

Mark E. Mitchell is a former senior executive in DOD who served most recently as the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)). He is also highly decorated U.S. Army infantry and Special Forces combat veteran who served 28 years on active duty. He participated in multiple combat tours in the First Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq. In recognition of his actions during the Battle of Qala-I Jangi in November 2001, he received the Distinguished Service Cross, our Nation's second-highest decoration for valor in combat. He served four tours in the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), commanding at every level from detachment to group. In addition to commanding 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Colonel Mitchell simultaneously commanded a nationwide, Joint Special Operations Task Force in Iraq during 2010-2011. After relinquishing command of 5th SFG(A), Colonel Mitchell served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as the Senior Military Assistant to ASD(SO/LIC). His final assignment in uniform was on the National Security Council as a Director for Counterterrorism. In this assignment he was intimately involved in significant hostage cases and recovery efforts in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. He was instrumental in establishing the framework for the landmark Presidential Policy Review of Hostage Policy, which resulted in significant changes in organization and policy for hostage recovery. Following his retirement from active duty, Mitchell worked as a business executive in the private sector. Mitchell holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering from Marquette University and a Master of Science degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School. He also served as a National Security Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and non-resident fellow at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. He has lectured at Harvard Business School, the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Joint Special Operations University, the U.S. Army War College, the National Defense University, and the United States Military Academy. He is also a board member and advisor to several non-profit organizations dedicated to serving veterans and their families, including Warriors Ethos, Gold Star Teen Adventures, the Global SOF Foundation, and Special Operations Survivors. He currently serves as a strategic advisor for Navigators Global Defense, Intelligence, Security and Space practice. He is married to the former Mary Ann Kilton of Montgomery, Alabama and they have two college-age daughters, Caroline (USMA '21) and Margaret (College of William & Mary/University of St. Andrews).