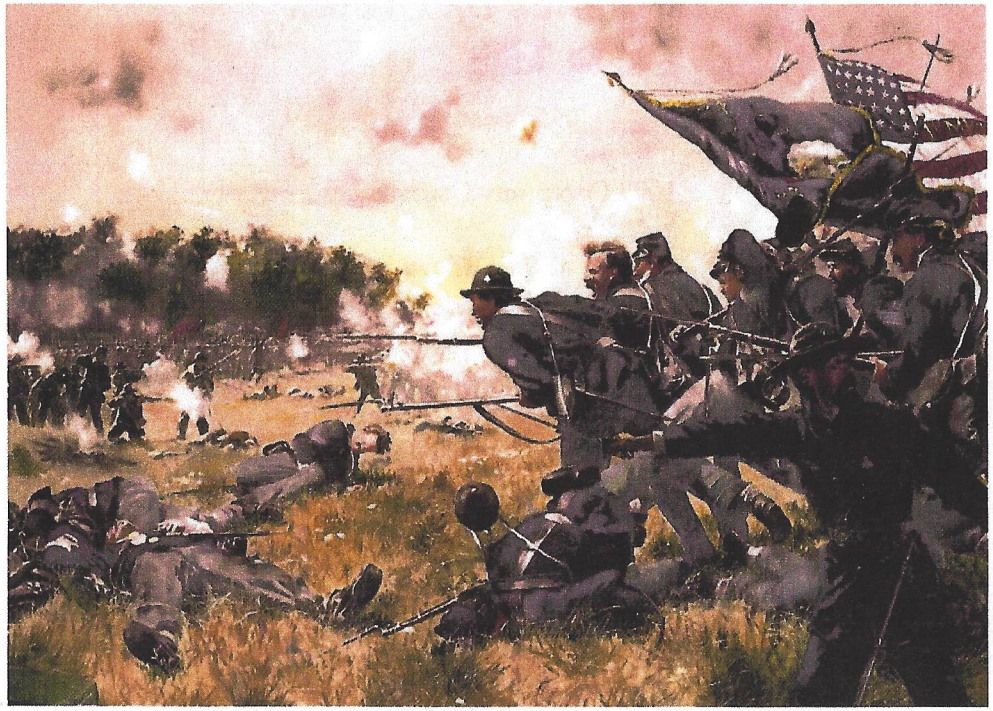
2nd Battalion
135th Infantry Regiment



Change of Command Ceremony

21 January 2024

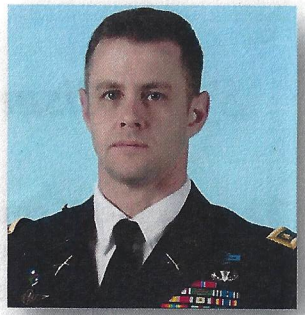
Symbolism of the Change of Command

The change of command ceremony is rooted in military history dating back to the 18th century during the reign of Frederick the Great of Prussia. At that time, organizational flags were developed with color arrangements and symbols unique to each particular unit. To this flag and its commander, the Soldiers of the unit would dedicate their loyalty and trust. When a change of command was to take place, the flag was passed to the individual assuming the command. This gesture was accomplished in front of the unit so that all could see and witness their new leader assuming his dutiful position. He who held the flag also held the soldier's allegiance. This symbolic tradition has survived throughout military history.

LTC Laddie Bata has a distinguished record of service to his country, the United States Army, and the 2-135th Infantry Battalion. As the outgoing commander of the battalion, he has served in an outstanding manner throughout his tenure, most recently he served as the Rear Detachment Commander for the battalion while Task Force Bayonet was deployed to Africa. During his time he led the rear detachment through two State Active duties for COVID Response and Operation Safety Net. LTC Bata assumed command over 2-135th Infantry Regiment upon their return from Africa and took over command operations to the present month including a multi-national forces training exercise in Macedonia.

Equally distinguished, MAJ Joseph Kelly will assume command of the 2-135 Infantry Battalion. He has Served most recently as the safety officer for HHC 1/34 Brigade Combat Team.

2-135th Infantry Battalion Outgoing Commander



Lieutenant Colonel Laddie Bata was born on January 22, 1982, in Park River, North Dakota. He enlisted into the North Dakota Army National Guard in 2001 as a Stinger Missile Operator. He received his commission from the University of North Dakota as an Infantry Lieutenant in 2004.

After receiving his commission Lieutenant Colonel Bata served in the active duty Army as a Platoon Leader and Troop Executive Officer in 1-89 Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York, where he deployed to Iraq in 2006-2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2007 he served as the Company Executive Officer of the Ranger Reconnaissance Company, Ranger Regiment Special Troops Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia until he separated from active duty in 2009. In 2011 he was assigned to 2-135th Infantry Battalion serving as an Operations Officer (Air), Commander of B Company and Battalion Operations Officer. In 2016-2017 he deployed as the 2-135th Infantry Battalion Operations Officer to Sinai, Egypt in support of the Multinational Force and Observers mission. In 2017 he was assigned as the Brigade Safety Officer, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division until he was transferred back to 2-135th Infantry Battalion to serve as the Rear Detachment Battalion Commander in 2020 while the forward element was deployed to the Horn of Africa.

His military education includes Command and General Staff College, Air Assault Course, Maneuver Captains Career Course, Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) School, Military Freefall Parachutist Course, Reconnaissance Surveillance Leadership Course, US Army Airborne School, US Army Ranger School and the Infantry Officer Basic Course. His civilian education includes a Masters in Public Administration from Minnesota State University at Mankato, Law Enforcement Skills from the Alexandria Technical College, and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of North Dakota.

Some of Lieutenant Colonel Bata's awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (5th Award), Army Achievement Medal (2nd Award), Iraq Campaign Medal with campaign star, Multinational Force and Observers Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Military Freefall Parachutist Badge, Basic Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and the German Armed Force Parachutist Badge (Bronze).

Lieutenant Colonel Bata is a Patrol Sergeant with the Moorhead Police Department in Moorhead, Minnesota. He lives with his wife, Alissa, in rural Sabin, Minnesota. They have three children; Ethan, Connor and Dave.

2-135th Infantry Battalion Incoming Commander



Major Joe Kelly was born on November 16, 1981, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He enlisted into the Minnesota Army National Guard in 2007 as an Officer Candidate. He received his commission through Federal Officer Candidate School at Ft. Moore, Georgia as an Infantry Lieutenant in 2008.

After receiving his commission Major Kelly was assigned as a Platoon Leader in Charlie Company, 2-135 Infantry. He was then assigned as the Executive Officer for Delta Company 2-135 Infantry. He was assigned to HHC, 2-135 Infantry as the Sniper Platoon leader in 2011 where he deployed to Camp Buehring from 2011-2012 in support of Operation New Dawn. He was assigned as 1/34 ABCT OIC to Camp Julien Ain 2014, he took command of Bravo Company 2-135 and deployed in 2016-2017 FOB North in the Sinai, Egypt in support of the Multinational Force and Observers mission. In 2017 he was assigned as the Operations Officer, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division until he was assigned as the S3 for 1-194 Armor. In 2020, he was assigned as a current operations officer at Headquarters, 34 Infantry Division. He was then assigned as an exercise and training officer to Joint Forces Headquarters, then the Brigade Safety Officer for 1/34 Armor Brigade Combat Team.

His military education includes Command and General Staff College, Air Assault Course, Maneuver Captains Career Course, Pathfinder Course, Counter Insurgency Leaders Course, US Army Ranger School and the Infantry Basic Officers Leaders Course. His civilian education includes a Juris Doctor from William Mitchell College of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Arizona State University.

Some of Major Kelly's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (2nd Award), Army Achievement Medal (2nd Award), Multinational Force and Observers Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, Expert Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Air Assault Badge, Pathfinder Badge and the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award.

Major Kelly is an Attorney at Kelly and Lemmons, PA in St. Paul, Minnesota. He lives with his wife, Veronica, in St. Paul, Minnesota. They have two children: Regan and Jack.