



July 30, 2012

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## Ruch takes command of Huntsville Center

By William S. Farrow

Col. Robert Ruch took command of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville during a traditional military ceremony July 26 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville's Chan Auditorium.

The organizational colors were retrieved by Charles Ford, Huntsville Center Deputy for Programs and Technical Management, who passed it in a clockwise direction to outgoing commander Col. Nello Tortora and on to Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite, deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who passed the unit's symbol to Ruch, symbolizing the change in leadership. Ruch returned the colors to Ford who returned them to the flag stand.

After the passing of the colors, Semonite addressed the crowd and cited Ruch's career as a perfect fit for commanding Huntsville Center.

"We've looked deep and far to figure out who's best-of-the-best," Semonite said.

"Bob's had an unbelievable career in service to the regiment, and an unbelievable performance as the Philadelphia (District) commander and he did a great job at Omaha (District), and Omaha isn't just a geographic district. Omaha has national missions. Not only did they perform civil works, they performed environmental missions in 41 different states, so he's done very similar work like (Huntsville Center) does on a national basis and interacted with numerous different districts. He carries through that skill set."

Semonite said Ruch is not only a perfect fit for leading Huntsville Center's current missions, but also for guiding the Center into the future.

"He also has the ability to understand where Huntsville (Center), the Corps and the Army needs to go with energy, and as much as we care about his technical competency, he's not brought in based on his past performance, he's brought in on his demonstrated potential to take this Center where it needs to go."

Ruch said when it was time to figure out his next assignment after commanding Omaha District, he knew exactly where he wanted to go.

"I had one preference and that was to command the Huntsville Center," Ruch said. "It's always been in the back of my mind that this is a great place, and I'm thrilled. This is an absolute privilege. The mission is diverse and challenging and there's nothing else I could ask for."

Ruch closed the ceremony by letting his work force know his expectations.

"I have three standing orders. Number one: we work for the nation, so work hard every day. Number two: have fun while working hard and number three: you can't communicate enough when working a national mission like this, so over-communicate to your customers, and over-communicate with the other people in USACE and we'll do great things together."

Outgoing Huntsville Center commander, Col. Aniello "Nello" Tortora, retired from the Army after 27 years of service.

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