

United States Army, Alaska
Relinquishment of Command Ceremony
16 July 2009

Aloha and good morning (VIPs) General officers, Soldiers, family and friends of United States Army, Alaska. Joining us today, is General Layfield's wife, Vicky. Steve was fortunate enough to marry his high school sweetheart, they have been together now for over 31 years. A special good morning to COL Daly, his wife Dawn, and daughter Eva.

My thanks to the 9th Army Band, your presence inspires patriotism, elevates esprit de corps, and preserves the musical heritage inherent to our ceremonies. As always, you look and sound fantastic.

To the Soldiers of this command, I would like to extend my personal thanks to you and your families. Continuing to operate in support of Overseas Contingency Operations while simultaneously transforming has been extremely challenging. It is your hard work and dedication to achieve mission accomplishment that has continued to make this command successful.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the 1/25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team currently serving in Iraq and the 4/25th Airborne

Brigade Combat Team serving in Afghanistan. We will continue to pray for their safe return.

Today we honor the accomplishments of MG Layfield. For 25 months of command, Steve was dual hatted as the Commanding General of US Army Alaska and as the Deputy Commanding General of Alaska Command (ALCOM). He was also responsible for what was formerly known as the Operational Command Post-Hawaii. His area of responsibility spanned across Alaska encompassing two installations, separated by 350 miles. His efforts included overseeing the transformation of US Army Garrison-Alaska and forming the basis of a Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. His championing of the Army Family Covenant delivered resources and facilities that supported USARAK's growth.

Within days of taking command, he received orders for the immediate deployment of Aviation Task Force 49 (TF 49) to operate as a medium CAB headquarters in Theater. It required a transition to a deployable headquarters and inclusion of an all active duty roster. His on-the-ground leadership facilitated the manning, equipping, and training of the Task Force.

Joint projects included Fort Richardson's unification with Elmendorf Air Force Base and the establishment of the Joint Pacific Area Range Complex initiative. A monumental task, this project will assemble all the available training areas – land, sea, and air. Under a unified resource this will promote joint training opportunities and the integration for any service, component, or allied nation.

Every commander knows the importance of caring for our Soldiers, DA Civilians, Contractors, and family members. He fostered an environment that provided physical, spiritual, and mental health. MG Layfield worked tirelessly to deliver resources and facilities that supported the growth of USARAK in order to provide the quality care commensurate with the service of Soldiers and family members. Steve ensured every leader understood the importance of caring for Soldiers and families while providing the time, flexibility, and means for them to do it.

Behind every Soldier is a resilient source of strength. As one of the Army's finest military spouses, Vicky hosted countless functions, welcomed families, and assisted our loved ones. She and her husband championed the Army Family Covenant and assisted numerous family members of deployed units, the highest number of

deployed Soldiers in USARAK's history. Vicky, we are grateful for your contributions to this Command and to the Army. Rhonda and I would like to personally thank you for your leadership and participation in military and community events.

As we say thank you and farewell to one of the Army's exceptional leaders, we provisionally entrust the responsibilities of this command to COL Daly. He and his wife Dawn will continue to the day to day business of United States Army, Alaska until our leadership has appointed and approved the next commander general.

Again, thank you and farewell to MG Layfield and his wife Vicky. I wish you the best. God Bless you and God Speed!

One Team.

Army Strong