



Jessica L. (Garfola) Wright

Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness



Secretary Jessica L. (Garfola) Wright was selected to serve as Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on January 1, 2013. Previously, she was confirmed as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs on May 24, 2012.

She is the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense on recruitment, career development, pay and benefits for 1.4 million active duty military personnel, 1.1 million Guard and Reserve personnel, 680,000 DoD civilians, and is responsible for overseeing the overall state of military readiness.

Mrs. Wright retired as a Major General in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Her distinguished 35 year career of military service culminated in her final assignment as Adjutant General of Pennsylvania and commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard. In this State of Pennsylvania Cabinet-level position, she was responsible for command, control and supervision of all Air and Army National Guard units allocated to the state of Pennsylvania, six state-owned veterans' homes, and programs for Pennsylvania's one million veterans. Prior to this assignment, she also served as the deputy adjutant general for the Army.

Mrs. Wright began her military career as an enlistee in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 1975, after graduating from Alderson Broaddus College with a bachelor's degree in social work. She also holds a master's degree in management from Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri.

She attended the Women's Army Corps Officer Orientation/Officer Candidate School at Fort McClellan, Alabama. She attended the Officers Rotary Wing Aviator Course at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and became the first female Army aviator in the Army National Guard. Mrs. Wright is a graduate of the CH-47 Aviator Qualification Course, CH-54 Aviator Qualification Course; and a graduate of the Army War College Military Fellowship at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC.

In 1986, Mrs. Wright was assigned as assistant professor of military science at Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, Georgia. In 1989, she was reassigned to Headquarters, National Guard Bureau, Washington, DC, where she served as a personnel staff officer, executive officer and chief of the budget and services branch, chief of the tours management office, Army National Guard personnel directorate, and chief of the personnel service division, Army National Guard personnel directorate.

Mrs. Wright commanded the 28th Aviation Brigade, 28th Infantry Division at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, from June 1997 to November 1998. She was the first female maneuver brigade commander in the Army. Prior to her assuming the deputy adjutant general for Army, Mrs. Wright served as the state Army aviation officer.

Her awards and decorations include the Distinguished Public Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, and Senior Army Aviator badge. Other awards include Chapel of the Four Chaplains Gold Award, ATHENA Award, the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters Gold Medal Award, the Philadelphia Union League's Distinguished Soldier Award, and the Founders Day Award from Lebanon Valley College.

She is married to retired Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wright. They have one son, Mike, who was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in May 2012.

