



TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Brig. Gen. Gallagher takes charge of Pacific Regional Medical Command

TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER-- As billowing afternoon clouds settled over Oahu's southern horizon on May 25, Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker handed Brig. Gen. Keith W. Gallagher the organizational colors of Tripler Army Medical Center, in the time-honored Army ritual of passing the colors. The ritual marked the change in leadership of the Pacific Regional Medical Command and Tripler Army Medical Center from Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Jones to Brig. Gen. Keith W. Gallagher.

The ceremony drew hundreds of guests and staff, including many generals and admirals from various commands on Oahu to Tripler's Oceanside terrace fronting the hospital's garrison flag, to bid Jones farewell and to welcome the new Commander and his family.

In his remarks, ceremony host Lt. Gen. Schoomaker praised the Pacific Regional Command and Tripler staff. "You have been on point for some of our most critical organizational practices regarding deploying and redeploying Soldiers, and in ensuring that they remain healthy and that their families are well-cared for, their children reached out to and nurtured, and that problems for any member of this Army Family are recognized early and managed compassionately and effectively," Schoomaker said.

Turning to Brig. Gen. Jones, Schoomaker recalled, "I leaned on Steve heavily when he commanded Fort Campbell's Blanchfield Community Hospital early in the war. I remember vividly his asking to be deployed in OEF and OIF after finishing command. He ended up doing back-to-back deployments as a senior medical leader in both Afghanistan and in Iraq—a tribute to his devotion to Soldiers. He has continued this enlightened leadership here over the past two years."

Brig. Gen. Jones, who leaves Tripler for assignment in the National Capitol Region, Washington D.C., began his farewell remarks by thanking his staff. "I'm here today to say thanks to the proud Soldiers and civilians of the Pacific Regional Medical Command. A few are standing before you in formation...but most are providing care in wards, clinics or in the fields of Hawaii, Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palau, Cambodia, Laos and Honduras."

He noted, "When you return from deployment, you're welcomed back, but not by bands, but by a few close friends. But that doesn't matter, because you draw your reward from knowing that you touch lives, you make a difference, and that when the service members, families and veterans across the Pacific need help, you are the ones they turn to first."

Brig. Gen. Gallagher, who is serving his first tour in the Pacific area of operations, after commanding Europe Regional Medical Command, shared his first impressions of Hawaii in bringing the ceremony to its close. "In the short time that I have been here in

Hawaii, I have been impressed with the overwhelming friendliness and the people of Hawaii.”

“I can see immediately that our staff clearly sees that our patients and units with whom we serve are the reason for our existence. I pledge that we will continue to provide the finest quality medical care to these brave and courageous men and women and their Families.”

“I pledge that we will endeavor to improve the health status of every patient currently enrolled in our military health system. I pledge that we will continue to improve the readiness and the competency of our field medical units. I pledge that we will continue to sustain the gains in behavioral health, access to care, Veterans’ Administration healthcare, Warriors in Transition, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, and in the patient-centered medical home.”



Brig. Gen. Keith W. Gallagher (at left center) is entrusted with the organizational colors of Pacific Regional Medical Command by Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker during the change of command ceremony at Tripler on May 25. Looking on is the regional command’s Command Sgt. Maj. Tuileama T. Nua. U.S. Army photo by Daniel Kawasaki



Change of command principals Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Jones, Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker, and Brig. Gen. Keith W. Gallagher (from left to right) salute the nation's flag during the change of command ceremony at Tripler on May 25. U.S. Army photo by Leslie Ozawa