



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New York District

News Release

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Local Corps unit celebrates change of command

Tortora takes command of New York engineer district

NEW YORK – Colonel Aniello L. “Nello” Tortora assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, during a formal change of command ceremony Aug. 25.

Colonel Richard J. Polo Jr., who had commanded the district since June 2004, relinquished command during the event in the U.S. Custom House in Lower Manhattan. He also retired from active Army service after more than 26 years.

A native of southern Florida, Tortora was commissioned an engineer officer upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1985. He also holds master’s degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and the National Defense University at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

He has served in a variety of operational, command and staff assignments in the United States and overseas. His most recent assignment was as senior joint engineer for defense continuity and crisis management with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Security), Washington.

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His awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three awards of the Army Meritorious Service Medal, three awards of the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal and Saudi Arabia Liberation Medal.

Polo came to New York District after graduation from the National War College. A 1980 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he also earned master's degrees in civil engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., and in national security strategy from the National Defense University at Fort McNair. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He served as the district engineer at the Corps' Detroit District and as executive officer to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) before entering the National War College.

As commander of New York District, Polo led a staff of more than 650 military and civilian personnel in executing a complex and diverse program including military construction, civil works projects and international and interagency support. He was responsible for overseeing the district's ongoing project to deepen the main channels of the Port of New York and New Jersey, a vital economic engine for the region, and robust military construction programs at the U.S. Military Academy, Fort Drum, Watertown, N.Y., and McGuire Air Force Base, Burlington, N.J.

Under his command, district personnel also deployed to support recovery operations following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Global War on Terror.

His prior military service included duty as a project officer in the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office during Operation Desert Storm and engineer brigade operations officer in Bosnia as part of Task Force Eagle during Operation Joint Endeavor.

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Polo's military awards and decorations include seven awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Army Commendation Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the NATO and Humanitarian Service medals, the Parachutist Badge and the Ranger Tab. During the change of command ceremony, he received the Legion of Merit in recognition of his outstanding service to the nation. He also received letters of appreciation from the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and Reps. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J. 11), Mike Ferguson (R-N.J. 7), and William J. Pascrell, Jr. (D-N.J. 8)

New York District is responsible for the Corps' water resources development, navigation and regulatory activities in northeastern New Jersey, eastern and south-central New York State, and parts of Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The district is also responsible for design and construction at Army and Air Force installations in New Jersey, New York and Greenland, and provides support following disasters and for the Global War on Terror.

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[Click here to read Col. Tortora's biography.](#)