

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
ROGER D. CARSTENS**  
*U.S. Army, Retired*

Inducted April 20, 2023



Lieutenant Colonel Roger D. Carstens was commissioned in 1986 as an infantry officer from the United States Military Academy. He commanded a platoon in the 75th Rangers, including a combat jump into Panama during Operation Just Cause. He graduated from the Special Forces qualification course in 1991, then completed the Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance Target Attack and Exploitation Course enroute to Detachment Commander and Company Executive Officer with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Germany. He then served as Future Readiness Officer and later Captain Assignments Officer at the Total Army Personnel Command. Then Major Carstens returned to Europe as commander and later, Battalion Executive Officer with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Stuttgart, Germany, followed by a year in Bosnia as Aide-de-Camp for the Commander, Stabilization Forces during Operation Joint Guard. He was selected to command both Company A, 4th Battalion and later Company F, 1st Battalion of the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), training Soldiers in unconventional warfare skills including the final Robin Sage exercise. Lt. Col. Carstens served as Legislative Liaison for U.S. Special Operations Command and as advisor to the National Counter Terror Bureau during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After his military career, Carstens significant contribution to the Regiment included, Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, negotiating and securing release of U.S. citizens taken hostage by terrorist or wrongfully detained by nation states abroad from 2020 until the present. He was designated the personal rank of Ambassador by the President of the United States for his duty as Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs.

He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, from 2019 - 2020. Senior Counterinsurgency and Security Force Assistance Advisor in Kabul Afghanistan during 2013 - 2014. Project Director supporting United Nations Mine Action Service in Somalia During 2012 - 2013. Senior Counterinsurgency Advisory to Headquarters, International Security and Assistance Force in Kabul Afghanistan during 2009 - 2010.

He is a Life Member of the Special Forces Association, and member of the Special Forces Association Chapter 17. He is on the Board of Directors for the Council for Emerging National Security Affairs also a member of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the American Political Science Association.

Carstens holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy and a Master of Arts degree from both the United States Naval War College and St. John's College. He is married to Melissa and has four children and lives in Alexandria, Virginia.