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John Nelson was commissioned a 2LT in the United States Army in 1987 after graduating from the US Military Academy at West Point. An Air Defense Officer, he served as a HAWK missile platoon leader, commanded a Bradley Stinger Fighting Vehicle battery, and served as a Patriot Battalion Executive Officer. Following his field time, he was a Senior Air Defense Observer Controller/Trainer with the Battle Command Training Program. He later served in the Force Management Division of the US Army Forces Command staff.

In 1997 he completed Masters of Science degrees from the University of Central Florida in Training Simulations and Engineering Management. He subsequently joined the faculty of the US Military Academy and served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Military Instruction teaching advanced military science elective courses and training simulations.

After retiring from active duty in 2007, John joined Dynamics Research Corporation and has been working with the Battle Command Knowledge System. He is the forum facilitator for the S3-XO Net professional forum and Team Lead for the Leadership and Leadership Development Knowledge Network, charged with integrating the professional forums across the various leader cohorts in the Army.

He is a graduate of the US Army's Command and General Staff Officers Course, a Certified Knowledge Manager (CKM), a Certified Six Sigma Green Belt (CSSGB), and currently pursuing his Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Certification.