



**Kenneth D. “Merch” Merchant**  
**Maj General (USAF Retired)**  
**Senior Consultant, RWB Aerospace Professionals**

Master Uniformed and Industry Program Manager and Logistician offering years of sustained superior performance, innovation, and highly effective Life Cycle Program Management. Proven record of developing, acquiring, and sustaining specialized, high-tech aircraft, weapons, equipment, and supplies. Previously led teams ranging in size from 3 to 26K and portfolios valued at more than \$14B annually. Highly proficient communicator and technical writer known for teambuilding skills and mentoring abilities. Specific skills include:

- Program Management
- Aircraft Sustainment
- Strategic Planning & Budgeting
- Congressional Engagement
- Teambuilding
- Foreign Military Sales

**Accomplishments**

**Program Management**

Uniformed Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Weapons and Senior Materiel Leader for numerous ACAT I programs. Industry Profit and Loss leader for F-35 Global Sustainment Vice President and F-22 Vice President over seven years. Annual budgets exceeded \$2B. Brought DevSecOps and Hardware Agility to F-22 Modernization; partnered with F-22 program office on a new Agile contracting approach to enable fielding capabilities faster.

**Aircraft Sustainment**

As F-35 Sustainment VP, increased Mission Capable Rate from 54% to more than 70% while reducing industry-controlled flying hour costs by 44% and setting the program on a course to additional reductions via a multiple year Performance Based Logistics contract.

**Strategic Planning/ Budgeting**

In Director, Global Reach Programs role, developed SAF/AQ’s first 20-year planning horizon tool to assess Total Ownership Costs by mission area. Produced Business Case Analyses using investment and sustainment costs to inform strategic tradeoffs during budget build.

**Congressional Engagement**

As F-22 VP, secured Service and congressional committee support for a long-term modernization plan that fielded near term capabilities and developed future capabilities enabling the F-22 to adapt to emerging threats and maintain US Air Dominance out to the 2040 timeframe. Worked with the Air Force to ensure budget was in place.

**Teambuilding**

Revitalized 400-person Contractor Logistics Support organization at Tinker AFB responsible for 433 aircraft in 33 design series including Air Force One, E-4, KC-10 and DV airlift resources. Restored morale and esprit de corps in largely civilian workforce.

**Foreign Military Sales**

Led a 13-member nation consortium responsible for NATO AWACS to agree on a plan to modernize NATO, French and UK aircraft via a common Block 40/45 configuration. Developed plan that compressed fielding of modification for 31-jet fleet by four years.

**International Partnerships**

Built a foundation for F-35 cooperative support; ensured all partner nations and FMS customers received consistent sustainment support. Enabled global responsiveness from the entire F-35 enterprise across 21 bases and 8 ships operating globally.

## **Work History**

**Senior Consultant:** By building on his military and industry experience, provides superb support to defense contractors and both domestic and international aerospace companies in the areas of Life Cycle Management, Program Management, Strategic Planning, and Foreign Military Sales. 2021-Present

**Vice President, F-35 Global Sustainment:** P&L role. Responsible for ensuring F-35 mission readiness for more than 600 F-35 fighters operating around the world. Coordinated with DoD, Service and National Reps, Base Level leadership. Oversaw the doubling of the F-35 fleet, expanding the global fleet from 370 at 16 bases to 720 aircraft at 21 bases and aboard 8 ships. Co-authored a white paper outlining an approach to adapt F-35 sustainment from inefficient annualized contracts to a multiple year, Performance Based Logistics framework and delivered it to then Defense Acquisition Executive, Ellen Lord. 2019-2021

**Vice President, F-22 Program:** P&L role. Ensured the F-22 program achieved financial, schedule and quality performance targets to support the U.S. Air Force customer and warfighters. Managed modifications and sustained operations for a fleet of 186 aircraft. 2014-2019

**Director, Global Reach Programs:** First non-flying Acquisition Officer Mission Capability Director, responsible to the Air Force Acquisition Executive for Airlift, Air Refueling, Special Operations and Trainer programs. Maintained direct contact with congressional committees and staff members, Office of Secretary of Defense and Service Headquarters. 2013-2014

**Commander, Air Armament Center and Program Executive Officer, Weapons:** Enhanced worldwide combat capability, effectiveness and readiness through joint development, test, procurement, deployment, and sustainment of air-delivered armament, navigation/guidance systems, and range control systems. 2011-2013

**Director of Logistics, Air Mobility Command:** Developed/issued policy and guidance to organize, train, and equip aircraft maintenance, transportation, supply, and logistics plans units at 14 major active installations in the US and 17 en route locations globally. Responsible for 860 aircraft, 8,200 vehicles, and 24,000 people. 2007-2011

**Previous work experience:** Planning, budgeting, developing, producing, and sustaining a variety of aircraft, munitions, and command and control systems including Air Force One, C-17, C-5, KC-135. Served as Vice Commander, Ogden Air Logistics Center, Commander, 551<sup>st</sup> Electronic Systems Wing, Director, Contractor Logistics Support Program Office, Director, PACAF Commanders Action Group and Executive to the Commander Pacific Air Forces. See link to military bio below. 1984-2007

Military biography is available at: [MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH D. MERCHANT > Air Force > Biography Display \(af.mil\)](#)

**Education:** Master of Arts, National Resource Management, National Defense University  
Master of Science, Troy State University  
Bachelor of Science, Engineering Management, Grove City College  
Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Fort Lesley J McNair  
USAF Enterprise Leader Course, University of Virginia  
LOGTECH Program for Executives in Logistics & Technology, University of North Carolina  
Executive Program Managers Course, Defense Acquisition University  
Program Managers Course, Defense Acquisition University  
AF Smart Ops for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Course, University of Tennessee

**Affiliations:** Air Force Association, Logistics Officers Association, National Defense Industrial Association, Airlift/Tanker Association

**Security Clearance:** Active Security Clearance