

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE CIVIL AFFAIRS REGIMENT



**COLONEL
CHRISTOPHER J. HOLSHEK**

Inducted 26 October 2017



Colonel Christopher J. Holshek was born in Cornwall, New York. During his distinguished 30-year military career, he served in Germany, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Kuwait, Iraq and Liberia, having performed Civil Affairs Support at Army, joint, interagency and multinational levels.

With orders to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Germany in the 1980s, he served as a Civil-Military Operations (RS-5) and Public Affairs Officer, dramatically boosting relations among diverse focus groups and initiating the application of civil-military and information operations concept. In 1993, he joined the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade and served a tour of duty as a Civil Affairs Plans Officer for the 21st Theater Army Area Command in Germany, where he helped plan, coordinate and execute numerous multinational civil-military logistics exercises, oversaw Reserve Component civil affairs integration, and contributed to campaign planning for upcoming operations in the Balkans. He then deployed in support of Operation Joint Endeavor with one of the first Civil Affairs teams, as a Theater Support Team Plans and Civil Information Officer.

In 1998, Col. Holshek assumed command of the 304th CA Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, developing and applying innovative methods and techniques to manage mobilization and deployment readiness, training and administration in CA support of theater-level joint/interagency peace, humanitarian relief and information operations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He then deployed to the J9 CIMIC directorate of Headquarters KFOR, as a Civil-Military Cooperation Liaison Officer to the UN Mission in Kosovo, spearheading NATO-UN civil-military cooperation there.

Shortly before September 2011, he was selected for command of the 402nd Civil Affairs Battalion in Buffalo, New York. Col. Holshek led its deployment at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, in support of humanitarian assistance and civil administration operations with U.S. Marines, United Kingdom and U.S. Army formations in combat and post-hostility environments in southern and northern Iraq. Following the first transition to NATO CIMIC, the 402nd supported complex and dangerous counterinsurgency operations in the Diyala province. The battalion earned the Naval Presidential Unit Citation and the Army Meritorious Unit Citation.

Col. Holshek returned to the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade as the G3 to help prepare Civil Affairs Soldiers for deployment. After attending the resident Army War College, he was assigned as the Senior U.S. Military Observer and Chief of Civil-Military Coordination of the UN mission in Liberia. He expertly led and managed a Joint team of 13 U.S. officers and instituted, fielded and validated a unique approach to multinational CIMIC that gained worldwide attention and resulted in a landmark "UN-CIMIC" policy. Col. Holshek finished his Army career as the U.S. European Command Military Representative to the U.S. Agency for International Development in Washington, D.C. He facilitated executive-level interagency coordination, theater and regional planning, crisis response and operational synchronization.

In post-retirement, as program director of the Civil Affairs Association, he established and leads the discussion of the future of Civil Affairs as a national strategic capability for conflict management in annual symposiums and roundtables, and is editor of the Civil Affairs Issue Papers.

His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with oak-leaf cluster, Army Meritorious Service Medal with two oak-leaf Clusters, United Nations Medals and NATO Medals among others.

Col. Holshek is married to Rosa Zoro from Madrid, Spain, and she is currently deployed to Iraq as a civilian with the UN Refugee Agency.