

Retiring general hands over Army's training cmd

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 8, 2008 – Army Gen. William S. Wallace today relinquished the colors of the U.S. Army command responsible for developing Soldiers' skills and doctrine.

In a ceremony at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command headquarters at Fort Monroe, Va., Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates praised Wallace's leadership, saying TRADOC became the Army's institutional and intellectual epicenter during the general's three-year tenure as commander.

"Spurred by the demands of fighting brutal and adaptive insurgencies in two theaters, the Army has seen a dramatic and historic shift in the way it is organized, equipped, and, above all, trained," Gates said.

TRADOC is responsible for the Army's architecture and doctrine -- from recruiting and training Soldiers to establishing the branch's standards and building a future Army. The command conducts more than 3,000 courses at 32 schools on 16 Army installations.

In addition to the command change, today's ceremony doubled as a farewell for Wallace, who is leaving the Army after a 37-year career that included a post commanding U.S. ground forces during the March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

As commander of 5th Corps in the opening phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Wallace saw firsthand the modern operational environment, Gates said, describing it as "a toxic admixture of the conventional and irregular, the high-tech and the low, the Internet and the IED," or improvised explosive device.

"During General Wallace's tenure, the best brains inside and outside the Army were brought together to publish new doctrine on counterinsurgency and stability operations – bolstered by a substantial increase in the amount of instruction devoted to irregular and asymmetric conflict in the Army's staff colleges," Gates said.

In an interview with TRADOC News Service, Wallace said the changes to Army field manuals that occurred under his command represented "a doctrinal rebirth."

"We think that it's a recognition that the operational environment has changed, and therefore we've got to reflect the changes in the operational environment and how we intellectualize how we do our business within the Army," he said.

During Wallace's time as TRADOC chief, the Army met its annual recruiting goals, basic training was retooled to better teach survival skills, and national training centers became more grueling and realistic, the secretary said.

"Because of [Wallace's] efforts," Gates said, "new Soldiers arrive at their units today far more ready to deploy and fight than in years past."

Taking over the reins of TRADOC is Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, who received his fourth star today. Most recently, Dempsey was acting commander of U.S. Central Command following the departure of Navy Adm. William "Fox" Fallon.

Gates expressed confidence in TRADOC's incoming leader.

"General Marty Dempsey – with his experience commanding U.S. troops in Baghdad, overseeing the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces, and his leadership of Centcom – is uniquely suited to take the helm of this organization at this critical time," he said.