

2011

Kuka'ilimoku

The 'Word' Edition, January

Editors Note: Due to software updates, this month's newsletter was produced in Word. We will resume the normal format next month.

Maj. Gen. Wong takes command as Adjutant General of Hawaii



Left: Maj. Gen. Darryll Wong symbolically takes charge of the Hawaii National Guard as Governor Neil Abercrombie hands him the state Department of Defense flag during the Adjutant Generals Transfer of Authority ceremony Jan. 9.

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Story and Photos by Tech. Sgt. Michelle Thomas

154th Public Affairs

As a long and distinguished military career came to an end another career as one of the top military leaders in Hawaii was just beginning during a Transfer of Authority ceremony Jan. 9 in front of Building 1989 of the headquarters of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team at Barber's Point.

Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee officially turned over leadership of the Hawaii National Guard during the hour-long ceremony, ending his tenure as Adjutant General of Hawaii. At the same time he relinquished his position to Maj. Gen. Darryll D.M. Wong.

Lawmakers, state officials and Hawaii National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who attended the mid-afternoon ceremony looked on as Lee presented the Hawaii National Guard flag to Hawaii's newly inaugurated governor, Gov. Neil Abercrombie as a ceremonial symbol of relinquishing command. In turn, the governor presented the flag to Wong as a symbol of his taking command as the adjutant general.

While Governor Abercrombie praised the outgoing adjutant general for his service as the state's top military leader he commented on the Hawaii National Guard's unique place as a reserve component.

"This (ceremony) will be the 11th change in command since Statehood. We have a particular sense of family in Hawaii...it takes on a whole new meaning for the Hawaii National Guard whereby its members are the living embodiment of the citizen soldier," said Abercrombie.



Hawaii's Governor also called the out-going State Adjutant General "a mentor" whose leadership will be "a tough act to follow."

General Lee served as Adjutant General for 8 years, during which he handled many natural disasters including the Ka Loko dam, Big Island earthquake and the tsunami warning last February.

He thanked his wife, Judi of 39 years for all her support.

"Judi, has been my conscious and continues to keep me grounded no matter how many stars I have," says General Robert Lee, Former Adjutant General.

With the passing of colors, Adjutant General Robert Lee stepped down as commander of the Hawaii National Guard, and during his acceptance speech, Gen. Wong praised Lee's leadership during his tenure, especially during natural disasters.

"Your calming demeanor and control in leading the department made the difference in guiding us forward to be successful in all our missions, you'll be a tough act to follow sir " said Wong, the new State Adjutant General.

Major General Wong has commanded one of the largest and most diversified Air National Guard commands in the nation, along with being a command and instructor pilot.

Outgoing Adjutant General Lee will retire officially March 1, 2011.

In Brief

The HIANG recently welcomed new officers to its ranks Oct. 22, 2010. Members represented several different units across the Wing and all did an outstanding job. Congratulations to 2nd Lt. Jonathan Laurion, from the 201st Intelligence Squadron for receiving both the Academic Award for achieving the highest academic average and the Maj. Gen. Wilson Winton Award. The latter was awarded for being the top performer in a class of 108 graduates.

New year proves to be an exciting time for the HIANG

by Brig. Gen. Joseph K Kim, Commander 154 WG

Happy New Year!

Mahalo for returning safely from your holiday activities. To those who supported the POTUS visit and to those who remain deployed, a special thanks for your service.

As you've heard, Governor Abercrombie has appointed me to the Deputy Adjutant General position. The transition date is soon but not yet firm. I'll work closely with General Wong, our incoming Adjutant General, to make the move as smoothly as possible.

My upcoming move, along with the vacancy at the HIANG Commander's position, is very exciting in the opportunities for advancement created. I'm very proud of our grooming of leaders here at the Wing and look forward to hearing of all the changes as they happen.

As we continue our F-22 conversion and KC-135 robust, our wing will need to focus on the resiliency of our Airmen and families as the operations tempo ramps up.

I've asked our Commanders to update Family Readiness charters and key volunteers and Military points of contact. This is also a call out to our families to get more involved in our mission and readiness. Our HIANG Spouse and Family Association needs your participation in preparing and caring for our families!

As always, I am thankful and it is truly an honor serving our great State and Nation alongside you. Please keep your focus on safely accomplishing our many missions and improving our readiness!

New leadership, exciting changes on horizon

by Command Chief Master Sgt. Willie Rafael, 154 WG

As we get back into the swing of things and bring some normalcy back into our daily lives, we are once again faced with a hectic year, probably even busier than last year. However, with professionalism and dedication, I don't think we're going to miss a beat at all this year.

We look forward to welcoming and working with Governor Neil Abercrombie our new governor, Maj. Gen. Darryl Wong our new Adjutant General and finally Brig. Gen. Joseph Kim our new Deputy Adjutant General. They are the new face of our leadership for years to come.

New leadership doesn't stop here. With these military appointments, there are now voids within the Hawaii Air National Guard that remain unfilled. More new leaders will emerge in the near future and as we have done in the past, we've always supported our leaders with our great followership. So hang in there for more changes!

Units will be going through numerous inspections this year: Logistics Compliance Assessment Program, Readiness Exercises and Inspections, and Unit Compliance Inspection, just to name a few. The bulk of F-22 Raptor fleet is also scheduled to arrive throughout the year. Lastly, numerous Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) deployments are scheduled for the year making Family Readiness of paramount importance to our mission success.

Hawaii Air National Guard (HIANG) has a very large ohana (family). Everyone that works in the HIANG, to include Active Duty, Civilian contractors, and family members are part of our Ohana. Family readiness builds military readiness—our service members are healthier, more focused, and highly dedicated to mission accomplishment when families are supported.

I encourage each and everyone to support and get involved in Family Readiness and Family Support programs to make life easier for our Warriors. I'm proud to serve alongside you in the world's finest Air Force this coming year. Aloha!

Enjoying the Exercise

Part 1: Brain tumor survivor cross-trains to aid recovery, improve health

by Staff Sgt. Carolyn Viss
JBPHH Public Affairs

Carmen knew what to expect going into her second brain surgery. She'd been on the operating table before when the doctors first found a mass on the left side of her brain, around her temple, and when an aneurysm that -- thankfully -- hadn't burst was removed.



This second surgery was required to not only remove a tumor re-growth but also repair Carmen's skull, which hadn't fused properly after the first surgery. The muscles over her temple had atrophied, causing a huge dent in the side of her face. The slightest pressure on that portion of her head -- even what little it took to wear her uniform cover or brush her hair -- caused pain, because the brain was basically only covered by a layer of skin.

The difference was, this time she was ready. She was ready for the pain, ready for the stitches, but most of all she was ready for the recovery. She had been cross-training for more than a year, and felt great going into surgery.

"I was really surprised, though," said Tech. Sgt. Carmen Colon-Alemany, a Hawaii Air National Guardsman with the 154th Medical Group. "Last time, from beginning to end, I was on a profile for a year and a half."

After just two months recovery time, Carmen was able to get back in the gym at CrossFit Oahu and began working out again -- a modified set of exercises, of course, but cross-training nonetheless. As a health services management technician for the 154th MDG and a prior active-duty management technician in the aeromedical evacuation career field, Sergeant Colon was not new to the

medical career field - but she didn't expect such a drastic difference in her recovery times from when she had her first surgery, in 2004, to her most recent surgery in September 2009.

Prior to her first surgery, Sergeant Colon had failed her physical fitness test and gotten into running as a "fix." She passed the re-test by a small margin and kept running, doing about three miles a night to keep up her abilities.

"I was thin," she recalled, but she still lacked what she refers to as "fitness."

She got into CrossFit after her husband, Tech. Sgt. Isaiah "Ike" Murray Jr., a loadmaster with the 535th Airlift Squadron, got back from his first workout at CFO with his friend and fellow loadmaster. Ike came back totally exhausted and exhilarated, and Sergeant Colon couldn't resist her curiosity as to what kind of workout made her husband work out so hard. Once she did one workout, she was hooked.

Every year since then, Sergeant Colon has gotten a 90 or higher on her PT test, and she's even gotten her 13-year-old son, Amir, into the workouts. CrossFit not only reshaped her body -- it's reshaped her life, she said. Throughout the short recovery time of her second surgery, her CrossFit "family" was cheering for her and encouraging her, the way they do to get her through the toughest "Workout of the Day" at the gym. Her first day back was a huge triumph.

And even though she doesn't do it because of any Air Force prescription, she said it definitely benefits her as a military person as well.

"I love the way it makes me feel," she said. "As a female, it makes me feel empowered. It makes me feel like I'm in good shape. Really, you could stick me in a tactical environment, and I can carry the flak vest, I can carry the web belt and all my gear, I can get down and crawl around and do anything else they might have me do... With having three kids and a husband, it's not just me I have to think about. After I saw how fast I recovered from my second surgery ... it was a reality check. I feel great."

As she pursues a commission in the coming year, Sergeant Colon knows she can get through anything without being "laid up" like she was during her first surgery.

She does it for the health of it.

Chaplain's Corner

When the ordinary is truly extraordinary...

By Lt Col Robert K Nagamine, Chaplain, 154th Wing

This month we can celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday in true fashion. As you know, Martin Luther King, Jr. was a historic civil rights leader in the 1960s, whose efforts helped to change civil rights in a positive way for our nation. Being raised during the 1960s, I couldn't help but notice his influence and impact. Many of us might have heard his famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

In celebrating the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, there is a famous quote of his that we should focus in on:

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

It seems like this is another way to express our Air Force core value, "Excellence in all we do." I see that core value being lived out and especially when I went on a mission with a KC-135 while deployed in Guam. While viewing the air refueling mission, I was reminded of the great care that the aircrew with the boom operator performed in refueling another jet.

But the good news is that they were doing the same type of great work that happens throughout the Air Guard and Air Force every single day.

I believe that Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream can't and won't be fully realized if our military doesn't continue to defend, protect and ensure the freedoms we hold dear and dear to us. And, these are the same freedoms we hope and encourage others around the world to embrace.

All of this to simply say: "Thank you" for your part, even though it may not seem big during ordinary days for the cause of freedom.

I recall several years ago as I was leaving to fly out to deploy for my deployment location, someone stopped me and said "Thank you." I paused, smiled and said to myself, "I haven't done anything yet, why thank me?" But later I realized that she was thanking me for being committed to the cause of serving our nation.

I believe that together we all play a role in working towards fulfilling King's dream for all people, when he said, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty,...free at last."
