

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE CIVIL AFFAIRS REGIMENT



**COLONEL
JOSEPH P. KIRLIN III**

Inducted May 2016



Col. Joseph P. Kirlin III began his career in Civil Affairs in 1974 in the 304th Civil Affairs Group, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1980, his initiatives while serving as a detachment commander at Eglin Air Force Base during Operation Muriel Boatlift, led to a Civil Affairs tasking in support of the operation. He was responsible for moving the unit on a 48-hour notice to Fort Indiantown Gap to process Cuban refugees, a first for an Army Civil Affairs unit. For their efforts, the unit was awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal.

In October 1983, he mobilized as part of a team sent to the U.S. Atlantic Command to provide the Civil Affairs assessment for Operation Urgent Fury-Grenada, West Indies, where Civil Affairs functional specialists were deployed to the operation — a first since World War II. He later deployed to Grenada and served as the Assistant G5, 1st Special Operations Command, in the first Civil Military Operations Center. His input to the G5 on the use of Civil Affairs assets provided the ground work for utilization of Civil Affairs assets in future military operations.

In 1984, while assigned to the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade, Norristown, Pennsylvania, he was attached to U.S. Army Forces Command, working on force modernization and structure. As an individual augmentee, he provided key input into the Civil Affairs Master Plan 2000, which was adopted and implemented into Army doctrine. His work defined how Civil Affairs would be employed under the U.S. Army Special Operations Command in the 1980s and 1990s. Col. Kirlin deployed four additional times as part of the joint overseas deployment and training programs executing Civil Affairs missions and host-nation projects for the U.S. Atlantic and U.S. Army Special Operations Commands. The programs were critical to stability in the region and integrated Civil Affairs assets into exercises and deployments. In January 1989, in conjunction with the Institute of Heraldry, he wrote the Regimental plan, designed the colors and Regimental crest and coined the Regimental motto of “Secure the Victory.” Following the Regimental activation in June 1989, he served as the first Regimental Adjutant. In March 1990, he wrote the first Joint Overseas Deployment Training Standard Operating Procedure and plan for Civil Affairs in the U.S. Atlantic Command. During Operation Safe Harbor in 1992, he deployed as Commander, 501st Civil Affairs Detachment Provisional, mobilized to run the Haitian Migrant Humanitarian Camps in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The unit was awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for its exceptional service. In 1993, Col. Kirlin developed and executed the first Army Training and Evaluation Plan for Civil Affairs in the U.S. Atlantic Command.

Since retirement, Col. Kirlin has served as President of the Civil Affairs Association, collaborating with The U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at the U.S. Army War College and the National Defense University in promoting annual symposiums, roundtables and papers. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak-leaf clusters, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Humanitarian Service Ribbon (two devices). He was awarded the Civil Affairs Association Annual Award and the Civil Affairs Special Award.

He is a graduate of the Civil Affairs Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. He has a bachelor’s in political science and a master’s in history with a focus on Soviet East Europe Studies from Niagara University, New York, and a master’s in business from LaSalle University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.