50th NOG gets new commander

by Staff Sgt. Stacy D. Foster
50th Space Wing Public Affairs


Col. Mitchel Butikofer succeeds Col. Robert Skinner, who will be leaving for an assignment at the Pentagon.

"You have a long lineage of great commanders who have served here, and it is my goal to live up to your expectations and serve you in every capacity possible," said Colonel Butikofer.

Colonel Butikofer received his commission in 1989 through the Air Force ROTC program at Utah State University. His first assignment was as a communications officer at the Office of Special Investigations, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.

Colonel Butikofer’s past assignments include Section Chief of Assignment Systems Development, Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas; Mission Systems Flight Commander, 8th Communications Squadron, Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea; Commander of the 71st Communications Squadron, Vance AFB, Okla.; Senior Communications and Information Resource Programmer for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications and Information at the Pentagon; Commander of the 1st Communications Squadron, Langley AFB, Virginia; Commander and Deputy Commander of the 485th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, Southwest Asia; Military Assistant, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration, the Pentagon, and Commander of the United States Military Group, Brazil.

Colonel Butikofer graduated from Utah State University, Utah in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science. He attended Squadron Officer School at Maxwell AFB, Ala. In 1996 he completed his Master of Science in Management of Technology from the University of Texas - San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas. He was a Legislative Fellow on the United States Senate through the Intermediate Service School in Washington, D.C. and attended Air Command and Staff College by correspondence in 2000. In 2004 Colonel Butikofer completed Air War College by correspondence. In 2005 he completed his second Master of Science, this time in National Resource Strategies from the National Defense University at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

His awards include a Bronze Star Medal, a Defense Meritorious Service Medal, five Meritorious Service Medals, an Air Force Commendation Medal, and three Air Force Achievement Medals.

As commander of the 50th NOG, Colonel Butikofer will be responsible for more than 1,500 active duty military, Department of Defense civilians and contractor personnel. The group provides assured access to space and cyberspace by operating and maintaining the $6.2 billion Air Force Satellite Control Network and the $100 million Department of Defense communications gateway. Additionally, the group manages contracts valued in excess of $90 million supporting Allied, National, Federal and Department of Defense missions.