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New Rapid Equipping Force Director

Colonel Steven A. Sliwa to Lead an Evolving Rapid Equipping Force

FORT BELVOIR, Va. -- August 9, 2013 – Colonel Steven Sliwa assumed directorship of the Army’s Rapid Equipping Force (REF) in Fort Belvoir, Virginia this week.

“I am thrilled and honored to have been selected for the position of REF Director,” said Sliwa. “The REF is an extremely unique and capable organization that has proven its utility to the warfighter time and time again.”

The REF is singularly focused on providing Soldiers with operational capabilities as quickly as possible. In his first week as Director, Sliwa emphasized the importance of maintaining focus on the Soldiers in Afghanistan.

“As the Army reduces its footprint in Afghanistan, it is critical to support the remaining units there as they complete the Operation Enduring Freedom mission set,” said Sliwa. “Fewer Soldiers on the battlefield translates into reduced infrastructure and capabilities for those remaining. REF is the right Army organization to rapidly equip and to continue to meet urgent operational needs as they occur.”

Sliwa will travel to Afghanistan early in his tenure as Director to visit REF Forward locations and speak with Brigade Combat Team Commanders and other leadership about the continuing operational requirements Soldiers will face during the drawdown.

“The bottom line is that there are still Soldiers in Afghanistan and the REF will continue to support requirements coming out of Afghanistan with a sense of urgency and priority,” said Sliwa.

Sliwa reports to REF immediately following his second assignment on the Joint Staff. As the Assistant Deputy Director for Joint Strategic Planning, COL Sliwa synchronized activities for the development of the National Military Strategy, Chairman's Risk Assessment, Unified Command Plan, and Joint Operational War Plans. His efforts resulted in a broad range of responsive assessments and recommendations to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Prior to serving on the Joint Staff, Sliwa commanded the 210th Fires Brigade, Camp Casey, Korea from 2009 to 2011. Under Sliwa’s leadership, the 210th Fires Brigade was

awarded the Army Superior Unit Award for its actions following the shelling of Yeonpyeong-Do Island by North Korea in 2010. He also served as the G-3/5/7 for the 8th Army from 2011-2012.

Bill Childers, REF Deputy Director, states, “We are extremely pleased to receive COL Sliwa as the new REF Director. His vast experience as a Brigade Commander and in shaping future U.S. security policies and strategies will be instrumental in moving the REF forward during the upcoming period of transformation and austerity.”

Sliwa’s previous position meeting urgent, warfighter requirements is directly applicable to the REF mission. During his three years as Chief of the Current and Future Warfighting Capabilities Division at Headquarters of the Army G3, Sliwa validated and filled incoming Operational Needs Statements from Army Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the Joint Operational Needs Statement assigned to the Army.

Sliwa will use this awareness to lead an evolving REF as Army Forces, and ultimately operational requirements, are realigned globally.

“In addition to seeing requirements from OEF, the REF is also receiving requirements from Army Forces deployed in support of other U.S. Combatant Commands,” said Sliwa. “I am excited by the potential of supporting those operations as well.”

The REF hosts periodic media roundtable events, demonstrations and other activities. If you are interested in receiving invitations or notices to events, or for additional information about the Rapid Equipping Force, call REF Strategic Communications Officer, Kara Ewell at 703-704-9433.

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About the Army’s Rapid Equipping Force

The Rapid Equipping Force, headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, rapidly supports deployed soldiers’ needs to defeat an adaptive enemy. The REF works in daily partnerships with industry, academia, military leaders, and other government agencies to support warfighter requirements. The organization responds to immediate needs in the field and provides readily employable capabilities to enhance lethality and survivability. Using a combination of commercial and government off-the-shelf products and developmental technologies, the REF enables the Army to remain ahead of an adaptive enemy and to save soldiers' lives. Please visit us at www.army.ref.mil.