

**Dr. Mark T. Esper**  
**Acting Secretary of Defense**  
**June 24, 2019 – Present**

Dr. Mark T. Esper was born on April 26, 1964, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He is a 1986 graduate of the United States Military Academy and received his commission in the Infantry. Upon completion of Ranger and Pathfinder training, he served in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and participated in the 1990-91 Gulf War with the “Screaming Eagles.” He later commanded a Rifle Company in the 3-325 Airborne Battalion Combat Team in Vicenza, Italy. He retired from the U. S. Army in 2007 after spending 10 years on active duty and 11 years in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

After leaving active duty, he served as Chief of Staff at The Heritage Foundation think tank, followed by service as legislative director and senior policy advisor to former Senator Chuck Hagel. He was a senior professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations and Senate Government Affairs committees, policy director for the House Armed Services Committee, and national security advisor for former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. During the President George W. Bush administration, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Negotiations Policy at the Pentagon.

From 2006-2007, Dr. Esper was the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of Defense and International Affairs at Aerospace Industries Association. He was the national policy director to Senator Fred Thompson for his 2008 presidential campaign, and was a Senate-appointed commissioner on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Dr. Esper later served concurrently as the Executive Vice President for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Global Intellectual Property Center and as Vice President for Europe and Eurasian Affairs from 2008-2010. Before being nominated as the Secretary of the Army in 2017, Dr. Esper was the Vice President for Government Relations at the Raytheon Company.

Dr. Esper is a recipient of the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. Among his many military awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Saudi Arabia, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Dr. Esper holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a doctorate in Public Policy from George Washington University. Dr. Esper and his wife, Leah, have been married for 30 years and have 3 adult children.

The Honorable Mark T. Esper was sworn in as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Secretary of the Army on November 20, 2017, and was named the Acting Secretary of Defense on June 24, 2019.