



# Christopher C. O'Donnell

## Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition

Chris O'Donnell currently serves as the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition (PDASD(A)). In this position, he advises the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition (ASD(A)) on matters relating to the Department of Defense Acquisition System while advancing innovative, data-driven approaches across the acquisition enterprise.

Mr. O'Donnell was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in August 2015. He has been involved in all phases of Department of Defense acquisition, sustainment, research and engineering since joining the defense acquisition workforce in 1984. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Platform and Weapon Portfolio Management (PWPM), he is also responsible for managing and analyzing major platform and weapons capability portfolios across the Department. He served as the Executive Director of the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell (JRAC) until March 2019. He was the Staff Specialist for the Joint Ground Robotics Enterprise prior to coming to the JRAC. He started in the Pentagon as a Staff Specialist in the JRAC providing rapid responses to warfighter needs and assisting in providing equipment to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. He has a Mechanical Engineering BS from Clarkson University.



As the Executive Director of the JRAC, he oversaw the conduct of all Joint Urgent Operational Needs and Joint Emergent Operational Needs for the Department of Defense. This work included multi-billion dollar efforts to Counter-small Unmanned Aircraft Systems, protecting helicopters and small fixed aircraft from modern anti-aircraft threats, and integrating the THAAD and Patriot systems. He was also the Executive Secretary for the Warfighter Senior Integration Group meetings support operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Prior to coming to the Pentagon, he was the Head of the Acquisition and Technology Department, at the Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division. He led a group of scientists, engineers and technicians that develop, test, acquire and maintain equipment for the over 5,000 Joint Service Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technicians. His efforts focused on detection, access, identification and neutralization of conventional ordnance, improvised explosive devices and underwater ordnance.

He was a leader in establishing the Joint Counter RCIED Electronic Warfare Program and started the Counter Terrorism Technology Task Force red team and evaluation efforts at the Joint Experimental Research Complex at Yuma Proving Grounds. Mr. O'Donnell was the founding director of the Joint Unexploded Ordnance Coordination Office. Mr. O'Donnell started at the NAVEODTECHDIV as the Applied Research Manager overseeing the S&T portfolio supporting the EOD community. He started his civil service career at the Naval Ordnance Station, Indian Head as a rocket motor design engineer and mine countermeasures project manager.

He has received the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medals for Exceptional and Meritorious Civilian Service, two Navy Superior Civilian Service Awards, a David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award, a Secretary of Defense Award for Excellence and a Naval Sea Systems Command Collaboration Award. He is married to Amy, the Deputy Technical Director at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head. Their three children are Alan, an Electrical Engineer; Calaa, an Architect; and Caitie, an Electrical Engineering student at Clemson.