



## Biography



Joel A. Vargas

### Senior Military Affairs Representative

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Joel joined USAA in May 2013. He is currently the Southern Virginia Senior Military Affairs Representative for the North Region. He directly supports USAA's vision for Military Affairs by directly working with major military installations, veterans, State National Guard and associated professional organizations to support military members and families through Morale Welfare and Recreation activity events and sponsorship support for pre-deployment and reintegration events. Additionally, he delivers financial readiness training to University ROTC units and local organizations during Indoctrination, annual training or leadership development schools. Joel also serves as Chairman on the Armed Services YMCA Board of Management, USO of Hampton Roads/Central VA Board of Directors and the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce Armed Services Committee.

Joel Vargas was born in Bronx, New York and enlisted in the Navy under the Delayed Entry Program in November 1981. Upon graduation from Aviation High School in Queens, New York, he reported to Recruit Training Center San Diego, California in September 1982. After graduating from Basic Training, he attended AMS "A" School in Millington, Tennessee and was designated an Aviation Structural Mechanic in March 1983. Lieutenant Commander Vargas was commissioned as a Chief Warrant Officer in October 1996 and achieved the rank of CWO3 before being selected for promotion under the Limited Duty Officer program in October 2000.

Lieutenant Commander Vargas' tours include Fleet Composite Squadron Eight (VC-8) REDTAILS in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, working on the SH-3G Sea King and the TA-4J Sky Hawk. VF-84 JOLLY ROGERS as the Corrosion Control and Airframes shops, where he made two deployments onboard USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71) during Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Provide Comfort. He then reported to VF-43 CHALLENGERS in NAS Oceana, where he was the Airframes Leading Petty Officer and Night Shift Maintenance Control Petty Officer. Lieutenant Commander Vargas then reported to VF-142 GHOST RIDERS in April 1994, deploying onboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73). He served as a Quality Assurance Representative and was handpicked as a Night Shift Flight Deck Coordinator. He was selected to Chief Petty Officer in September 1994 and served as Night Shift Maintenance Control Chief. Upon decommissioning VF-142, he reported to VF-143 PUKIN' DOGS in May 1995, deploying again onboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) and served as Night Shift FDC and Night Shift Maintenance Control Chief. In February 1996 he was selected for a commission as a Chief Warrant Officer under the Active Duty LDO/CWO Program. He was commissioned in October 1996 and upon graduation from Mustang University in Pensacola, he reported to VF-154 BLACK KNIGHTS on December 1996, forward deployed out of NAF Atsugi, Japan deploying onboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV 62) and USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63); serving as the Material Control Officer and Maintenance Material Control Officer. Under his leadership VF-154 was awarded the Battle "E", Maintenance Golden Wrench, Safety "S", BOOLA- BOOLA Award for missile excellence and CLIFTON award for best Fighter Squadron in the Navy.



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Lieutenant Commander Vargas reported to Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD), Naval Station Puerto Rico in December 1999, where he served as Quality Assurance Officer. He was selected to CWO3 and LTJG in October 2000 and promoted to Lieutenant in October 2002. He also served as Maintenance Material Control Officer and Assistant Maintenance Officer before decommissioning AIMD in October 2003. While in AIMD, he earned his Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airframes and Power Plants Certification. He was assigned to USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) home ported in Norfolk, VA on October 2003 where served as the IM-4 Officer, IM-2 Officer and IM-1 Quality Assurance Officer during an extensive RCOH period and ship's overhaul. Additionally, he served as Bridge Team member and qualified as a Helm Safety and After Steering Officer, performing underway duties of the Bridge Team during numerous pre-deployment cycles. He reported to Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit (CNATTU), Oceana on September 2006 where he was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and served as Training Department Head for a staff of 197 Sailors and Marine Corps "A" and F/A-18 A thru F "C" School instructors in support of CNATT's mission, Revolution in Training, and Total Force readiness in the Naval Aviation Enterprise.

LCDR Vargas reported to his major Department Head tour on USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) home ported in Norfolk, VA from August 2009 to August 2011 serving as the AIMD Maintenance Officer, making several deployments including Operation CONTINUING PROMISE to South America. He was awarded the Commander, Naval Surface Forces, Navy and Marine Corps Leadership Award for CY 2010; nominated by his peers for inspirational leadership.

Joel capped his 31-year career as the Force Aviation Maintenance Officer for COMNAVSURFLANT and COMNAVSURFPAC, a position overseeing aviation maintenance activities and 72 Air Capable ships in both Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. He has served on the NAVAIR Process Improvement and AIRSpeed Implementation Teams, Boots on Deck Coordinator and the LHA/R Fleet Integration Team responsible for the design of aviation spaces on "next generation" Amphibious Assault Ships, focusing on architecture of hangar and maintenance space configuration for the Joint Strike Fighter and MV-22 aircraft.

Joel earned a Bachelor's Degree (BS) in Admin/Management Studies and Sociology from Excelsior College and is currently working on his Master's Degree in Sociology. His personal military awards include the Professional Aviation Maintenance Officer and Enlisted Aviation Warfare Breast Insignias, Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (7 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (6 awards) and numerous service, campaign awards and citations.

He and his wife Jan Sears Vargas reside in Virginia Beach and they have three adult children and three grandchildren.