

VETERAN

Lawelawe i nā hoa kahiko me ka ha'aheo: "Serving veterans with pride"

Vol. 4 No. 4

State of Hawaii Office of Veterans Services

Winter 1995

vet news

Veterans information on the internet World Wide Web

The internet has numerous information resources for veterans its World Wide Web (WWW). You can access this information through any of the on-line services if you have a modem and compatible computer.

The on-line address for the Department of Veterans Affairs is <http://www.va.gov/va.htm>. Approximately 30,000 information seekers access this site weekly.

The following are website addresses that may be of interest to veterans:

- **Air Force Sergeants Association page:** <http://www.association.com/AFSA/>
- **Air Force Link** <http://www.dtic.dla.mil/airforcelink/>
- **Gulf War Veterans:** <http://www.gulfwar.org/>
- **Vietnam Veterans:** <http://grunt.space.swri.edu/index.html>
- **Air Force Retiree News:** <http://wwwtest.mpc.af.mil/afretire/>

Internet WWW addresses sometimes change without notice. We apologize for any changes that

(More vet news on page 6)



Deborah M.S. Murray

SALUTING THE COLORS--Participants of the Veterans Day Ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl pay their respects to the flag.

Observances held in honor of local veterans and war heroes

By Deborah M.S. Murray

A Veterans Day ceremony commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II in the Pacific came to an end with fanfare, the thundering sound of artillery, the roar of Hawaii Air National Guard F-15s and the tolling to church bells.

At exactly the eleventh hour on November 11th (the eleventh month and eleventh day) church bells on Oahu tolled 50 times to mark the last official observance of programs commemorating the 50th anniversary of WWII in the Pacific.

The event was held at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl.

It was sponsored by the local chapter of the Disabled American Veterans.

"If the future is to have any meaning, we veterans must remember the past," said retired Col. Gene Castagnetti, director of the cemetery at Punchbowl. Adm. Richard A. Macke, commander in chief of the U.S. forces in the Pacific was the keynote speaker of the event attended by approximately 400 people.

(Continued on page 5)

Office of Veterans Services

State of Hawaii Department of Defense



Reflections at the dawn of a New Year

*From the Director
Robert C. Viduya*

In one of our recent newsletters, we talked about the year 1995 as being an exciting time for Hawaii's veterans. We discussed the 50th anniversary commemorating the end of the World War II, and the many events designed to honor the veterans and home front workers of that war. You will recall Hawaii was honored by the participation of thousands of veterans and their families from World War II, and also veterans from other conflicts. And many of the special core events included the President of the United States, along with many other prominent national, state, and county leaders. Now, as we approach the end of the year associated with the various important holidays, our thoughts turn to family and friends, often accompanied with thanksgiving and traditional gift giving. The upcoming holiday period coincides with the closing of the old year, and the dawning of the new. And so it seems appropriate for the Office of Veterans Services to take stock of where we have been . . . to reflect on the past year . . . and to gage where we are headed in the New Year.

On reflection, 1995 has been a challenging and fulfilling year for OVS.

Veterans cemeteries in development for all islands

• The Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery received a final dedication, mark-

ing the opening of the Memorial Plaza and the culmination of concerted efforts by many of our community leaders and veterans organizations to take care of the burial needs of veterans and their families.

• We witnessed the groundbreaking and Phase 1 development of the new veterans cemetery in West Hawaii, Kona.

• The existing neighbor island veterans cemeteries on Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, and Molokai are being upgraded. And we anticipate that groundbreaking for the new veterans cemetery on Lanai will bring this project to fruition, as soon as possible.

World War II commemorative activities wrap up

• Our participation and involvement in the planning and execution of the many World War II commemorative events, and the positive results of our outreach to the veterans of that war

were highlights for OVS.

Veterans home planned

• Planning also continues for the establishment of State Veterans homes on the neighbor islands. We will continue our dialogue with the Department of Health to move this project ahead. Along with the on-going construction of the Center of Aging by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the State Veterans Homes will help address the long-term care needs of our aging veterans population. The Center for Aging is scheduled to be completed about a year from now.

Neighbor island veterans services counselors work to keep vets informed

• On Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui, our veterans services counselors have been deeply involved in coordinating and integrating the efforts of their respective county veterans councils and local veterans organizations for the benefit of veterans and their families.

• The above-cited activities provide us with a sense of continuity and direction for our renewed efforts to finish the work already started, and to map out new directions in 1996. Because of serious budgetary constraints, we will continue to seek volunteers to collaborate with pooling of resources among other state agencies and to explore new ways to fulfill our mission. The Office of Veterans Services extends our warmest best wishes for a joyous holiday season and Happy New Year. We are grateful for the help and support we have received in serving our veterans.

The Office of Veterans Services
wishes you a joyous New Year!

Women vets are honored

By Deborah M.S. Murray

Women veterans have made great contributions to the defense of the nation. This is the message that was emphasized during a reception, Nov. 4, at the Richards Street YWCA.

Approximately 25 women, representing all branches of military service, gathered at the "Y" to talk about their military experiences, and meet other female veterans who shared identical struggles.

Delores Fees Mooring's (former photographer) face lit up when she discovered that she may have been in basic training at Lackland Air Force Base the same time as another veteran. Although the two ladies did not remember each other, it was evident that a spirit of camaraderie existed between them, as well as the other women in the room.

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Shirley R. Farineau, chairman of the State Office of Veterans Services Veterans Advisory Board, was the keynote speaker for the event. She spoke about women who risked their lives to serve their country, pointing out the daring feats of Molly Pitcher, an American Revolutionary War heroine who earned her nickname by her carrying water to thirsty troops on the battlefield. When her husband died in battle, she filled in by shooting his cannon.

Mary McEldowney, a veteran of the Vietnam war era, said that when helping with the women's veterans recognition program, she discovered that there was not a central place to find information about women veterans. For this reason, she encouraged the women to "hang on to your history."

Mooring's photography was on display in the "Y's" lobby. The photographer said that she kept all of her documents from her military career.

The program was part of activities for Women Veterans Recognition Week held nationally from Nov. 5-11.

Women veterans urged to submit histories to memorial database

The Women In Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. (WIMSA) recently broke ground at its Arlington National Cemetery site with plans for the dedication in late 1997.

Meanwhile, WIMSA is launching a registration drive to acquire information from women veterans to document the stories, deeds, sacrifices and service of women's veterans.

Women veterans are encouraged to send submissions to include a photo, military history, and personal memoirs of the servicewoman. The stories will be displayed through the Memorial's computerized database and will be accessible to the public.

Of the 7,400 estimated women veterans in Hawaii, only 500 have been registered.

"We urge women from across the state and the nation to help in this effort to document women's history in the military. Whether you served many years ago or are serving today, your military history deserves a place in this national Memorial dedicated to women," said Robert C. Viduya, director of the State's Office of Veterans Services.

If you are an American woman who served in the armed forces at any time, or are currently serving, or know of a woman you would like to register, please call 1-800-4-SALUTE (1-800-472-5883) or write to WIMSA, Dept. 560, Washington, D.C. 20042-0560.

State DOD rates memorial sites honoring veterans

A State of Hawaii Department of Defense report reveals that there are a total of 49 sites in Hawaii dedicated to the memory of veterans. Of these 49 sites, three are in desperate need of repair.

The survey was conducted as a result of Act 63, a bill introduced in the legislature by Hawaii State Rep. Mary Jane McMurdo. It required the Office of Veterans Services to determine the condition of every state war memorial and veterans cemetery.

The sites were rated in three categories: excellent, good and fair. Excellent sites were clean and well maintained. Good sites had minor discrepancies, and fair sites require repairs and maintenance.

A team of inspectors examined a total of 49 sites concluding that 32 sites were excellent, 14 sites good and three were rated fair. The Waikiki Natatorium was numbered among the three fair-rated sites, along with the World War II Korean-Vietnam Memorial at King and Punchbowl Streets, and the Pahala Monument.



Deborah M.S. Murray

Waikiki Natatorium -- opened in 1927.

Veterans Day ceremony held at Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe

By Spc. Jonathan M. Shiroma

With the picturesque Koolau Mountains in the background, the fifth annual Veterans Day Ceremony took place at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe on Saturday, Nov. 11. It was a time to pay tribute to the many service members who served their country over the years.

"It is fitting that we observe this final commemorative ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II here in Kaneohe," said Maj. Gen. Edward V. Richardson, adjutant general.

"For it is here in the Pacific that the United States was thrust into this global conflict," he added.

Richardson also noted that many of the veterans who participated in the ceremony have become familiar faces to him since commemorative events began four years ago. Dozens of veterans from various wars the U.S. was involved in gathered for the ceremony. One of these veterans was John Haverty who served in the Navy.

"It told us that we must always be alert and to not be caught with our guard down."

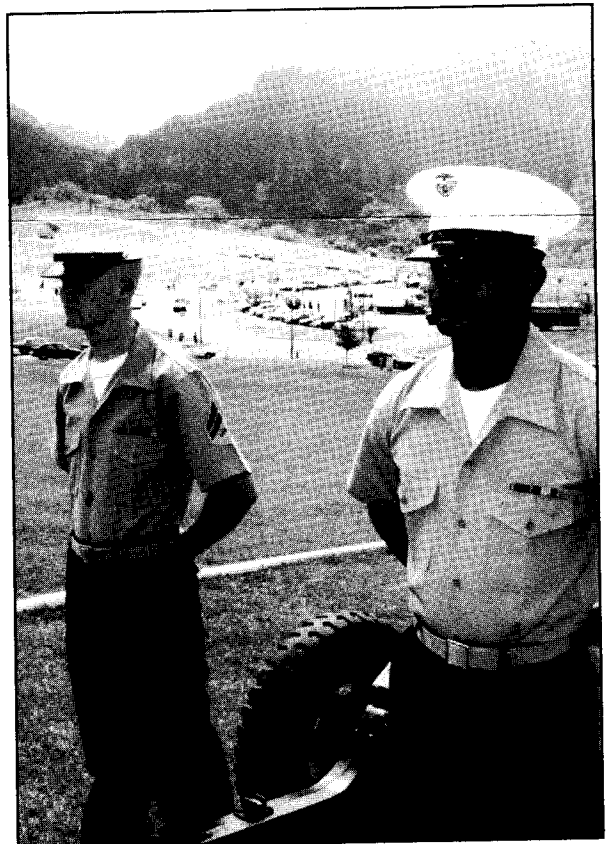
Haverty also noted that service members back then did not necessarily enjoy their work; however, they realized the need to defend their country.

Lt. Gov. Mazie Hirono delivered the keynote address. A color guard representing all branches of the military and the Hawaii Air National Guard's Royal Guard, opened the ceremony. They were promptly followed by a contingent of veterans who presented their organizational flags. A U.S. Marine Corps 21-gun salute and flyover by the Hawaii Army National Guard CH-47 helicopters concluded the observance.

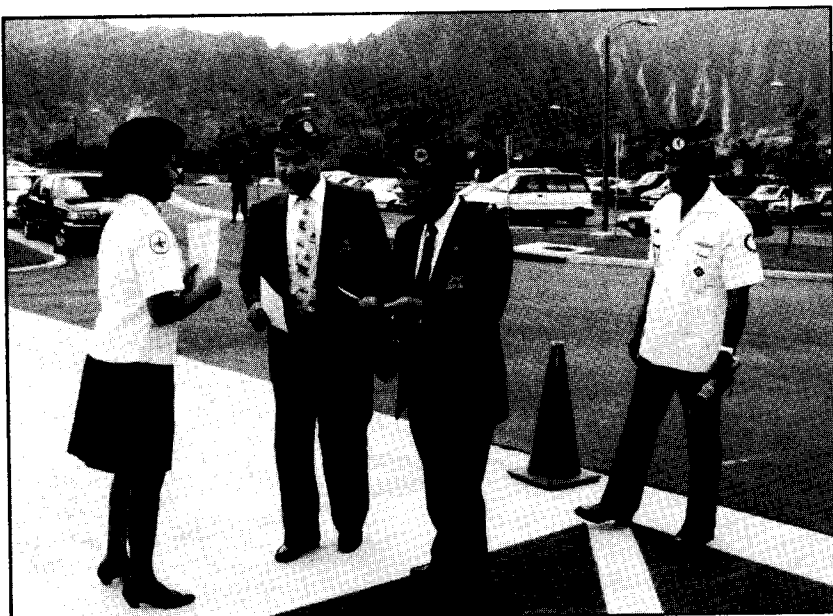


Sgt. Lance M. Kamisugi photos

WE'LL NEVER FORGET -- Local veterans proudly display the flags that represent their veterans' organizations.



ALWAYS READY -- (Above) U.S. Marine Corps firing battery stands by for their signal to begin a 21-gun salute. The Koolaus are shown in the background.

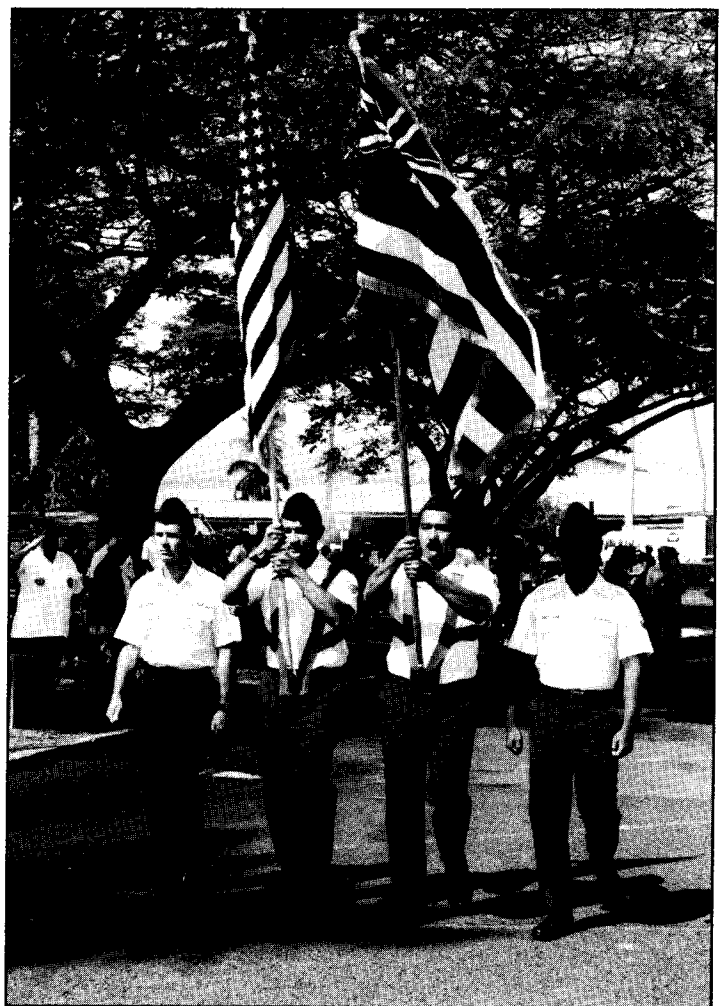


SURVIVORS REMEMBER -- (Left) Veterans arrive for the Veterans Day program at Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery, Nov. 11.



Sgt. 1st Class Wayne T. Iha

HONORING VETERANS--American Legion Post 2 participated in Kauai's Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 4. Rainy weather subsided -- bringing forth clear skies for the annual event.



Sgt. 1st Class Wayne T. Iha

KAUAI VETERANS PARADE--Hawaii Air National Guard color guards, carrying the federal and state colors, start the Veterans Day parade in Kauai.

OBSERVANCES -- *continued from page 1*

Lauding the WWII veterans, Macke said that they exemplified a commitment of selflessness.

"Today's soldiers exemplify this same spirit," he said adding, "you taught us well."

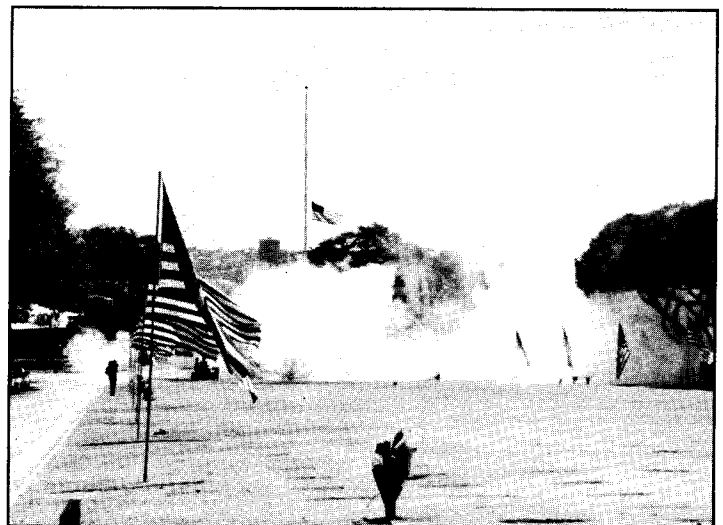
Units such as the Navajo Code Talkers, Nisei veterans of the 442nd Infantry, Tuskegee Airmen, Filipino Scouts, helped put an end to segregation in military units.

"Because we (now) uphold equal opportunity for all, we are better. You taught us well," Macke said.

When speaking about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Macke said that the military paid its dues because it was not ready. In contrast, Macke added that many lessons were learned from the WWII conflict, because when Saddam Hussien's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990, the military responded quickly.

"We were ready and Saddam Hussein's forces paid a terrible price."

"You taught us well and we will never forget."



Deborah M.S. Murray

BOMBS BURSTING IN AIR-- Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, from the 25th Infantry Division (Light) fire a 21-gun salute at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl, Nov. 11.

Q & A:

Department of Veterans Affairs

Does the federal government grant no-fee passports to family members visiting overseas gravesites of veterans? Who is eligible for this benefit?

Yes. Members of the immediate family visiting overseas graves or tablets of the missing are eligible for no-fee passports. Those eligible include widows, parents, children, siblings and guardians of the deceased who are buried or commemorated in permanent American cemeteries on foreign soil.

Who can I contact for more information on how to obtain a no-fee passport?

The necessary information can be obtained from the American Battle Monuments Commission, Room 5127, Pulaski Building, 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20314-001.

Are World War II veterans automatically eligible for VA pension benefits at age 65?

No. VA used to presume veterans 65 and over were permanently and totally disabled. To currently qualify for a pension, veterans of all ages must now be rated permanently and totally disabled and meet other requirements, including honorable wartime service and income and net worth limitations.

For more information, contact any DVA office. In Honolulu, call 566-1000 or 1 (800) 827-1000 or write: VA Medical and Regional Office, P.O. Box 50188, Honolulu, HI 96850.

vet news --continued from page 1

may have occurred before the Hawaii Veterans' presstime.

modem, 1-800-871-8387.

Vietnam veterans and families needed for PTSD study

Male Asian American Vietnam veterans and their families are needed to participate in a study related to the effects of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder on families.

The study is being conducted by the Pacific Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder which is part of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The center is located at 1132 Bishop Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 307.

Participants must be Vietnam combat veterans, and must have at least one child between 12-18 years old living with them.

Veterans and spouses will be compensated for their participation.

Dr. Linda Revilla is the principal investigator for the study and Maria Eva Pagilinan is co-principal investigator.

For more information, please contact Nona Kay at 566-1650.

Information on Veterans benefits available

The Veterans Administration publishes a booklet entitled "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" which explains eligibility requirements, outlines claims procedures and lists all VA facilities. To receive a copy, request General Purchasing Office stock number 051-000-00205-9 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20202-9325. Enclose a check or money order for \$3.25 per copy. If you prefer to order with a VISA or Mastercard, call (202) 512-1800. An electronic copy of this document is also available for download from the VA-ONLINE electronic bulletin board, via

BRAVO hopes that its march on Washington will draw two million

BRAVO is drumming up support for its Veterans Day 1996 March on Washington with the intention of drawing two million veterans for the event.

For more information, please contact John H. Rogers Jr., president of BRAVO's local chapter, at (808) 621-2412.

Hawaii now offers motorcycle license plate for veterans

A motorcycle license plate for veterans has been available statewide since Dec. 18.

Veterans interested in applying for one should take their DD-214, registration, proof of vehicle ownership and safety check documentation to any local Satellite City Hall.

VAMROC AND Mental Health Hawaii help homeless vets

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center (VAMROC) is teaming up to provide shelter for homeless veterans.

The VAMROC initiated the project with the help of Mental Health Hawaii with the goal of securing a residential home for mentally ill veterans.

A 5-bedroom home was secured in Kaneohe on Duncan Drive. It will be renovated in Spring of 1996 to add three more bedrooms and to retrofit the facility to meet U.S. Housing and Urban Development and VA safety and fire requirements.

The residence home is expected to be completed in the summer of 1996.

Monetary donations are being sought to purchase furniture for the residence. Veterans organizations interested in participating in this project should contact James O'Connor at 433-7985.

Vietnam veteran recognized 30 years later

Retired colonel receives award for valor

By Bill McPherson

Retired Air Force Col. Robert J. Thomas relived a fateful aerial combat mission he completed in Vietnam almost 30 years ago, as he belatedly received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Thomas was formally recognized today for his contributions in saving the life of a fellow pilot during intense hostile ground fire on the night of Oct. 22, 1965.

"The time seems to have travelled very fast," Thomas said to Brig. Gen. Dwight M. Kealoha and a crowd of well-wishers at the Fort Shafter ceremony. "It seems like only yesterday I was in Vietnam."

Prior to presenting the medal, Kealoha, commander of the 15th Air Base Wing, explained that the United States Air Force was belatedly recognizing Thomas for "putting himself in harm's way for the benefit of others."

Kealoha said that shortly after the mission in October 1965, then-Capt. Thomas' aircraft flight commander, Maj. Howard Pierson, had submitted the paperwork recommending Thomas for the DFC. Dur-

ing a visit to Hawaii in November 1993, when Pierson and Thomas were reminiscing about the mission, Pierson learned that the award had never been presented.

Pierson contacted the Air Force Military Personnel Center where it was discovered that the award had been lost and forgotten. "The award was resubmitted and approved by the secretary of the Air Force last year and forwarded to Hawaii for presentation," Kealoha explained.

"It's been a long time coming," Thomas said.

Recalling the mission he was cited for, Thomas said, "Maj. Pierson and I were flying a combat support mission for the sieged Special Forces Camp of Plei Me (Vietnam), providing flare drops in support of a camp which was under heavy attack."

"The mission required flying at less than 1000 feet in very poor weather conditions and heavy hostile ground fire for over three hours," Thomas continued. "During our mission, one of our escort fighter aircraft was shot down. We helped locate the

downed flyer and aided ground forces in their successful rescue of the pilot."

The citation of the award commended Thomas for "heroism and extraordinary achievement." The citation read, "Although subjected to intense hostile ground fire, Capt. Thomas, through superior airmanship and courage aided ground forces in locating a downed fighter pilot. As a result of this extra ordinary effort in keeping the area lighted, a downed Air Force pilot was saved and successful fighter strikes were completed, this preventing the loss of the Special Forces Camp."

Thomas, who retired from the Air Force in April 1979 after 25 years of service, currently works as a site coordinator for the Global Command and Control System Facility, 30th Signal Battalion, 516th Signal Brigade, at Fort Shafter.

Since Thomas is now an Army civilian employee, Maj. Gen. David R.E. Hale, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Pacific, and Col. John B. McDougle, commander of the 516th, hosted the ceremony which was officiated by Kealoha.



Stephen M. Lum

HELPING HANDS -- Staff Sgt. Herman W.S. Lau, a loadmaster for the Hawaii Air National Guard's 204th Airlift Squadron, straps down donated supplies for homeless veterans on Maui, Kauai and the Big Island.

OVS and BRAVO assist the state's homeless vets

"You are not forgotten," that's the message that the state and local veterans organizations want to convey to the State's homeless veterans.

With the help of the Hawaii Air National Guard, the Office of Veterans Services delivered a load of surplus blankets to Maui, Kauai and the Big Island of Hawaii recently for distribution to homeless veterans who once served their country proudly. The supplies traveled to its destination on a Hawaii Guard C-130 Hercules transport on a regular scheduled neighbor island flight.

On Nov. 11, members of the Brotherhood Rally of all Veterans Organizations (BRAVO), headed by John H. Rogers, spent Veterans Day feeding hungry veterans at Kaiholani Park.

Caring for the needs of homeless veterans has been an ongoing project for BRAVO since 1988, according to Rogers.

Event participants had the opportunity to talk to representatives from Legal Services, or employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive information about services that may be available to them.

Along with the picnic, a Veterans day parade, billed as the last parade commemorating the 50th Anniversary of WWII was held in Waikiki. Approximately 100 veterans participated in the event.

calendar/notices

February 19, Monday

President's Day, federal and state holiday.

March 26, Tuesday

Prince Kuhio Day, state holiday.

April 5, Friday

Good Friday, state holiday.

May 17-19

Eight Annual Kentucky Vietnam Veterans reunion is scheduled at Capital Plaza in Frankfort, Kentucky. For additional information contact, Mike Cartwright at (502) 449-3113 or (502) 363-5296.

May 13-17

Hawaii Military Week, events and activities throughout the week.

May 18, Saturday

Armed Forces Day.

May 27, Monday

Memorial Day (observed), federal and state holiday.

June 11, Tuesday

Kamehameha Day, state holiday.

July 4, Thursday

Independence Day, federal and state holiday.

August 16, Friday

Admission Day, state holiday

September 2, Monday

Labor Day, state and federal holiday.

If you have a story idea or want to list an event for veterans in the *Hawaii Veteran*, please forward the information to the State Department of Defense Public Affairs Office, 733-4236 (fax), or call 733-4241. The submission deadline for the Spring '96 (Mar.15) issue is Feb. 15.



V HAWAII VETERAN

The *Hawaii Veteran* is published quarterly by the Department of Defense, State of Hawaii, 3949 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96816-4495. All photos are Hawaii State DOD photos unless otherwise noted. Circulation: 15,000.

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