

CHRIS CASSIDY

ASTRO/SEAL

Captain Christopher J. Cassidy, USN (Ret.) is a decorated Navy SEAL, accomplished NASA astronaut, and national civic leader whose career spans elite military operations, pioneering space exploration, and institution-building of lasting significance.

Cassidy served 11 years in the SEAL Teams before his selection as a NASA astronaut in 2004. A combat-proven leader, he graduated as Honor Man of BUD/S Class 192 and earned two Bronze Stars—including one with Combat “V”—as well as a Presidential Unit Citation for commanding a high-profile mission along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border in the aftermath of 9/11. His military decorations also include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, and Legion of Merit, recognizing exceptional leadership at the highest levels of joint and naval service.

Over three spaceflights, Cassidy spent 377 days in orbit and completed 10 spacewalks, flying aboard both the Space Shuttle Endeavour and the Russian Soyuz. He launched for his final six-month mission in 2020 at the onset of the global pandemic. From 2015 to 2017, he served as NASA’s 14th Chief Astronaut, overseeing astronaut training, crew assignments, and operations during a period of major organizational change. Cassidy is a 1993 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and earned a master’s degree in ocean engineering from MIT in 2000. He also holds honorary doctorates from Husson University (2015) and the University of Maine at Augusta (2021).

In August 2021, Chris was selected as President and CEO of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, where he led the vision and fundraising efforts to bring to life an iconic museum and leadership institute in Arlington, Texas, as well as a monument on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Following the successful launch of the museum, Chris stepped down from his role and retired in December 2025.

Today, he is focused on inspiring others through speaking, forging meaningful partnerships, and helping shape the future of human spaceflight—while continuing to champion the stories and legacy of military veterans and spending more time with his family.



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