

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS REGIMENT



CHRISTOPHER L. LEYDA

COLONEL (ret)

United States Army

Inducted April 2014



Mr. Leyda was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry from the University of Oklahoma and holds Master of Arts Degrees in International Relations and National Security Strategy. Mr. Leyda's military education includes the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Infantry Basic and Advanced Courses, U.S. Army and Joint Psychological Operations Courses and the Defense Language Institute Korean Language Course. He graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval War College in 2002.

Prior to retiring from active duty on 1 May 2011, Mr. Leyda was Chief of Information Operations, J39, United States Special Operations Command. Previously he served as Chief of Staff, United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) (USACAPOC(A)), commanded the 7th Psychological Operations Group, and served as G3, USACAPOC(A). Mr. Leyda's other psychological operations assignments include Commander, 8th PSYOP Battalion (BN) (Airborne); Commander, PACOM PSYOP BN (A); Deputy Commander, 4th PSYOP Group (Airborne); Executive Officer, S3, and Detachment Commander, 8th PSYOP BN (A); and PSYOP Officer, Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea. He also held command and staff positions in the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment and 2nd Infantry Division.

During his time on active duty, Mr. Leyda has played a key role within the PSYOP community. While serving as operations officer for 8th PSYOP BN (A), he planned the Battalion's deployment for initial entry into Somalia, later deployed to lead operations, and then redeployed the Battalion at the end of Operation RESTORE HOPE. Assigned as the PSYOP Officer for UNC/CFC in Korea, he was the focal point in providing PSYOP support that ultimately led to Republic of Korea (ROK) and U.S. PSYOP forces being designated as a separate UNC/CFC Component and reinstituted the ROK/US Combined Military PSYOP Committee. During periods of increased tension on the Korean Peninsula, resulting from North Korean nuclear testing and the death of Kim Il Sung, Mr. Leyda was the lead planner in developing one of the first Combatant Command-level, External Information Plan designed to provide nonlethal flexible deterrent options. In the mid-nineties, he deployed as a PSYOP Task Force (POTF) Commander supporting Operation GUARDIAN ASSISTANCE in Rwanda and was selected as the first commander to activate a task organized PSYOP Battalion that would later become the 5th PSYOP Battalion. As commander of the 8th PSYOP Battalion from 1999 to 2001, he developed, executed, and guided sensitive operational PSYOP programs that transitioned into a POTF supporting the initial phases of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

As G3 of USACAPOC, Mr. Leyda was the primary planner to prepare PSYOP and Civil Affairs forces to support Operation IRAQI FREEDOM initial entry operations. In this capacity, he orchestrated the largest mobilization, training, and deployment of active duty and reserve PSYOP and Civil Affairs forces since World War II. Selected to command the 7th PSYOP Group, he supported Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM by preparing, training, and deploying multiple PSYOP Battalions into theater. While assigned as the USSOCOM J39, Mr. Leyda led a work group that resulted in the USSOCOM Commander's approval of a new PSYOP operational construct that led to the task organization of the Military Information Support Operations Command as well as current active duty PSYOP Group organization. After retiring from the Army, Mr. Leyda was selected to serve as the PSYOP representative to a USSOCOM team that deployed twice to Afghanistan supporting a Communications Integration Staff Assistance Visit for Commander, ISAF.

Mr. Leyda's military awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Defense Meritorious Serve Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with silver and bronze oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the United Nations Medal. He has earned the Expert Infantryman, Pathfinder, Air Assault, Master Parachutist, and a variety of foreign parachutist badges.