
David Keith Sanders



Director Integrated Systems Evaluation, Experimentation & Test Department Naval Air Systems Command

In May 2015, Keith Sanders was appointed to the Director, Integrated Systems Evaluation, Experimentation and Test Department. He is responsible for the efforts of over 3,000 flight test engineers, military test pilots and project officers, aircraft maintainers, acquisition professionals, and associated contractor support personnel performing flight test and experimentation for the Naval Aviation Enterprise and other customers. Mr. Sanders' responsibilities include the operation of two test air wings with approximately 200 aircraft and the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School. He was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in February 2003 and has 45 years of civilian service with the Navy.

From January 2010 to May 2015, Mr. Sanders served as Assistant Commander for Acquisition where he was responsible for a broad portfolio of programs and functional competencies. He led six program offices and two advanced development offices executing more than 90 ACAT II-IV programs and Abbreviated Acquisition Programs assigned to Commander, NAVAIR; i.e., aircrew systems, aviation training systems, range instrumentation, air combat electronics, aviation support equipment, Global Positioning Systems integration, support for 18 types of proven aircraft and recapitalization of carrier delivery aircraft. His responsibilities for functional competencies included aviation/ship integration, international programs, environmental management, acquisition knowledge management and program management workforce development. Mr. Sanders also served as Navy's lead for Program Management.

From October 2007 to January 2010, Mr. Sanders was detailed to the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics where he served as the Deputy Director for Air Warfare. He was the senior official responsible for management oversight of the acquisition programs for tactical fixed-wing aircraft, including their precision weapons and electronic warfare systems. Included were 30 of the Department's largest Major Defense Acquisition Programs such as Joint Strike Fighter, Next Generation Bomber, F-22, B-2, EA-18G, C-130, Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, Special Forces Gunship, Tomahawk, Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile, Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures, and Advanced Tactical Infrared Countermeasures.

From February 2003 to September 2007, Mr. Sanders served in his permanent Navy position as Deputy Program Executive Officer for Strike Weapons. As Deputy, he supported the Program Executive Officer in managing the acquisition and life cycle support of major strike weapons programs including Tomahawk Cruise Missile with its Weapons Control and Mission Planning Systems, Joint Standoff Weapon, Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile, High speed Anti-Radiation Missile, Standoff Land Attack Missile-Extended Response and Harpoon Missile System.

In February 1996, he was selected as the Deputy Program Manager for Conventional Strike Weapons where he was responsible for development, procurement and life cycle management of precision guided weapons and air-launched munitions like Joint Standoff Weapon, Joint Direct Attack Munition, Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile, Laser Guided Bombs and aircraft ejection systems.

In February 1989, Mr. Sanders was recruited into the Conventional Strike Weapons Program Office to establish a Major Defense Acquisition Program developing a new family of bombs. After Desert Storm, he helped combine Navy's bomb improvement program with a similar Air Force effort and led the Navy through the initiation of the Joint Direct Attack Munition program. After assuming the duties of Deputy for Special Programs, he led government-industry teams that streamlined Navy acquisition programs for consistency with commercial aerospace industry practices.

In October 1983, he moved to Naval Air Systems Command's Air Armament Division as the Senior Systems Engineer responsible for technical management of all 100 air-to-surface weapons and 800 emergency escape devices used on naval aircraft. For one of his efforts during that period, developing countermeasures equipment and survivability tactics for F/A-18 Aircraft, he was honored with the Special Commendation of the Canadian Forces award.

Mr. Sanders began his career with the Navy in 1971 after a brief tour with Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in Florida. From 1971 to 1983, he held several positions at the Naval Weapons Support Center, Crane, Indiana, with duties ranging from aerospace engineering to the management of a branch of project managers developing countermeasures systems for aircraft and submarines.

Mr. Sanders holds a bachelor's of science degree in aeronautical engineering from Purdue University and a master's of business administration degree from George Mason University. He is a recipient of the Secretary of Defense Exceptional Civilian Service Award in 2009 and 2010, the Navy Superior Civilian Service Award in 2003 and Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award in 1999. He and his teams have received the Defense Department's William J. Perry Award in 2006, the National Daedalian Weapons System Award in 1999 and 2004, and the Department of Defense's David Packard Award in 2001 and 2005.