Jeff “Odie” Espenship

FOUNDER, SPEAKER, AND AUTHOR, TARGET LEADERSHIP

Former USAF A-10 Fighter Pilot | International Airline Captain

Odie in the cockpit of the A-10 “Warthog”

> Everyone is a leader, and the shadow you cast is bigger than you think.

Jeff “Odie” Espenship began flying at 14, soloed at 16, and earned his private pilot license at 17, the youngest age the FAA allows. He attended the University of Georgia on a full Air Force ROTC academic scholarship and earned a slot in USAF pilot training. After earning his bachelor’s degree in political science, he trained at Vance AFB in Enid, Oklahoma. There he won the Commander’s Trophy as the overall top graduate and the T-38 Talon “Hard Charger Award” for dedication to excellence.

Jeff went on to fly the legendary A-10 Thunderbolt II, the “Warthog,” with the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Eielson AFB in Fairbanks, Alaska. He became one of the youngest 4-ship flight leaders in his squadron and was combat search and rescue qualified, winning numerous Top Gun awards for air-to-ground bombing and gunnery. His outgoing personality earned him the callsign “Odie,” after Garfield’s lovable sidekick.

After six years in the Air Force, Odie began his airline career in 1992. Today he is an international captain for a major airline based in Atlanta, Georgia, flying the Airbus A350. He also flew a 1943 WWII vintage T-6 “Texan” on the airshow circuit.

In 2005, a tragic accident in that aircraft took the life of his older brother. That loss sparked the creation of Target Leadership, a company dedicated to inspiring personal leadership and impeccable safety in the workplace. Over the past two decades, Odie has delivered keynotes to more than 200 companies and organizations, from ExxonMobil, Chevron, and PG&E to NASA, Merck, and the National Safety Council. For more than 20 consecutive years, INPO has chosen him to speak to every Next Level Leadership class. He is also the author of *Target Leadership*, and his message is simple: everyone is a leader, and the shadow you cast is bigger than you think.