

Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

General Stéphane Abrial



French Air Force

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Gen. Stéphane Abrial received appointment by the North Atlantic Council as Supreme Allied Commander Transformation on 29 July 2009. He is the first European to be appointed permanently as head of a NATO strategic command.

Born in 1954 in the South-Western French department of Gers, he began his military service in 1973. After an exchange program in US Air Force Academy, Gen. Abrial graduated from the French Air Force Academy in 1975. He completed his pilot training in 1976.

Gen. Abrial has extensive experience both as a fighter pilot and an operational commander. He has a wideranging background that includes operations in coalition environments, at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

He served in a unit of the German Luftwaffe from 1981 to 1984 and with a unit of the Greek Air Force in 1988. In 1990 and 1991, he took part in the liberation of Kuwait as commander of the French Air Force's 5th Fighter Wing during Operation Desert Storm. From 1996 to 1999, he served at the NATO International Military Staff in Brussels.

He is a graduate of the U.S. Air War College, Montgomery, Alabama, in 1992, and of the French Institute for Advanced Studies in National Defense (IHEDN) in Paris.

He acquired broad experience in political-military matters through several appointments to the private offices of the French Prime Minister and President, and went on to serve as head of French air defense and air operations, and finally as Air Force Chief of Staff from 2006 to 2009.

He has, among other distinctions, been elevated to the rank of Grand Officer in the French Legion of Honor, and Commander of US Legion of Merit, and was awarded the German Verdienstkreuz der Bundeswehr (silver).

Gen. Stéphane Abrial and his wife Michaela have two teen-aged children.