



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.



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MIKE PRENDERGAST
COLONEL, U.S. ARMY, RETIRED

Retired Army Colonel Mike Prendergast was appointed Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs by Gov. Rick Scott and the Cabinet June 22, 2011. He is a native of Tampa and a graduate of Clearwater Central Catholic High School. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1978 and attended Military Police (MP) One Station Unit Training at Fort McClellan, AL where he graduated as the honor graduate of Company E, 10th Military Police Battalion. Upon completion of the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, GA he was assigned to Fort Bragg, NC as a paratrooper where he served as a Military Policeman in the 118th MP Company (Airborne) (Corps), 16th MP Brigade (Airborne). In 1982, he attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, where he graduated as an honor graduate and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant of Military Police.

Colonel Prendergast is an Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veteran and served in a variety of command and staff positions over the course of his Army career. In 1983, he served as the Executive Officer, Company D, 1st Battalion at Fort McClellan and, later, Aide de Camp to the Commandant of the Military Police Corps Regiment. In 1987, he served as the S-3 Operations and Training Officer in the U.S. Army Law Enforcement Command (USALEC) at Fort Shafter, HI followed by command of the Fort Shafter MP Company and, later, duties as the USALEC S-3 Operations Officer. From 1991 thru 1993, he served in consecutive overseas assignments as the American Embassy's Foreign Area Officer in Kinshasa, Zaire and in Yaounde, Cameroon. In 1994, he deployed to Cuba where he served as the Military Police Plans Officer for Joint Task Group – Guantanamo Bay. Upon redeployment, he served as the Long Range Military Police Plans Officer for the III (US) Corps and the 89th MP Brigade at Fort Hood, TX and subsequently completed the last 14 months of his tour as the Executive Officer of the 720th MP Battalion. In 1996, he served as an American Political Science Association Foreign Affairs Congressional Fellow in the office of U.S. Senator Bob Graham of Florida. Following his fellowship, he served as the Chief of Plans and Operations, Programs Division, Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison (OCLL), in the Office of the Secretary of the Army (OSA), Headquarters, Department of the Army in the Pentagon and, later, as the Director of Legislative Strategy (OCLL) (OSA).

Colonel Prendergast commanded the 19th MP Battalion (Criminal Investigation Division) (Theater Support Element) in Korea from July 1999 through June 2001. Upon his return to the continental U.S. (CONUS), he served as the Fort Meade, MD Provost Marshal / Director of Emergency Services and Commander of Joint Task Force – Patriot, the installation's Threat Management Forces, which he led during the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and throughout the post-attack recovery.

In 2003, Colonel Prendergast was assigned to Headquarters, Third U.S. Army / U.S. Army Forces Central Command / Coalition Forces Land Component Command as the Provost Marshal / Director of Emergency Services and Director of Operational Protection. From 2005 to 2007, he commanded the 202nd MP Group (Criminal Investigation Division), headquartered in Seckenheim, Germany. Following brigade command, he served as the Provost Marshal / Director of Emergency Services and Director of Operational Protection for U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army, headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany until his assignment to U.S. Central Command J-3 Joint Security Office (JSO) in 2008 as the Provost Marshal / Director of Emergency Services. Colonel Prendergast retired from active duty on October 1, 2009.

Colonel Prendergast has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with Special Honors and a dual major in Political Science and Sociology from Jacksonville State University, a Bachelor of Science degree with a concentration in Psychology from the University of New York, a Bachelor of Social Science degree from Campbell University, a Master of Arts degree with a major in International Relations and a Certificate in African Studies from the University of Florida, a Master of Public Administration degree with a concentration in Public Management from Troy State University, and a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College with a major in Public Diplomacy and a concentration in Campaign and Strategic Crisis Planning. His military education includes Officer Candidate School, the Military Police Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Instructor Training Course, the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, the Physical Security Course, the Traffic Management and Accident Investigator's Course, the Counterterrorism Course, the Combined Arms and Services Staff School, the Defense Language Institute Basic French Course, Joint Staff Anti-Terrorism Courses Levels I-IV, the Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College.

Colonel Prendergast's personal awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with 2 oak leaf clusters (OLCs), the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with 3 OLCs, the Army Commendation Medal with 1 silver OLC (sixth award), the Army Achievement Medal with 1 OLC, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with 1 bronze service star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Kosovo Campaign Medal with one bronze service star, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, the Iraq Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal with 1 OLC, the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the NATO Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon with numeral 5, and the Army Service Ribbon. He has also earned the Combat Action Badge, the Parachute Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Canadian Parachute Badge, the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency in Silver (Schützenschnur in Silber), the U.S. Central Command Staff Identification Badge, and the Army Staff Identification Badge, the Driver's Badge, and Expert qualification badges for the Rifle, Pistol, and Hand Grenade. His unit awards include the Joint Meritorious Unit Award with 2 OLCs, the Army Superior Unit Award with 2 OLCs, and the Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation. COL Prendergast is a 2009 inductee into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, GA. COL Prendergast is also a recipient of the Military Police Corps' Order of the Marechaussee award in Silver for having had a significant impact on the Military Police Corps Regiment over a period that spans over three decades.

Colonel Prendergast and his wife, Naomi, have two grown children and five grandchildren. Their son is a Military Police Soldier and a combat veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Their son-in-law is a Flight Engineer with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, and he recently completed his ninth combat deployment to Afghanistan.