

Stephen Rayleigh - Bio

Specialist Stephen Rayleigh is an Unmanned Aerial Systems Operator in the United States Army. Specialist Rayleigh flies the RQ-7B Shadow, and recently returned from a twelve-month deployment in Iraq, where he gained over 1500 hours of UAS experience.

Specialist Rayleigh enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 2006, and graduated from the Unmanned Aerial Systems Training Battalion in May of 2007. Specialist Rayleigh provided UAS coverage in many field training exercises at his home base of Ft. Hood, TX and rotations to the Joint Readiness Training Center in Ft. Polk, LA and the National Training Center in Ft. Irwin, CA. During a training exercise at Ft. Irwin, Specialist Rayleigh was awarded the "Hero of the Battle" commendation. His ingenuity and quick thinking in overcoming a communications problem enabled UAS coverage to commence and greatly influenced the success of the exercise.

Specialist Rayleigh deployed to Iraq with the 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in June 2008 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Specialist Rayleigh gained valuable experience in air vehicle and payload operation, as well as crew support and maintenance, earning him the Army Achievement Medal.

In his free time, Specialist Rayleigh is also a private pilot, and offers a unique perspective in the study of human factors of aviation.