
Melissa L Kirkendall



Executive Director Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants

Ms. Melissa Kirkendall was selected as a Department of Navy (DON) Senior Executive in April 2017. Currently, as the Executive Director, Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC), Ms. Kirkendall directs the acquisition and sustainment of the Navy's expanding family of unmanned maritime systems, mine warfare systems, and small surface combatants.

Previously, Ms. Kirkendall served as the Director for Production, Deployment and Fleet Readiness in Program Executive Office for Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS). She facilitated the execution of effective systems and cyber engineering processes for the Surface Navy's combat systems, weapons, radars and related international and foreign military sales programs.

Ms. Kirkendall has enjoyed a 30 year career with the Navy in a variety of engineering and acquisition positions. She began her civil service career in 1989, working as an Electronics Engineer for the Naval Sea Systems Command. Following a number of challenging assignments at NAVSEA, she served as the Deputy Program Manager for the Ship Self Defense System, the Deputy Major Program Manager for the Surface Ship Weapons Directorate, and the Deputy Major Program Manager for the Integrated Combat Systems Directorate. She also served as the Director for Surface Warfare Above Water Sensors, Electronic Warfare, and Decoys, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Ships where she oversaw the acquisition of several ACAT I and ACAT II programs, to include the Air and Missile Defense Radar and the Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program.

In 2012, Ms. Kirkendall was selected as the Mine Warfare Program Manager in PEO Littoral Combat Ships. She was responsible for the development, acquisition, test, and fleet support of over 50 mine countermeasures systems, as well as the Nation's offensive mining capability.

Ms. Kirkendall graduated from George Mason University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electronics and Computer Engineering. She is certified at level III in the DAWIA Program Management and System Planning, Research, Development, and Engineering career fields. She has been a member of the Acquisition Professional Community since 1997. Her awards include the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, along with numerous PEO IWS and PEO LCS Excellence awards.