

Colonel Louis B. Rago, II



Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Africa

Colonel Lou Rago, a native of Chicago, Illinois, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Armor, as a Distinguished Military Graduate of The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina in May 1989. During his initial assignment, he served as an M1A1 Tank Platoon Leader, Scout Platoon Leader, Assistant S3 Operations Officer and Battalion S1/Adjutant with 2nd Battalion, 64th Armor, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), in Schweinfurt, Germany.

Following completion of the Armor Officers' Advanced Course in 1993, Colonel Rago was assigned to 4th Battalion, 64th Armor, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He served as the Battalion S4/Logistics Officer prior to assuming command of Company D, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized). During his command, the company was awarded the Draper Combat Leadership Award as the Outstanding Armor/Cavalry Company in the division.

In early 1997, Colonel Rago was assigned to the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), Hohenfels, Germany where he served as the Task Force Tactical Operations Center (TOC) Observer-Controller, a Tank Company/Team Observer Controller and as the Operations Group's S3 Training Officer. Following attendance at the Command & General Staff Officers' Course and the Advanced Military Studies Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, he was assigned as a G3 Contingency Plans Officer with Headquarters, V Corps, Heidelberg, Germany.

In November 2002 Colonel Rago deployed to Kuwait and then later to Iraq with HQ V Corps for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In the summer of 2003, he was reassigned to the 1st Armored Division, Baghdad, Iraq as the Task Force Operations Officer/S3 of 1st Battalion, 35th Armor. Upon redeployment of the division in July 2004, Colonel Rago was assigned as Brigade Operations Officer/S3, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany where he served until his assignment to the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy as the Chief, G3 Current Operations in June 2005. During this tour, he deployed as the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) Director for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan from November 2005 until May 2006.

Upon his return to Italy, Colonel Rago continued to serve as the Corps Chief, G3 Current Operations until June 2007. Shortly after arriving in Schweinfurt in July 2007, Colonel Rago deployed to Iraq with HQ 1st Armored Division/Multinational Division-North where he served as the Chief of the Diyala Operations Command Advisory Team in Baqubah, Iraq until his redeployment in December 2007. In January 2008, Colonel Rago assumed command of 1st Battalion, 77th Armor, 1st Infantry Division in Schweinfurt, Germany. In the spring of the same year, the battalion was redesignated 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor, 172nd Infantry Brigade and rebased to Grafenwoehr, Germany. Colonel Rago deployed with the battalion to Iraq in November 2008 where it served in Balad Ruz District, Diyala Province under 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division until November 2009. Colonel Rago relinquished command of the battalion in April 2010 and entered the United States Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania as a member of the Academic Year 2011 Resident Class. Following graduation in June 2011, Colonel Rago was assigned at the Operations Officer/G3, 2nd Infantry Division, Republic of Korea. In June 2012, Colonel Rago assumed command of 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Republic of Korea.

In March 2014, Colonel Rago returned to the United States where was assigned as a Chief of Staff of the Army Fellow with the Strategic Studies Group. In July 2015, Colonel Rago returned to Italy as G3/5/7, United States Army Africa and the Southern European Task Force until assuming his current duties as Chief of Staff on 2 May 2016.

Colonel Rago is a graduate of the Armor Officers' Basic and Advanced Courses, the Marine Amphibious Warfare School, the Combined Arms Staff & Services School, the Command & General Staff College, the School of Advanced Military Studies where he earned a Masters of Military Arts & Sciences degree and the Army War College where he earned a Master of Strategic Studies degree. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal (w/2OLC), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (w/4OLC), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (w/2OLC), Army Achievement Medal (w/2OLC), the Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit (Fourth Class), the Combat Action Badge, the Basic Parachutist Badge and the German Army Proficiency Badge in Gold. He also holds the Bronze Medallion of the Order of Saint George, the Order of Saint Barbara and the Order of Saint Michael.