

Mr. James F. Geurts is a natural born leader. His leadership philosophy is based on the belief that a leader's qualities are infectious and an organization will rapidly take on the manner of its leader. As such, he leads from the front, placing the highest premium on leadership—both on himself and with those in his organization—and has achieved significant results in his 20-plus year career in government. His acute intellectual and cognitive skills enable him to make effective decisions and solve complex military, technical, strategic, and national security issues; develop and foster partnerships, both internal and external to his organization, headquarters, service, and country; and inspire and motivate teams and organizations throughout his career to support his vision and strategies.

After serving his country in the U.S. Air Force, Mr. Geurts transitioned into a civilian role and currently serves as the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Deputy Director to the Acquisition Executive, where he supports the mission to rapidly develop, field, and sustain the equipment and programs the U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) need to get their job done. In doing so, Mr. Geurts exemplifies USSOCOM leadership competencies and holds the SOF core values of integrity, courage, creativity, and competence in high regard as demonstrated in his approach to meeting the mission each and every day.

As Deputy Director to the Acquisition Executive, Mr. Geurts is responsible for equipping all SOF personnel (e.g., U.S. Navy SEALs, Army Green Berets, AFSOC Air Commandos, and Marine Special Operations Forces). His skills and leadership ability to understand the USSOCOM operational end-state as it relates to national security goals and the strategic needs of America's most elite fighting forces, operating all around the globe, has been unequalled in USSOCOM's 24-year history. With a staff of just under 600 personnel, he provided guidance and direction to equip 58,000-plus members of USSOCOM (20% of which are deployed to more than 120 countries around the globe). Mr. Geurts adeptly provided leadership to ensure execution of more than 350 acquisition programs, 150 combat evaluations, numerous urgent acquisition programs addressing Combat Mission Needs, and several multi-billion dollar service contracts with an annual budget of over \$5 billion. In 2010 alone, his team delivered 31 aircraft; 108 tactical vehicles; 1,878 weapons systems; 9.7 million munitions; 7,645 Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence systems; 623 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) kits; and eight Mobile Tech/Repair Complexes to SOF units engaged in combat operations world-wide.

Mr. Geurts was hand-picked by the USSOCOM Acquisition Executive in 2010 to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan to identify and institutionalize the means of achieving streamlined, cost-effective solutions to accelerate end-to-end delivery and sustainment of equipment to the Force. This effects-based approach to planning and conducting operations enabled USSOCOM to exceed its already legendary ability to rapidly deliver capability to the Warfighter and continue to be the benchmark Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition teams strive to meet. The plan included four lines of operation, which has enabled USSOCOM's Acquisition Center to achieve all its organizational goals while simultaneously reducing manpower by approximately 20 percent.

Mr. Geurts demonstrated sound management principles, techniques, and methods to obtain, allocate, and manage assets led to his personal selection by the USSOCOM Commander to lead the SOCOM Red Team in 2011. This team was formed to independently review the entire Command to identify roles, missions, and resources that were not aligned and/or could be executed more efficiently. Under his leadership, Mr. Geurts' team recommendations were outbriefed to the USSOCOM Commander and were the primary basis for USSOCOM's response to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) on

USSOCOM efficiencies. The recommendations were accepted by the SECDEF and have enabled USSOCOM to reinvest nearly \$2 billion in new and emerging critical needs - funds that may have otherwise been redirected to other services or agencies failing a justifiable rationale.

Prior to serving as Deputy Director, Mr. Geurts was instrumental in executing USSOCOM's #1 urgent acquisition program as Commander of the Joint Acquisition Task Force (JATF) – Project Dragon, to meet the SECDEF and USSOCOM Commander's tasking to field a SOF C-130 aircraft for armed overwatch and mobility for SOF teams in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As Commander of the JATF, Mr. Geurts' formulation of the JATF concept - integrating concepts of the SOF Task Force structure - enabled unprecedented responsiveness to meet the unique challenges of USSOCOM acquisition. Mr. Geurts pioneered the JATF business model, composed of diverse and distributed Combat Acquisition Detachments (CADs) across the country, who, under his direction, planned and conducted operations requiring independence from traditional command and control arrangements to provide equipment and services to the mission integration initiative.

Communication and collaboration among the CADs was a critical consideration; Mr Geurts' leadership and direction specifically encouraged the CAD to actively engage with each other in order to achieve common objectives. This dynamic created a collaborative environment between autonomous tactical elements that enhanced the speed of project implementation. To alleviate the burdens of communication and collaboration across a widely distributed and diverse team, Mr. Geurts leveraged new tools, technologies, and processes to improve organizational effectiveness by developing a SharePoint portal which contained mission critical areas of program management, finance, requirements, hardware/software systems engineering, training, logistics, testing, and certification.

Ultimately, his team delivered two combat configured aircraft in April 2010—five months ahead of an already aggressive schedule. These aircraft have already been deployed while the team continues to deliver additional aircraft well in advance of the SECDEF goal of 8 aircraft in 18 months. These aircraft, delivered at 10% of the cost of legacy AC-130s, are making daily contributions on the battlefield. Mr. Geurts' innovative and maverick solution to accomplishing the mission by thinking outside established constraints and expectations earned some of the most prestigious awards in the acquisition field: William J. Perry Award for significant contribution to precision weaponry, 2010; Air Force Transformation Acquisition Team of the Year, 2009; David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award, 2008; and the Global War on Terrorism Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration Program Transition Team of the Year Award, 2008. Additionally, Mr. Geurts was recognized with the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, 2009, and a USSOCOM Special Act Award, 2009.

Mr. Geurts has also demonstrated exemplary leadership skills as the Program Executive Officer for Fixed Wing (PEO-FW), a position he held as a U.S. Air Force Colonel prior to retiring from the military. Mr. Geurts successfully led the team responsible for acquiring and supporting USSOCOM's fixed wing manned and unmanned programs, with a SOF budget of over \$6 billion and associated service budget of over \$13 billion. During his three-year tenure as the PEO, the organization achieved unparalleled success, fielding complete weapon systems in months versus years, including delivering the DoD's premiere ISR system in less than 10 months. Based on his outstanding accomplishments as the PEO-FW, Mr. Geurts was handpicked by the USSOCOM Commander to be the HQ USSOCOM representative on the SECDEF ISR Task Force. Mr. Geurts was personally recognized by the SECDEF for contributions, including developing and gaining approval for the Air Force Liberty ISR Program, the single largest contribution for enhanced ISR with direct impacts on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Geurts' performance as the Commander of the 308th Armament Systems Group further demonstrates his proven ability to lead people, especially in a crisis situation. In this position, he served as the System Program Director for two ACAT-1D acquisition programs, as well as several foreign military sales programs. He was unexpectedly moved to this position from another command due to the failure of the program in the operational testing phase and subsequent unplanned transfer of his predecessor. The organization was under tremendous pressure to get this nationally important program back on track. Mr. Geurts demonstrated exceptional leadership in this crisis with his situational awareness and ability to analyze the challenges and circumstances unique to the environment. He responded quickly and efficiently to the emerging situation and led the strategy development to address the programmatic issues, as well as restore the confidence of the organization, all in the midst of significant pressure from external stakeholders. He rapidly built a coalition of team leaders and began an accelerated, but disciplined, assessment of the strategic and tactical issues. Mr. Geurts quickly assessed the team and with diplomacy and a clear perception of the organizational issues, identified the team needed corrective action to prioritize the critical first steps to getting the program back on track. His leadership and risk management skills enabled him to lead the team through deliberate, calculated actions that, in the end, led the program back to flight testing and completed operational testing ahead of their challenging recovery schedule. For his outstanding leadership efforts and accomplishments, Mr. Geurts was recognized with the Air Force Outstanding Military System Program Manager of the Year, 2005, and Legion of Merit Medal, 2006.

Mr. Geurts faced different challenges leading the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Mission Systems Integrated Product Team, in which he was responsible for the \$6.5 billion effort to develop, test, and field all JSF avionics and mission planning systems. Mr. Geurts' team consisted of 45 joint service and foreign government personnel, with a supporting industry team in the thousands. The scope of the effort, which included three different aircraft variants, three U.S. Services, and nine coalition customers; 4 million lines of software code; and the world's most advanced sensing equipment was enormous to say the least. Just as daunting was the challenge of leading a team based on different continents, states, and national/Service cultures. There was only one 2-hour period per day when the entire team was at work at the same time, and less than 25% of the team was physically collocated at Mr. Geurts' site. To overcome these challenges, he developed collaboration tools and processes to create synergies to facilitate the close ties a collocated team builds naturally. His interpersonal and communication skills were extraordinary to lead this team in an international, interagency, and a joint force environment. The team responded well to his approach and became the best performing team in the JSF program. For his efforts, Mr. Geurts was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, 2004, and the Joint Service Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, 2001. Mr. Geurts also received recognition for his dynamic approach with a published Defense AT&L article titled, "The Special Challenges of Leading Geographically Dispersed Teams" (May/Jun 2006).

Mr. Geurts' focus on leadership as the means to achieve results has enabled his teams and organizations to accomplish more than what are normally thought possible. His leadership approach has been successful because he ensures his team shares a common vision for success. Mr. Geurts creates the conditions for success by empowering team members; holding himself and each team member accountable for their responsibilities; and transparently and objectively rewarding team members for their contributions. Mr. Geurts has earned the respect of his managers, peers, and subordinates in his ability to lead others while honorably serving his country, both in the military and as a government civilian. Mr. Geurts' exceptional leadership capabilities make him an ideal recipient of the Roger W. Jones Award.