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Degidio takes command of the Far East District

Seoul — Col. Donald E. Degidio, Jr. assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District from Col. Blair A. Schantz during a Change of Command Ceremony on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan July 8.

Degidio is the 32nd FED Commander and takes responsibility of a diverse workforce of nearly 500 employees. He also serves as the U.S. design and construction agent for U.S. Forces Korea, serving all branches of the armed forces.

“It is truly an honor to assume the Engineer Colors and serve you,” said Degidio. “The Far East District is here to serve and remains ready and relevant in a changing environment. If you can conceive it and believe it, the Far East District can achieve it.”

Previous to his assignment to FED, Degidio served as Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation (Korea Region), Installation Management Command since 2010.

Degidio is from Providence, R. I. and received his commission as an engineer from The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, in 1987. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Military and International Studies from the U.S. Marine Corps Command and General Staff College and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

Brig. Gen. Richard L. Stevens, Commander, USACE Pacific Ocean Division, hosted the ceremony during what was his first visit to Korea as he too had just recently assumed command.

“Command is perhaps the most significant achievement of an officer’s career,” said Stevens. “It is the ultimate vote of confidence by one’s superior officers. It is a job of immense personal satisfaction and, at times, unrelenting pressure.”

Stevens welcomed Degidio as a commander and, at the same time, thanked Schantz for his unwavering commitment to FED and its mission.

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“He (Schantz) leaves behind a legacy of service, dedication, and achievement few could equal,” said Stevens. “But I can assure you he will never, never forget his pride in this organization and its people.”

Schantz has overseen billions of dollars worth of construction projects during his time as commander, but beyond that monumental task he has lead USACE’s only maneuver district through numerous contingency operations.

“The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has over 39,000 members in 45 districts around the world,” said Schantz. “But there is only one maneuver district, only one enduring district that defends freedom, day in and day out, directly in harm’s way.”

During the change of command ceremony, for the first time ever, Emergency Essential and Mission Essential personnel stood in formation beside their military counterparts.

“We are unique,” said Schantz. “We are one of the only organizations in Korea where U.S. civilians, Korean civilians, and U.S. military stand side-by-side to assist in the defense of the Korean Peninsula.”

Stevens presented Schantz with the Legion of Merit for his service as FED Commander from July 2009 to July 2011.

In closing, Schantz reminded all FED team members for one last time that “the most important project in the District is the one you’re working on.”

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PHOTOS



Brig. Gen. Richard L. Stevens (center left), Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Ocean Division, passes the Engineer Colors to Col. Donald E. Degidio, Jr. Far East District incoming Commander, during a ceremony on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan July 8. Col. Blair A. Schantz (left), outgoing Commander, and Jon Iwata, Deputy District Engineer, look on. (Photo by Patrick Bray)

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Emergency Essential and Mission Essential personnel stand in formation beside their military counterparts during a Change of Command ceremony for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan July 8. (Photo by Patrick Bray)



Brig. Gen. Richard L. Stevens (right), Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Ocean Division presents Col. Blair A. Schantz, outgoing Far East District Commander with the Legion of Merti during a Change of Command ceremony for FED on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan July 8. Schantz was presented the award for his service as FED Commander from July 2009 to July 2011. (Photo by Patrick Bray)