



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

Jose (Joe) D. Riojas

Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security & Preparedness

Brigadier General, U.S. Army (Ret) Joe Riojas became Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP) for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on May 19, 2009.

As Assistant Secretary for OSP, Mr. Riojas directs a number of Department level programs. These programs include: Law Enforcement, Physical Security, Personal Security, Personnel Security, Identity Management, Preparedness, Continuity of Government, Continuity of Operations, and Emergency Management. His overall responsibilities are to ensure that VA's workforce - and those they serve - enjoy a safe and secure environment, and that the Department can continue to perform its missions regardless of natural or manmade conditions.



Prior to assuming his current role, Riojas served at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he was Vice-President for Strategic Initiatives. He concurrently served as the Executive Director of the Department of Homeland Security's Center of Excellence for Border Security and Immigration; the Executive Director of the Center for Defense Systems Research; and on Governor Rick Perry's Advisory Committee for the Texas Emerging Technology Fund.

Secretary Riojas' career began upon his 1976 graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery.

His military service of more than 30 years included numerous and significant operational assignments throughout the world, including: Korea, Germany, and combat operations in Southwest Asia (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm). While the majority of his career was spent in command of operational units at the platoon through Task Force levels, he also served as Political Military Affairs Officer with the U.S. Department of State, as Project Manager of the Extending the Littoral Battlespace, Advanced Concepts Technology Demonstration. Riojas served in five different Army Divisions: the 2nd Infantry, 7th Infantry (Light), 2nd Armored, 25th Infantry (Light), and the 3rd Infantry (Mechanized).

While at the Pentagon from 2000-2003, Riojas served as Chief of Army Requirements and was the Army's representative at the Joint Requirements Oversight Panel, as part of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. During his last two plus years in the Pentagon, he served as Executive Officer to the Chief of Staff of the Army. He then went on to serve as the Assistant Division Commander for the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Stewart, Ga.

From 2004-2006, Riojas commanded Joint Task Force North (JTF-N), headquartered at Fort Bliss, Texas. Serving in that role, his geographical area of responsibility included Canada, Mexico, and the 48 contiguous states. The command was comprised of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps personnel, as well as representatives from the interagency community. JTF-N's mission was to provide Department of Defense resources throughout the continental United States in support of Law Enforcement agencies at the

federal, state, and local levels, allowing them to more effectively interdict Transnational Criminal Organizations and an array of threats.

Riojas has been awarded numerous military decorations to include: The Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit (3 awards), Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Army Meritorious Service Medal (6 awards), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Southwest Asia Medal with bronze service star, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Army Staff Identification Badge.

He and his wife, Susan, are the proud parents of a son and a daughter. Joshua is a graduate student at the Harvard Business School after having served seven years as an Army Officer. Christina is a Surgical Resident at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Fort Gordon, Ga.