

New commander takes over 1/50 battalion

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By: **Tiffany Nabors, The Bayonet**



LTC Anthony Benitez, COL Daniel Kessler and LTC Michael Hastings review the troops during the change of command ceremony June 15.

LTC Michael Hastings took the lead of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, during a change of command ceremony June 15 at Kannell Field. The new position is Hastings' third assignment at Fort Benning.

"I cannot tell you how excited I am to return ... and take command of an absolutely outstanding unit," he said. "My personal and professional point of aim is to meet the high standards (the outgoing commander) established for this battalion."

Hastings said the unit could expect his best, and he plans to slowly transition into the current workflow.

Most recently, Hastings was assigned to the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The 1991 Citadel graduate holds a master's of military arts and science from the Command and General Staff College and has completed the Combined Arms Staff Services School.

During the ceremony, COL Daniel Kessler, 198th Infantry Brigade commander, thanked outgoing battalion commander LTC Anthony Benitez for a job well done. He said the battalion has made huge contributions to the global war on terror under Benitez's leadership.

"The cadre of this great battalion work hard and tirelessly to conduct effective, outcome-based training to build our future Infantrymen and prepare them to join Infantry units around the world," Kessler said. "His dedication to excellence and attention to detail ... will have a lasting impact on our Army for many years to come."

Benitez is moving on to Germany to work in the U.S. African Command. He holds a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy and a master's degree in education from the University of Georgia.

Among other awards, he has received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters and Joint Service Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster.

"Certainly this is a bittersweet day, but I prefer not to focus on the has been but what I have been," Benitez said.

The outgoing commander said he was blessed and fortunate to have served in the unit and amazed by the Soldiers in it. He said he is confident the battalion is in good hands and will continue to thrive.

Kessler told Hastings he looks forward to many accomplishments during his command.

"You will find the task before you challenging, at times, but extremely rewarding," Kessler said. "But I am confident that you, (your wife) Diane and your new team will meet these challenges with great boldness and enthusiasm."