



Biography

Department of the Army



Karen Durham-Aguilera

Executive Director

Army National Military Cemeteries



Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera is the Executive Director of Army National Military Cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery, serving as Principal Advisor to the Secretary of the Army on all matters related to Army cemeteries. Ms. Durham-Aguilera administers and oversees policies; doctrine, plans and standards with all stakeholders to include the Army staff, major commands, and the other services. She establishes and maintains gravesite accountability, provides technical guidance, training, staff assistance, and inspections; adjudicates burial exceptions, disinterment, expansion requests, and other issues of concern at the 40 Army Cemeteries across the nation. As Executive Director she also manages a \$70.8M annual budget as well as \$130M in existing major constructions and expansions, and the planning for a new \$300M expansion.

2011-2017: SES Director, Contingency Operations and Office of Homeland Security, Headquarters, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Ms. Durham-Aguilera was responsible for the USACE Homeland Security mission support of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of the Army, and the Department of Defense. She served as the Agency Principal for all USACE efforts to assist Federal, state and local emergency management and response organizations to prepare, respond and recover to any emergency or disaster, natural or manmade. Ms. Durham-Aguilera led the federal engineer response (over 2000 military/civilian personnel, about \$3Billion effort) to numerous events, including hurricanes, tropical events, ice storms, river flooding, tornadoes, and landslides. Her portfolio included leading USACE efforts in flood risk management and critical water resources infrastructure resilience, and supporting Combatant Commands with forward field engineering assets for overseas contingency operations.

2007-2011: SES Director, Task Force Hope, New Orleans, LA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Durham-Aguilera planned, led, and delivered the Corps' \$14.6 Billion hurricane storm damage reduction system in New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Led over 5000 military/civilian personnel in collaboration with academia, industry, research and development, and stakeholders. She also served as Program Manager for nearly 400 construction contracts and employed acquisition techniques unprecedented for Civil Works. This system performed as designed when Hurricane Isaac made landfall, August 2012, preventing catastrophic flooding, and loss of life and

property damages such as occurred during Hurricane Katrina. The keystone project of this system received the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2014 Civil Engineering Achievement Award, first time for USACE in its 50+ year history.

2003-2007: SES Director, Programs, Northwestern Division, Portland, OR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Durham-Aguilera managed and led over 100 engineers and scientists, and five subordinate engineer districts (over 3000 personnel), responsible for \$3.5 Billion in civil works and military programs, covering about 25 % of the United States. She led the successful issuance of the Missouri River Master Manual, resolving 14 years of litigation across eight states, tribal nations, and numerous other entities. The Master Manual was upheld by the Supreme Court and continues to guide the operations and environmental compliance of the Missouri River main-stem dams.

2005: SES Director of Reconstruction Programs, U.S Army Project and Contracting Office (PCO), Baghdad, Iraq. Joint Armed Forces Position. Ms. Durham-Aguilera deployed and led a workforce from all branches of the armed forces, multi-national civilians and Iraqi professionals, to deliver nearly 3,200 construction projects throughout Iraq. She also developed mentor-mentee network for Iraqi women engineer-owned businesses.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY:

- 1983- 2003, served in numerous progressive positions home and abroad, construction, operations, and engineering, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, GS-0810-11 to GS 0810-15. Served as lead construction manager, project engineer, resident engineer, area engineer, and Chief, Construction-Operations, for civil works and military construction, with supervisory positions, 1987 – present.
- 1980-1983, employed in private industry with Architectural/Engineering firms.

EDUCATION

- University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, MEng, Civil (Geotechnical) Engineering
- University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, BS, Civil Engineering
- Harvard Kennedy School of Government, National Preparedness Leadership Institute

SIGNIFICANT TRAINING AND LICENSES

- Harvard Kennedy School of Government, National and International Security for Senior Execs
- Army Senior Executive Advanced Course, University of Virginia
- Army Senior Executive Intermediate Course, University of Notre Dame
- Department of Defense, APEX for Senior Executives
- Registered Professional Engineers (Civil), State of Louisiana

SIGNIFICANT AWARDS AND HONORS:

- Secretary of the Army Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service (2017)
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2016 Government Civil Engineer of the Year
- Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service (2014)
- Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service (2008)
- University of Louisville JB Speed Engineering, Professional Award for Engineering (2013)
- Silver Order (2010) and Bronze Order (2006) of the DeFleury Medal
- Secretary of Defense Medal for the Global War on Terrorism (2009)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS:

- Society of American Military Engineers
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- Army Engineers Association
- Senior Executive Association (Board of Directors)