



Col. Nicole Malachowski

Colonel Nicole Malachowski, a trailblazing Air Force veteran and the first woman Thunderbird pilot, began her professional career by breaking barriers in aviation. Her journey continues to inspire audiences globally, showcasing her resilience, courage, and determination.

KEY TOPICS

- HARNESSING HEADWINDS – SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING CHANGE & ADVERSITY
- PUSHING THE ENVELOPE – BEING THE BEST WHEN IT COUNTS
- BREAKING BARRIERS – CONQUERING SELF-DOUBT AND CULTURAL PARADIGMS
- CONQUERING FOG AND FRICTION – LEADING THROUGH TIMES OF CRISIS
- THE MACH 2 MINDSET – DECISION-MAKING IN A HIGH-SPEED ENVIRONMENT

BIOGRAPHY

Col. Nicole Malachowski: Jet Fighter Pilot & Resilient Leader

[Col. Nicole Malachowski](#) isn't just known for her time in the cockpit; she's a powerhouse of leadership with an *impressive 21-year career in the Air Force*. As the first woman pilot to fly with the **Thunderbirds Air Demonstration Squadron**, she broke barriers and redefined what's possible. A mission-ready fighter pilot and **combat veteran**, she has taken her expertise to the White House as a White House Fellow and *has become a passionate advocate for health and veteran issues*. Nicole Malachowski reminds audiences of the importance of perspective in her speeches, sharing insights from her groundbreaking career. She also reflects on overcoming challenges and avoiding the constraints of a scripted life, **inspiring audiences** with her journey of perseverance, courage, and leadership.

Aviation Career and Achievements

Starting solo flights at sixteen, Nicole progressed quickly in her aviation career. She attended undergraduate pilot training, where her skills and determination were a standout. Chosen to fly combat aircraft, *she became part of the first wave of women flying modern fighter aircraft*. Throughout her service, she's logged over 2,300 flight hours in six Air Force aircraft, including milestones like her first solo flight, and had the significant responsibility of acting as a flight lead during a number of missions. Nicole's achievements have solidified her status as a career pilot, including leading the first fighter formation that secured Iraq's democratic elections in 2005. Her commitment to personal and professional excellence also earned her a place in history as the first **Air Force officer** to *join the USAF Air Demonstration Squadron*. Additionally, she served as an instructor pilot, accumulating flight time while *inspiring others with her extraordinary journey*.

Service Beyond the Air Force

Nicole's professional story began not only in the skies but also in leadership roles on the ground. *Nicole Malachowski* worked as a **White House Fellow** and later as the Executive Director of the 'Joining Forces' initiative. There, she collaborated with the Presidential Transition Support Team and advised figures like Michelle Obama and Dr Jill Biden on topics related to service members and their families. Her professional journey offers principles of **resilience and leadership** rooted in her experiences as a trailblazer in the Air Force Office and beyond. Her efforts also aligned with her involvement in organisations such as the White House Fellows Foundation and her experience as a Patient Advisory Board Member, showcasing her commitment to advocacy in the face of personal adversity, national security policy, and her connection to Seymour Johnson AFB. Additionally, her academic background at American Military University further highlights her *dedication to leadership and service*.

Advocacy in the Face of Personal Adversity

After being diagnosed with a severe tick-borne illness, Nicole fought tirelessly and became an advocate for others with similar diseases. She actively contributes to the LivLyme Foundation and The Dean Centre for Tick-Borne Illness, highlighting the pressing need for research and understanding in this field. Nicole Malachowski also shares inspiring personal stories of her journey, stressing perspective and emphasising the importance of both personal and professional vulnerability. In addition to her advocacy work, she is a class honour graduate, recognised for her dedication and excellence. Furthermore, the association awarded Nicole for her relentless efforts to raise awareness and inspire others battling tick-borne illnesses.

Recognitions and Accolades

Nicole's dedication has led to multiple honours, including being named to the World Economic Forum's "Global Leaders of Tomorrow". Her achievements have also been recognised by the National Women's Hall and the Association that awarded Nicole for her trailblazing contributions. As an **elite fighter pilot** and **Air Force officer**, her career reflects the qualities celebrated in the Aviation International Pioneer Hall. *Her academic credentials are equally impressive, with two Master of Arts degrees and a top honour from the U.S. Naval War College.* Beyond her professional accolades, Nicole has inspired others, including other high school students, by sharing inspiring personal stories about her journey and the importance of leadership. Nicole Malachowski stresses perspective as a vital element of success, showing how commitment to excellence mirrors the resilience showcased during Iraq's historic democratic elections, where determination triumphed against challenges.

Family and Personal Life

Outside her professional roles, Nicole Malachowski is a mother to twins, Garrick and Norah, and is married to Paul, a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Born in Santa Maria, CA, she has consistently served as an example for both military families and those balancing their personal and professional lives, especially women in the military. Nicole's journey resonates with the values championed by Lady Michelle Obama, proving that life doesn't have to follow a scripted life to be meaningful and impactful. She has also mentored high school students, inspiring the next generation with her story and experiences. Having spent time at Columbus AFB, Nicole Malachowski remains connected to the Air Force community and its values.

Book Nicole Malachowski as a Speaker for Your Event

Nicole Malachowski offers insights from both her military career and her personal journey, sharing inspiring personal stories and principles that resonate across industries. As a former member of the Civil Air Patrol and the first female pilot with the Thunderbirds, Nicole inspires audiences with her trailblazing achievements and authentic storytelling. If you're looking for a speaker who combines experience with authenticity, Nicole brings a unique perspective shaped by her time in the Air Force Junior ROTC and beyond. Whether it's navigating a scripted life or breaking barriers, Nicole fits the bill. [Contact us](#) to see how Nicole Malachowski can add value to your next event.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY

"Colonel Nicole Malachowski is an exceptional speaker who embodies the qualities of a true American hero. She has this innate ability to form a genuine connection with every member of the audience. She'll effortlessly draw parallels between her high-stakes world, essential business principles, and the challenges we face in our own professional and personal lives...I've been so fortunate to have her as a featured keynote at two different companies and she continually showcases her unparalleled expertise as a speaker and scores top audience ratings...With Nicole, you can be confident that every element of the event will be seamlessly orchestrated, resulting in an enjoyable and moving experience for all involved. She truly leaves a lasting impression for every audience member and was our highest ranked speaker at our largest client event of the year. Planning tip - have tissues in the room, there will be tears in the very best way."

— Marketing Director, Private Advisor Group

"Nicole is an engaging, authentic and inspirational speaker who will energize your group. Reckitt Health recently had the pleasure of hearing Nicole address our teams on the importance of trust, courage, vulnerability and pushing the envelope to drive out performance. Working with Nicole was a joy - she was genuinely curious to learn more about our business culture & values so she could tailor her message to be even more relatable to the team. I would recommend her to anyone who wants to engage and inspire their team."

— Reckitt Health

"This shouldn't come as a surprise...Nicole was a hit. She nailed it out of the park. Standing 'o' at the end and the feedback? Incredible. So many people were touched and connected by what she had to say. And let's not forget what an amazing person she is! I could have talked with her for hours. She was incredible to work with and someone I hope I get to meet again."

— Emcor