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## U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific In Any Clime and Place

### Historic events highlight deputy commander's 32-year career

By Cpl. Isis M. Ramirez | July 02, 2012

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**CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii** -- The staff at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific said farewell to one of the command's senior-most members, Brig. Gen. Ronald F. Baczkowski, deputy commander of MarForPac.

Baczkowski, who has been the deputy commander since August 2011, held his retirement ceremony at Bordelon Field here June 29.

After 32 years of service in the Marine Corps, Baczkowski retired, passing on more than three decades of history to the next generation of Marines. "He has been through every pivotal event in modern Marine Corps history," said Lt. Gen. Duane D. Thiessen, commander of MarForPac.

From witnessing the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut during his deployment to Lebanon in 1983, to serving as the deputy commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command, between 2008 and 2010, years that saw a significant surge of Marines in Afghanistan, he has helped shape the Corps as Marines know it today.

"As a Marine, General Baczkowski rose to every occasion," Thiessen said. "He threw his best effort, he threw his honest effort and his integrity into every single thing he did. He shaped the world that we live in today, as a leader and as a Marine. Our nation and our Corps owe him a great debt."

During the ceremony, many of his old friends sat in the audience laughing at shared memories of their time in the Corps.

Thiessen told a story about when Baczkowski, as a battalion commander, organized a force march and turned it into a fundraising opportunity by letting the Marines buy their way out. On the morning of the event, Baczkowski set out on the hike, with his pack and his rifle, alone.

Although the audience shared numerous laughs with Baczkowski, saying goodbye was not easy.

"It's really a bittersweet moment," said Baczkowski. "I've spent the past 32 years in the Marine Corps. So I leave behind some great memories, but at the same time I know it's time for others to move up. The Marine Corps is going to be well served by those Marines who continue to serve."

"The Corps has been the greatest adventure, the greatest experience that one could ever hope for and we appreciate all of the opportunities that it's provided," he said.

Baczkowski is being replaced as the deputy commander of MarForPac by Brig. Gen. Richard L. Simcock, who comes from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Asia and Pacific Affairs, where he served as the principal director, South and Southeast Asia.

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Marines from U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, stand in formation during MarForPac Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. Ronald F. Baczkowski's retirement ceremony here at Bordelon Field, June 29. Baczkowski retired after 32 years in the Marine Corps. (Photo by Cpl. Isis M. Ramirez)

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