

Command In Brief

Missile Defense Brigade's first command change

By MAJ Laura Kenney, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD)



COL Michael L. Yowell, new commander of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) received the unit's colors from brigade CSM Daniel Marques, right. The Assistant Adjutant General of the Colorado Army National Guard, BG Thomas D. Mills, left, hosted the ceremony, charging the new leader with the responsibilities of command by the passing of the colors. *Photo by Dennis Plummer*

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — The nation's only missile defense brigade, headquartered here, underwent its first change of top leadership Tuesday, as COL Gary W. Baumann relinquished command to COL Michael L. Yowell.

The 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), U.S. Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command is at the forefront of the nation's emerging missile defense technology. The brigade, a multi-component unit, falls under the overall direction of Northern Command during an operational mission.

The Assistant Adjutant General of the Colorado Army National Guard, BG Thomas D. Mills, hosted the ceremony. Baumann, first commander of the brigade, assisted in its formation prior to its activation here Oct. 16, 2003, in response to presidential directive. Baumann was awarded the Legion of Merit for his role in establishing the historic unit. Yowell assumed command in a traditional flag-passing ceremony held in the Air Force Space Command Auditorium

The 100th MDB, largely composed of Colorado Army National Guardsmen operating in their time-honored mission of defending the homeland, has interceptors located in Alaska and California. The brigade oversees the Soldiers operating the ground-based midcourse portion of the nation's emerging missile defense capability.

Baumann said, "It's going to be hard to stop thinking, 'missile defense,' 24/7, but at least I can sleep easily at night knowing that the unit has passed into the more than capable hands of its new commander. It was a true pleasure to be a part of bringing something so important to the American people. It's not every day one can say, 'I (the unit) protect(s) almost 300 million people.'"

Yowell approached the new challenge with enthusiasm. "We've come a long way since the days of Paul Revere awakening fellow citizens to the threat facing them," said Yowell. "With today's technology, we can now defend against a threat not even imaginable then. The unit will build on the outstanding formation that Colonel Baumann has ensured, and I'm glad that I will assist it in doing so."