

Colonel Stefan J. Banach Biography

Colonel Banach was commissioned in the Infantry in 1983. His initial assignment was with the 2d Battalion, 505th (Abn) Infantry, 82d Airborne Division. During this tour, he qualified for the 1984 Final Olympic Trials in wrestling, was a member of the 1984 All Army Wrestling Team and was later assigned to the 1st Ranger Battalion, Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia, from 1985 - 1987.

Colonel Banach attended the U.S. Army Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1987, and graduated as the Distinguished Honor Graduate. He was then assigned to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, 197th Mechanized Brigade (Separate), at Fort Benning where he commanded Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, from 1989 - 1991. His command tour included a combat deployment to Iraq with the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in support of Operations Desert Shield & Desert Storm.

He later served as a Liaison Officer with the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning and as the Battalion Adjutant for 1st Ranger Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield from 1991 - 1993. He attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was assigned to 2d Ranger Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington, as the Battalion Liaison Officer, Operations Officer and Executive Officer from 1994-1997. This assignment included a deployment to Haiti in support of "Operation Uphold Democracy".

Colonel Banach was then assigned to the United States Pacific Command in Hawaii, where he served from June 1997 - June 1999. He commanded the 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry (Mechanized), 3d Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia, from July 1999 - June 2001. His battalion command tour included a peace enforcement deployment to Bosnia in support of SFOR 8, "Operation Joint Forge."

He commanded the 3d Ranger Battalion from June 2001 - June 2003. This command tour included two deployments to Afghanistan and one deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, respectively. During this assignment, he led his men during the execution of a combat parachute assault into Afghanistan on 19 October 2001 as the spearhead for the Global War on Terrorism and participated in a second parachute assault into Iraq during the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003.

Following his battalion commands, he was selected to command a Stryker Brigade Combat Team at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii from May 2005-June 2007. Colonel Banach is a graduate of the Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship at the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and is currently serving as the 12th Director of the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies.

His awards and decorations include:

- Legion of Merit Medal (2 Awards)
- Bronze Star with Valor Device
- Bronze Star Medal for Service
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Joint Meritorious Unit Award
- Meritorious Service Medal (Five Awards)
- Army Commendation Medal (Five Awards)
- Global War on Terror Service and

- Expeditionary Medals with Arrowhead
- U.S. Army Master Parachutist Badge (With Two Gold Combat Jump Stars)
- U.S. Army Ranger Tab and British, Thai, South Korean, & Jordanian Jump Wings.
- Combat Infantry Badge (Two Awards)

He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa; is a graduate of the School of Advanced Military Studies and has a Masters Degree from the Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.