



USARPAC
News Release
USARPAC Public Affairs
Ft. Shafter, HI 96858-5100

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Release 031-07
August 24, 2007

USARPAC says farewell to ‘Citizen Soldier’

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti
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FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii -- U.S. Army, Pacific bid farewell to Maj. Gen Stephen D. Tom, USARPAC deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve, who Lt. Gen John M Brown III, commanding general, USARPAC, described as the “epitome of the American citizenSoldier,” in a ceremony on Palm Circle here, Friday.

Tom has served in USARPAC for the last four years and described his departure as “bittersweet.”

“It is bitter because I have to say goodbye to my teammates here,” he said, “but it is sweet because today I start an exciting new job up the hill at U.S. Pacific Command.”

Tom will transition to U.S. PACOM to serve as the command’s new chief of staff.

During his farewell remarks, Tom thanked the USARPAC commander for his leadership and praised his time spent at USARPAC.

“Thank you, sir, for the trust and confidence to have me come aboard as your active duty command in 2005 ... Thank you for your continued faith in me ..., he said.”

During the ceremony, Brown presented Tom with the Distinguished Service Medal.

“I’ve never presented an award that was more deserved than the Distinguished Service Medal that I have the honor of presenting ... this morning. I have never been associated with a leader or Soldier that deserved recognition more than Steve Tom,” said Brown.

During his time at USARPAC, Tom led USARPAC’s contribution to Pacific Command’s theater Security Cooperation Program as the exercise director for Balikatan in the Philippines in 2005 and 2007, and also served as the U.S. representative to exercises in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Mongolia. Tom also was the lead in USARPAC’s transition to the National Security Personnel System, the new civilian personnel system being adopted throughout the Department of Defense.

The ceremony concluded with Lt. Gen. Brown asking for a moment of silence. “I’m sure everyone in the audience and on the field recognizes the tough week our brothers and sisters and family members at Schofield endured....pause [with me] in prayer as we remember the 14 Soldiers who gave their lives in Iraq this week, their family members, both here in Hawaii and

Fort Lewis, Washington, and all over the United States.... Thank you, and God bless our heroes.”

-30-



Lt. Gen John M. Brown III, U.S. Army, Pacific commanding general, shakes the hand of Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Tom, USARPAC deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve, during Tom’s farewell ceremony on Palm Circle Friday. Tom spent four years in USARPAC and is now the new chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Command. (Photo by Sgt. Angela Gilmore, U.S. Army Pacific, Public Affairs Office)



Lt. Gen. John M. Brown III, U.S. Army, Pacific commanding general, presents Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Tom, USARPAC deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve, a Distinguished Service Medal during Tom's farewell ceremony on Palm Circle Friday. Tom spent four years in USARPAC and is now the new chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Command. At center of the photo is Tom's wife, Mrs. Diane Y. Tom, who was also honored with a Department of the Army Commander's Award for Public Service. (Photo by Spc. Nathan Porter, U.S. Army Pacific, Public Affairs Office)



Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Tom, USARPAC deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve, gives his remarks during his farewell ceremony on Palm Circle Friday. Tom spent four years in USARPAC and is now the new chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Command. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christina Bhatti, U.S. Army Pacific, Public Affairs Office)



Lt. Gen. John M. Brown III, U.S. Army, Pacific commanding general, stands with Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Tom, USARPAC deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve, during Tom's farewell ceremony on Palm Circle Friday. Tom spent four years in USARPAC and is now the new chief of Staff for U.S. Pacific Command. (Photo by Sgt. Angela Gilmore, U.S. Army Pacific, Public Affairs Office)