



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

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Wagenaar becomes New Orleans district engineer

NEW ORLEANS -- Col. Richard P. Wagenaar became the 59th district engineer of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on Tuesday, July 12, in a formal military change of command ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, division engineer, Mississippi Valley Division, and president-designee of the Mississippi River Commission, placed the Corps of Engineers flag, symbolizing command of the New Orleans District, into the hands of Wagenaar during the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Also participating were Lt. Col. Stephen E. Jeselink, the outgoing district engineer, and Gregory Breerwood, deputy district engineer for project management. Later this month, Jeselink will leave New Orleans for Fort Jackson, S.C., where he will command the 1st Battalion, 345th Engineer Regiment.

Wagenaar will be responsible for a top Corps project--restoring coastal Louisiana in partnership with the state of Louisiana. This is his second trip to Louisiana.

“My first trip to Louisiana was just over two years ago with officials to view and discuss the loss of coastal Louisiana, America’s largest and premier wetland,” Wagenaar said. “I guess that trip was a primer for me and a snapshot of things to come in my future.

“One thing that really stood out was the complexity of this enormous issue and the challenges it presents. However, for a first timer it was relatively easy to see the environmental and economic importance of this national treasure.”

Wagenaar takes command in N.O.

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The visit was made with the chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, a White House office. Wagenaar earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science and forestry at Syracuse University.

Wagenaar will be responsible for the Corps' flood control, navigation and environmental stewardship projects in 30,000 square miles of south Louisiana. The New Orleans District includes more than 2,800 miles of navigable waterways, including the Mississippi River deepwater channel from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico.

The district's projects include the Bonnet Carré Spillway, Atchafalaya Basin, 973 miles of levees and floodwalls along the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, and 320 miles of hurricane protection levees. Wagenaar will also oversee the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, a rain-flood project in Jefferson, Orleans and St. Tammany parishes. Wagenaar will also serve as chairman of a multi-agency task force conducting a comprehensive program to restore and prevent the loss of coastal wetlands in Louisiana under the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act of 1990.

BIOGRAPHY

Colonel Richard P. Wagenaar

Colonel Richard P. Wagenaar, assumes command after an assignment with Headquarters, Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command, where he served as the chief of Engineer Plans Division. His key duties while in Korea included the development and coordination of operational war plans, and the execution of studies that would support those plans. Prior to this, Wagenaar served as the military assistant at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. One key assignment during his tour was a visit to Louisiana with the chairman, Council on Environmental Quality, to view and discuss the loss of coastal wetlands. He was district engineer of the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, from July 2000 to July 2002.

Other previous assignments in engineer staff and command positions were at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New England Division, Waltham, Mass.; 44th Engineer Battalion in Yongsan, Korea; 194th Armored Brigade at Fort Knox, Ky.; Combat Maneuver Training Center - 7th Army in Hohenfels, Germany; and, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y. He has also served as an active duty advisor to the Army National Guard's 34th Infantry Division, Fort Snelling, Minn., and as a Reserve Officer Training Corps assistant professor of military science at the University of Virginia.

Wagenaar is an ROTC graduate from New Mexico Military Institute where he earned an associate's degree in biology. He attended Syracuse University in New York, graduating with a bachelor's degree in environmental science and forestry. He earned a master's degree in management from Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wis., and a second master's degree in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University, Washington, D.C. His professional military education includes Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Army Command and General Staff College, Combined Arms Services Staff School, and Engineer Officer Advanced and Basic courses.

His awards and decorations include eight Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, two Overseas Service Ribbons, two National Defense Service Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Army Reserve Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, and the Parachutist Badge.

Wagenaar is a native of Carthage, N.Y. He is married to the former Heather Turner, and they have two children, Chelsea and Hunter.