

***United States Army***  
**Battalion Commander**  
**Fransisco J. Leija**



**Lieutenant Colonel**  
**2-305<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion**  
**177<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade**  
**First Army Division East**

Lieutenant Colonel Leija is a Distinguished Military Graduate from the Officer Candidate School Program. He began his military career as a private with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division located at Fort Riley, Kansas. During this tour he achieved the rank of Sergeant.

In 1996 he received his commission, completed the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course, and received his assignment to the 172<sup>nd</sup> Separate Infantry Brigade located in Fairbanks, Alaska. During this tour he gained experience in arctic light-infantry operations, air-assault operations, towed-artillery operations, and earned a twelve-month military-exchange to the United States Marine Corps to attend the Amphibious Warfare School, in lieu of the Army's Captain Career Course. Upon completion of his military-exchange he was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. During this tour he commanded an artillery battery, deployed that battery to and from combat operations in Iraq, and then commanded the headquarters company for an armored brigade, as it transitioned from a legacy unit to a Brigade Combat Team.

Lieutenant Colonel Leija then earned a position as a tactics instructor at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY. During this tour he achieved the title of Assistant Professor and served as a course director. Following this assignment he attended the Command General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies, located in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He was then assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division where he deployed for two consecutive tours-of-duty to Afghanistan. During this assignment he served as a Regional-Command Lead Planner, Brigade Fires and Effect Chief, and Battalion Executive Officer. He was then assigned to the Joint Staff's Joint Training Directorate. From this position he competed and was selected as a White House Fellow. As a fellow, he has spent the last year as the Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Lieutenant Colonel Leija holds a B.A. in Social Science from Kansas State University, an M.A. in Diplomacy from Norwich University, and an M.M.A.S in Strategic Design from the School of Advanced Military Studies. He has completed the following military courses: Airborne, Air Assault, Rappel Master, Basic Military Mountaineering, Advanced Military Mountaineering, and Ranger School.

His awards include the Bronze Star (1OLC); Purple Heart; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal (2OLC); Army Commendation Medal (1OLC); Army Achievement Medal (2OLC); Army Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal (1BS); Afghanistan Campaign Medal (2 BS); Iraqi Campaign Medal (2BS); NATO Medal; and the Combat Action Badge.