



# PRESS RELEASE

## United States Air Force

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### **LRAFB WELCOMES NEW WING COMMANDER**

**LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE, Ark.** – Col. Angela Ochoa took the helm of the 19th Airlift Wing during a change of command ceremony, June 25, becoming the first woman to assume command of Little Rock Air Force Base.

Ochoa, who most recently served as the vice commander of the 375th Air Mobility Wing at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, took command of the wing from Col. John Schutte during a ceremony presided over by Maj. Gen. Kenneth T. Bibb Jr., 18th Air Force commander.

“John, I saw very clearly during our last visit how wonderful and strong your influence is with our Airmen and families--we have needed your leadership during this last year and you have set this wing up for success,” Bibb said. “Angela, with your proven skill and ability I have every confidence your Airmen will reach new heights.”

Ochoa returns to LRAFB having previously served in a variety of positions at the “Home of Herk Nation” including the chief of safety for the 314th Airlift Wing and commander of the 61st Airlift Squadron.

Entering the Air Force in 2001 after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy, Ochoa is a command pilot having flown more 2,800 hours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Resolute Support and Operation Freedom Sentinel.

As installation commander, she is now responsible for organizing, training, and equipping the personnel who operate, maintain and sustain more than 62 C-130 aircraft, enabling support for combat, contingency and humanitarian requirements around the world.

She is also accountable for ensuring the readiness and well-being of more than 10,000 personnel and families at LRAFB.

In her first address to the wing, Ochoa thanked the men and women of the 19th AW for their tireless efforts over the last 16 months.

“These last 16 months have tried not only this base, not only our nation, but the entire world as we have fought through a global pandemic,” Ochoa said. In spite of this, “Herk Nation has been constantly on the go, supporting the warfighter needs and accelerating change.”

Ochoa offered her expectations as she assumed command, and said the wing “will not be resting on its heels for the next fight.”

“We will not wait for the war to come to us, but rather we will embrace the opportunity to tackle this challenge now,” she said. “As we go forth and try new things we have never done, we will fail. This is how we will learn and grow together as a team to be smarter, better and stronger.”

The new commander further intends to foster an environment of professionalism, dignity and respect, and she plans to instill pride in her team – while focusing on Airmen, their families and unit readiness.

“As Black Knights, we will grow courageous leaders, because we cannot win tomorrow’s fight without courageous leaders,” Ochoa said. “We will nurture battle ready mobility warriors with a resilient warrior ethos, which ensures we are ready anytime, anywhere. And we will foster a connected community for all Airmen, families and partners. We will work hard, play hard and have fun.”

“Airmen of the 19th Airlift Wing, your incoming commander has a long and distinguished list of accomplishments that uniquely qualify her to lead you,” Bibb said. “Angela, it is your turn to take this team to new heights--you are the right leader, at the right place, at the right time.”

In Schutte's outgoing address, he thanked his family, fellow leaders, the community and Team Little Rock Airmen.

“My family and I will depart with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to have served alongside each of you during this extra-ordinary moment in our Nation’s history, and pride in all that you have accomplished over the past two years,” said Schutte. “Thank you for all that you did as we stood tall and answered the challenges before us. I have no doubt that you will reach even greater heights under Col. Ochoa’s leadership, and am excited to see where the Home of Herk Nation leads the way next!”

Schutte leaves LRAFB to become the deputy chief of staff at U.S. European Command, which is responsible for U.S. military operations across Europe, as well as portions of Asia and the Middle East, and the Arctic and Atlantic oceans.

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Link to still imagery: <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6709157/lrafb-welcomes-new-wing-commander>

Link to livestreamed event coverage:

<https://www.facebook.com/LittleRockAirForceBase/videos/255207989611808>