

James Q. Roberts
Colonel, USA (Retired)
Senior Executive, OSD (Retired)

Subject Matter Expert
Counterterrorism, Special Operations, Irregular Warfare

James Q. Roberts retired from federal service in July of 2016, after 48 years - 24 as an Army Officer and 24 as a career Senior Executive. In his last tour he served as the Secretary of Defense Chair at the Eisenhower School, National Defense University, where he taught Strategic Leadership. Before that while a civilian, he worked (mostly in the Pentagon) for the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations, Combating Terrorism, and European Issues.

Mr. Roberts was born in Fresno, California. While growing up he traveled extensively in the U.S. and overseas. He lived in Iran as a child, attended high school at the Lycée Jaccard in Lausanne, Switzerland and graduated with a B.A. from the University of South Carolina in 1968. He holds an M.A. from Middlebury College, and a Certificat d'Études Politiques from l'Institut des Sciences Politiques in Paris.

In 1968 he began his government career as an U.S. Army Private. Commissioned in 1969 as an Intelligence Officer, he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1970, and served in intelligence, light infantry, special operations, and foreign area officer positions. Military overseas tours included Vietnam and Cambodia as an intelligence officer; Paris, France as a graduate student; and Iran - as the Army's last Foreign Area Officer there in 1979. He commanded the 7th Military Intelligence Company at Fort Ord, CA, and the 8th Psychological Operations Battalion (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, NC.

Selected for promotion to Colonel in 1989, he joined the new, Congressionally-mandated Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. In 1992 he retired from the Army to accept an appointment in the Senior Executive Service in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

As a Senior Executive he worked principally in the Special Operations and Combating Terrorism fields. Other positions included: Director, NATO Policy, 1999-2000; Defense Policy Advisor, U.S. Mission to the European Union, 2000-2003; U.S. Deputy Director, George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, 2006-2009; and as the Secretary of Defense Chair at the Eisenhower School, 2013-2016.

Mr. Roberts and his wife Beth Wald live on the Potomac River in Virginia's scenic Northern Neck. They also have a home in Palm Coast, Florida. Beth, who is retired as well, served as a senior intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency. She holds a B.A. from American University's School of International Service, an MSSI from NIU, and an M.A. from the U.S. Army War College. They have three children, two grandchildren, one rescue dog - a young rambunctious mixed breed terrier from West Virginia, and a cute rescue calico cat named Lottie, as she found Jim and Beth in a parking lot.