



BG Dennis Watts

Commander, Georgia State Defense Force

Brigadier General Watts was commissioned 2LT INF, Regular Army, on 20 March 1980, through the Georgia State University Army ROTC program. Served 12 years on active duty, and 8 years in the reserves. He was honorably discharged in 2000. Watts joined the Georgia State Defense Force in 2005 and has served continuously through the present. Appointed as Commander July 2023, and Promoted to BG on 9 September 2023.

BG Watts earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education from Georgia State University. He is also a graduate of the Infantry Officers Basic Course, Ft. Benning, GA, Infantry Officer Advanced Course, Ft. Benning, GA, Combined Arms Services Staff School, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, and the Marine Corps Institute and GASDF Command and Staff Course.



COL Watts graduated Airborne School 1977, Air Assault School 1980, Ranger School 1980, Infantry Mortar Platoon Officers Course 1980, and the French Commando School in Berlin 1981. BG Watts earned his Expert Infantry Badge in 1981, and the GASDF Search and Rescue Badge in 2009.

After commissioning and attending Infantry Officer Basic Course, Watts first assignment was as Infantry Platoon Leader, Company B, 4th Bn 6th Inf, Berlin Brigade 1981. He served additionally as 81 MM Mortar Platoon Leader, and Company Executive Officer for B Company. The West Berlin assignment included continuous training and multinational exercises with allied (British and French) forces, and German Police. He also had significant treaty interaction with Soviet forces at check points and Spandau prison. Upon completion of the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, he was assigned as Assistant S3 Air, 2nd Bn, 21st Inf, 24th Infantry Division Mechanized, at Ft. Stewart, GA. Subsequently Commanded A Company 2/21st Infantry, moved to serve as 1st Brigade Asst S3, then Commanded HHC 1st Brigade, 24th Infantry Division. Five rotations to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California as both staff officer and company commander resulted in significant tactical and operational expertise in deploying and maneuvering heavy mechanized forces. In 1988 he was assigned as Plans and Operations Officer for Headquarters Cadet Command, Ft. Monroe, VA. BG Watts left Active Duty in 1992 and joined the reserves as an Individual Mobilization Augmentee and served in a variety of assignments. Last reserve assignment was with the Army's Safety Augmentation Detachment, Combat Safety Officer Program at Fort McPherson Georgia. BG Watts was honorably discharged in 2000.

BG Watts Joined the GSDF in March 2005, served as Assistant G3, G3 Force Schools Officer, Deputy G3, then as the G3. Stood up and commanded the 76th Support Brigade as a new unit, served two years in Ready Reserve, then returned to Command the GSDF Training and Doctrine Command in July 2015. Watts was assigned as Deputy Commanding General September 2021 and served as Deputy Commander and Acting Commander from 26 June 2023 to September 2023. In July 2023 Watts was selected through a competitive interview process as the next commanding general for the Georgia State Defense Force. Watts assumed command and was promoted to Brigadier General by, then Georgia Adjutant General, MG Thomas Carden on 09 September 2023.

Army Meritorious Service Medal (2), Army Commendation Medal (2), Army Achievement Medal (2), Army of Occupation Medal Berlin, NDSM, ASR
GSDf Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal, Achievement Medal

BG Watts is currently employed as the Sr. Public Safety Risk Division Manager for the Georgia Municipal Association. BG Watts leads a team of Risk Management Loss Control Services professionals and Law Enforcement Risk professionals who work with Cities belonging to GMA's Property and Liability, or Worker Compensation Insurance pools. BG Watts engages with Elected Officials, Administrative managers, and line people who do the work for our cities. Currently about 434 Cities participate. BG Watts presents and creates multiple safety related training programs annually both virtually via webinars and in person. He is a Certified Crisis Risk professional.

West Berlin was still an Allied Occupied City from WW II when I was assigned. One of the memorable duties was serving as Guard Commander, Spandau Prison four times. The only prisoner in Spandau was Rudolph Hess, Hitler's former Deputy, who had been continuously incarcerated since 1941, first in Great Britain, then in Spandau after the Nuremberg trials. That was my personal association with WW II.