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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Pfenning Becomes Gulf Region North District's Fifth Commander

By LuAnne Fantasia
Gulf Region North

TIKRIT, Iraq — Colonel Michael F. Pfenning became the fifth commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region North district in a ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher July 18. Pfenning's previous command was as the 61st district engineer and commander of the St. Paul District.

"From all I've heard and seen, the professionalism, technical competence, and positive attitude of our employees remain the greatest strengths of the Gulf Region North district," Pfenning said, during the change of command ceremony.

Born in Vermont, Pfenning was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers upon graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1980, where he earned a bachelor of science and engineering. Subsequently, he earned his masters and doctorate in operations research from the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colo.

Pfenning told his new district members, "In spite of unique challenges and opportunities that project delivery in this area of Iraq presents, you continue to successfully "team" with not only the Gulf Region Division staff, but also with the Multi-National Division-North, our provincial partners, and our contractors, to deliver the highest quality projects and services on-time and within budget."



Gulf Region North district's new commander, Colonel Michael F. Pfenning, talks to a Ministry of Interior official helping to foster continued positive relationships at the site of truck bomb that was detonated in May near the MoI building in Erbil, Iraq. Pfenning became the fifth commander of GRN with quality assurance responsibility for over 1,400 reconstruction projects in the Iraq Reconstruction Program over 66,000 square miles of northern Iraq. (U.S. Army photo)

Relinquishing command of the Gulf Region North district was Colonel Frederick S. Wolf III, a native of Virginia. Wolf's next assignment is Deputy Garrison Com-

mander for Transformation at Fort Benning, Georgia.

He told members of the Gulf Region North district present for the event, "This is an incredibly important time to serve in Iraq. I'm proud of what you've accomplished, your service, your courage, and I look forward to hearing about your continued success."

The reviewing officer was Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, Baghdad.

To Wolf, Walsh said, "Derrick, you dealt with continuous escalation of terrorism in your area, and still synchronized civil and military requirements. You did it...and you brought everybody back."

To Pfenning, he said, "We stand on the shoulders of those who come before us. Today we welcome Mike Pfenning, and he comes at a challenging time because our efforts are increasingly more important to the Iraqi people."

To both, Walsh added, "Derrick, God Speed; see you next post. Mike, the command is yours."

The Gulf Region North district has project management and construction management responsibilities for reconstruction projects in the northern seven provinces, or states, in Iraq. Since Iraq's sovereignty in 2004 and to date, the Gulf Region North District has completed 1,152 of 1,477 planned projects to improve Iraq's failing infrastructure; helping the country become a self-sufficient one. At a price tag of \$2.5 billion to date, reconstruction projects include schools, health clinics and hospitals; water and sewage treatment plants and networks; electrical; oil; roads and bridges, and Iraqi security and military facilities.

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