



## James “Hondo” Geurts

The Honorable James “Hondo” Geurts has nearly four decades of leadership experience in the national security sector. Widely recognized for rapidly fielding emerging technologies, scaling innovative solutions, inspiring teams, and developing diverse talent, he is a proven leader in complex and high-pressure environments.

Since retiring from government service in 2021, Hondo has focused on strengthening the Nation’s defense industrial base. He has served on several commissions and study groups, co-hosts the Building the Base podcast, and mentors public and private sector teams on scaling, agility, innovation, teamwork, talent development, and servant leadership.

He has served on the Army Science Board, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency Advisory Board, and several innovative national security firms. He is also a long-time trustee for the WWII veteran SS American Victory Ship and Maritime Museum, and supports various non-profit, volunteer, and academic organizations.

Before retiring from public service, Secretary Geurts performed the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy, the Department’s second-highest civilian leader, overseeing global business operations for the 1-million-person, \$200 billion Navy and Marine Corps team. From 2017 to 2021, following Presidential appointment and unanimous Senate confirmation, he served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition. In that role, he managed a \$150 billion annual budget and ensured the effective procurement and sustainment of platforms, systems, and technologies to enhance the readiness of Sailors and Marines worldwide.

Prior to joining the Navy, Hondo served for over a decade at U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), including as its Acquisition Executive and in other senior leadership positions during its most operationally demanding years. He began his career as an Air Force officer, holding engineering and program management roles in complex weapons system programs, and retired as a Colonel after 22 years of uniformed service.

Hondo is the founder of SOFWERX, NavalX, and the Ghost Mentor Program—initiatives that have since been emulated across the Department of Defense and other federal agencies as models for driving innovation in large organizations.

His contributions have been recognized with numerous honors, including the Navy Distinguished Public Service Medal (twice), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Distinguished Civilian Service Award, Defense Superior Service Medal, Presidential Rank Award, USSOCOM Medal and Colors, William Perry Award, Rylander Award, and the Federal Times Vanguard Award for Executive of the Year. He is also an Honorary U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer.

