2008 – October 2012, Instructor, Flight Chief, 315th Training Squadron, Goodfellow AFB, Texas
8. October 2012 – April 2014, Superintendent, Geospatial Intelligence Analysis Squadron, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
9. April 2014 – September 2014, Superintendent, Geospatial and Signatures Intelligence Group, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
10. September 2014 – August 2015, Superintendent, Air and Cyberspace Intelligence Group, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
11. September 2015 – June 2019, Superintendent, 11th Operations Group, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C.
(Sept 2016 – Apr 2017, Superintendent, 447th Air Expeditionary Group, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey),
(Apr 2018 – Oct 2018, Superintendent, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, Bagram AB, Afghanistan)
12. June 2019 – July 2021, Command Chief, 52nd Fighter Wing, Spandahlem AB, Germany
13. July 2021 – May 2023, Command Chief, 377th Air Base Wing, Kirtland AFB, N.M.
14. May 2023 – present, Command Chief, Third Air Force, Ramstein AB, Germany

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit

Bronze Star Medal

Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters

Joint Service Commendation Medal

Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster

Joint Service Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster

Air Force Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters

Joint Meritorious Unit award

Meritorious Unit award with two oak leaf clusters

AF Outstanding Unit Award with Valor device with two silver oak leaf clusters

Humanitarian Service Medal

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

1998 Senior Airman Below-The-Zone

2001 John L. Levitow Award, Airman Leadership School, Beale Air Force Base, Calif.

2001 Tenant Group NCO of the Year, 9th Reconnaissance Wing, Beale AFB, Calif.

2006 Distinguished Graduate, NCO Academy, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Ala.

2008 COMUSAFCENT Outstanding Performer, CAOC, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar

2009 SNCO of the Year, 315th Training Squadron, Goodfellow AFB, Texas

2011 Distinguished Graduate, Senior NCO Academy, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Ala.

2011 SNCO of the Year, 17th Training Group, Goodfellow AFB, Texas

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Chief Master Sergeant -- 1 December 2014

(Current as of May 2023)