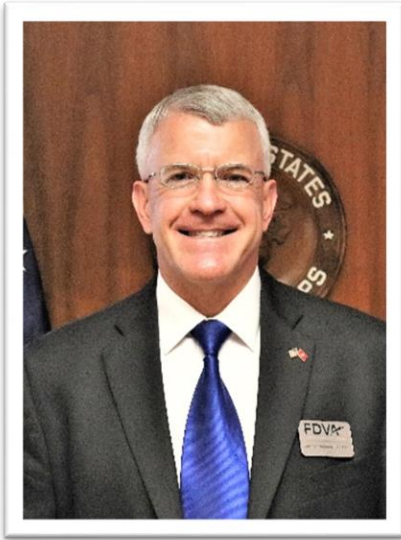


James S. “Hammer” Hartsell



Retired Marine Corps Major General James S. “Hammer” Hartsell was appointed Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs by Gov. Ron DeSantis and unanimously approved by Florida’s three Cabinet Officers during the May 4, 2021 Cabinet Meeting.

General Hartsell served in the United States Marine Corps with honor for 37 years of active and reserve duty, beginning as an enlisted Marine in 1981 and completing a distinguished and highly decorated military career as a Major General.

As a Lieutenant Colonel commanding 4th Reconnaissance Battalion in 2001-2003, he was mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 and awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. In 2004, he was mobilized again and deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 as 1st Marine Division Senior Liaison to the Marine Expeditionary Force and awarded the Bronze Star and Combat Action Ribbon. As a Colonel he was mobilized once again and deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom as Senior Liaison to NATO Regional Command South and subsequently awarded the Legion of Merit and Combat Action Ribbon.

As a General Officer he served as Commanding General of 4th Marine Division, comprised of 18,000 Sailors and Marines in 37 states and during his command deployed units and teams to five Continents in support of the Global War on Terror. General Hartsell then served as U.S. Pacific Command Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, where he was mobilized as J5 Strategy & Policy Director, and as Chief of Staff, of the 360,000 participant United States Pacific Command, and awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal.

While serving as Mobilization Assistant to the Commander U.S. Pacific Command, he concurrently served in a senior Department of Defense role as Director of the Department of Defense Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies working under authority and direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and personally engaged senior level U.S. and Foreign Military and Civilian government delegations throughout the Indo-Pacific theater of operations.

Concurrent with his Reserve military career, General Hartsell completed a successful 22-year civilian career in the Healthcare Industry where he provided leadership in Marketing, Product Management, U.S. and Global Business Development, and Hospital Administration.

A very accomplished Marksman throughout his entire career, he earned his nickname “Hammer” as a young Captain while shooting on the Marine Corps Pistol Team. General Hartsell was the first Marine Distinguished Shooter to achieve General Officer rank in more than 60 years.

Upon retirement from the Marine Corps in 2018, he moved back to his home state of Florida and joined the Pasco Sheriff’s Office where he launched the Future Operations Division. In 2019, he was called to join the leadership team of a 1,500-member constitutionally chartered State Veterans’ Affairs department, where he continues to serve with passion and purpose on behalf of Florida's 1.5 Million Veterans.

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