



Vol. 16, No. 2 State of Hawaii Office of Veterans Services July 2012

Memorial Day Ceremony - Honoring their Sacrifices

By Nancy Schubert Yurow
Oahu Veterans Services Counselor

The Hawaii State Veteran's Cemetery (HSVC), normally a serene, rolling green lawn between the Koolau Mountains and Kaneohe Bay, was draped today in red, white and blue, and dotted with flowers of every color as several hundred people arrived to attend the 2012 Memorial Day Ceremony. Preparations had begun the day before by some 300 Girl Scouts who had placed 8,000 leis and flags on the head stones.

The 111th Army Band officially began the afternoon event with a musical prelude followed by the blowing of the conch and Hawaiian blessing by Navy veteran Kahu Manu Mook. The colorful Parade of Flags and Presentation of Leis by 50 proud veteran organizations and their Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy escorts.

Ron Han, Dir. of OVS, emceed the event. In line with the program's theme "Honoring their Sacrifices", he set the tone in his opening remarks by saying, "Memorial Day is a day we dedicate to the fallen...to those who fell in defense of the ideals, beliefs, and values we hold sacred."

Following his remarks was the traditional Presentation of Colors by the Joint Service Color Guard and the Hawaii Royal Guard, the patriotic National and Hawaiian anthems, and Invocation by veteran Kahu Kekapa Lee of the First Chinese Church of Christ. A special recognition was given to SSgt Ryan Soto, a Wounded Warrior Battalion, for his decorated service and combat injuries in Afghanistan. He was honored for his valor and resilience, representing the best of our men and women in uniform.

There were two distinguished speakers. Maj. Gen. Darryll Wong, the State Adjutant General, gave the welcoming



Lt. Gov. Brian Schatz, Maj. Gen. Darryll D.M. Wong, Veteran Services Coordinator Caz Ross and our wreath bearer HMSN Breana Adkins presented the State of Hawaii Memorial Day Wreath at HSVC.

Photo by Jayme Sato

remarks. He spoke briefly about the HSVC's beginnings in 1991, holding its first Memorial Day celebration in 1992, and celebrating its 20th Anniversary Memorial Day at the cemetery. He talked about the significance of the cemetery's values of Duty, Honor & Country and he spoke of our timeless commitment to veterans, especially in Hawaii where 1 in 10 residents is military. Vocalist SSG Samuel Hesch followed with a beautiful performance of "I Believe in America" accompanied by the 111th Army Band.

Lt. Gov. Brian Schatz gave the main address noting President Obama's proclamation to honor Vietnam Veterans on this 50th Anniversary of the beginning of the Vietnam War. Locally, he spoke of the long but successful struggle to add the name of Hawaii's Vietnam Veteran Navy Airman Albert Kuewa to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. Albert Kuewa's sister Grace was specially recognized for the sacrifices her brother made for this country. Schatz also recognized those veterans from all wars. "Let us always remem-

ber," he said.

There were many special highlights of the day. One was the placing of the State wreath by Lt. Gov. Schatz, Maj. Gen. Wong, and OVS's own Carswell "Caz" Ross, Veteran's Services Coordinator. Caz is retiring after 24 years as an original member of OVS and 43 years of total distinguished State service. His presence will be missed. Also, for the first time on Memorial Day, senior leaders of the Armed Forces in the Pacific placed a Military wreath to honor those who had fallen.

Continuing with tradition was the Rifle Salute, the silence and reverence that accompanied the Taps, and the excitement and pride felt by the US Coast Guard helicopter Fly Over. More music followed, along with the Retiring of the Colors, and final remarks. Slowly people trickled away from the ceremony, past the rows of red, white, and blue and flowers of every color, mindful of the significance of the day. In closing, Memorial Day 2012 was a special day to honor and remember.



Director's Message

COL-R Ronald P. Han, Jr.

Director State Office of Veterans Services

Right up-front, our heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to retired Chief Master Sgt. Carswell "Caz" Ross. A distinguished career in the Air Force and Hawaii Air National Guard for 28 years, 24 years as an original cadre member of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS), and with a total combined 43 years as a State Civil Servant. Caz is truly irreplaceable and his legacy lives on in the thousands of lives he has touched with his honored service. Our fondest aloha and best wishes on retirement from OVS to Caz, Caroline, and the entire Ross Ohana. Jennifer Aina's article on Caz is a must read.

My sincerest thanks to all of our Veterans and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in working and testifying with our State Legislators in addressing Veterans issues this past session. In this supplemental year with known fiscal constraints, just a few Veteran related bills and resolutions made it through in the end. We will continue to fight for legislation that benefits our Veterans. Hats off to the newly formed State Women's Military Veterans Task Force. These 14 women have become a catalyst for creating initiatives in empowering and influencing change not just affecting women Veterans, but all Veterans.

I truly cherish the opportunities to meet with the many VSOs we have throughout the State. Thank you to the West Hawaii Veterans Council and Cemetery Association led by John Grogan and Herb Lum, the Military Order of the Purple Heart (Chapter 483) led by Reinaldo Espada and Thomas Tanaka, the Oahu Veterans Council led by Ed Cruickshank, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) at their State Con-

vention led by Chair Gordon Kamihara, Penny Fox, Ed Kawamura, and Bob Kent, the DAV Auxiliary led by Loretta Keanu, and many others who have invited OVS to brief and participate with them. Much thanks to Rep Cindy Evans and Calvin Griffin for highlighting OVS initiatives on their respective 'Olelo television programs.

Would like to also highlight the great work our Hawaii Hires Heroes (H3) team led by Ann Greenlee is comprised of the US Dept. of Labor/Veterans Education and Training Services, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, the Chamber of Commerce, State Workforce Development Team, BAE Systems, Veterans Affairs, the Strategist, and OVS. Successful H3 events were held on Oahu on 16 May 12, one on Maui on 14 June 12, and yet another event is planned in Kona on 15 Sept. 12. H3 is making a significant difference putting Veterans back into the workforce and identifying employers who are looking for these highly skilled and experienced professionals.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie's attendance at the Hilo State Veterans Cemetery for Memorial Day drew one of the largest crowds in the history of this important ceremony. Many thanks to Dr. Norm Stahl and Brian Jordan of the Marine Corps League, Dan Kama, and our OVS on-island team, Joe Flores and Lyndie Michioka. Lt Gov Brian Shatz was the keynote speaker at our Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony (please see Nancy Schubert Yurow's article) and Sen. Daniel In-

ouye was the keynote speaker for two ceremonies that same day on the island of Maui. A day prior, Navy Airman Albert Kalahana Kuewa was honored by the Waialua Lions Club along with 45 other departed Veteran heroes from the North Shore Community. A distinguished Vietnam War Veteran, Judge Thomas Kaulukukui, provided an inspiring address. Hats off to Jacob Ng, the President of the Waialua Lions Club and his staff for a first rate ceremony. Mayor Peter Carlisle's Memorial Day ceremony at Punchbowl was equally impressive with an F-22 flyover and culminated several candlelight and weekend tributes. Kudo's to Gene Castagnetti and Alan Sumitomo and their staff for their incredible efforts. Would also like to thank all of our volunteers who came out to prep for these ceremonies at our State Veterans Cemeteries; the Hawaii Youth Challenge Academy, both at Kalaeloa and Kulani, led by Rick Campbell, Girl Scouts of Hawaii and the Boys Scouts along with

their families, military members from Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, and countless other Veterans and their families.

Finally, a special mahalo to Col (ret) Lloyd Sodetani and former State Rep. Anne Stevens, members

of our State Veterans Advisory Board. Lloyd served two terms as our Chairman and Anne Stevens served for one term both ending their tours on 30 Jun 12. Without a doubt, both Lloyd's and Anne's influence and impact have been felt in numerous Veterans initiatives statewide. Thank you both for your dedicated service to our Veterans. On the horizon, look for the launch of the Network of Care website for our Veterans and their families. On behalf of Team OVS, we're proud to serve you!



Dr. Norman S. Stahl, MCL and MSGT Brian Jordan USMC (ret)

Photo by Joseph Flores

Update your info for the Hawaii Veteran

Cut out and mail responses in a stamped envelope to:

Office of Veterans Services
ATTN: HI VETERAN NEWSLETTER
459 Patterson Road
E-Wing, Room 1-A103
Honolulu, HI 96819-1522

Or email us at:
ovs@ovs.hawaii.gov

Yes, I would enjoy a FREE copy of the Hawaii Veteran Newsletter. Please add me to your mailing list.

Update information, change my old address to my new address

No thanks, Please remove me from your mailing list.

Old Address

New Address

Email: _____

Memorial Day at the Neighbor Island Cemeteries



Gov. Neil Abercrombie attended the Memorial Day ceremony in Hilo. He presented the wreath with our Hilo Veterans Services Counselor Joseph Flores.

Photos by Joseph Flores



Korean War Veterans cleaning the headstones to prepare for the Memorial Day Ceremony in Hilo.



Ms. Kauai Veteran



The Kauai Boy Scouts

Photos by Milton Oshiro

Thank you to all of our volunteers

The volunteers were of great assistance to our Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery staff. Their work in pulling weeds, removing artificial and dead flowers from graves to include clearing the grounds of the cemetery helped in beautifying and readying our veterans final resting place for a day of remembrance at our upcoming Governor's Memorial Day Ceremony.



The Military Intelligence Battalion came out on May 29, 2012 with about 15 personnel to assist the HSVC staff remove the flags and artificial leis from the graves.

Photos by Willie Hirokane

The Air Force Sergeants Association worked from noon till 2:00 p.m. on April 20, 2012. They went straight to work and did another great job.



Information needed to obtain your DD-214's

From the National Archives and Records Administration

If you've been discharged from military service, your personnel files are stored at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Recent military service and medical records are not online. However, most veterans and their next-of-kin can obtain free copies of their DD Form 214 (Report of Separation) and other records 2 ways.

1. Use eVetRecs system to create your request online at

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

2. Mail or Fax a Standard Form SF-180

Online eVetRecs system creates a customized order form to request information from you, or your relatives's records. You may use this system if you are:

- A military veteran
- Next of kin of a deceased, former member of the military. The next of kin can be any of the following: surviving spouse that has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister or brother.

Required Information:

- Veterans complete name used while in service
- Service number
- Social security number

- Branch of service
- Dates of service
- Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known)
- If you suspect your records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, also include:
 - Place of discharge
 - Last unit assignment
 - Place of entry into the service, if known
- If you are the next of kin of a deceased veteran, you must provide proof of death of the veteran such as a copy of death certificate, letter from funeral home, or published obituary.

Meet the Hawaii Women's Military Veterans Task Force



From left to right of the 14 Women Veterans: Noe Foster, Patricia Scott, Raquel Ramos, Chelsea Ann Fernandez, Terii Perez, Ann Freed, Anji Lowe, Monica Lynch, Maxine Cavanaugh, Kat Eisenbrey, Roxanne Bruhn and Patricia Matthews.



Missing from photo: Ann Greenlee

Photos by Jayme Sato

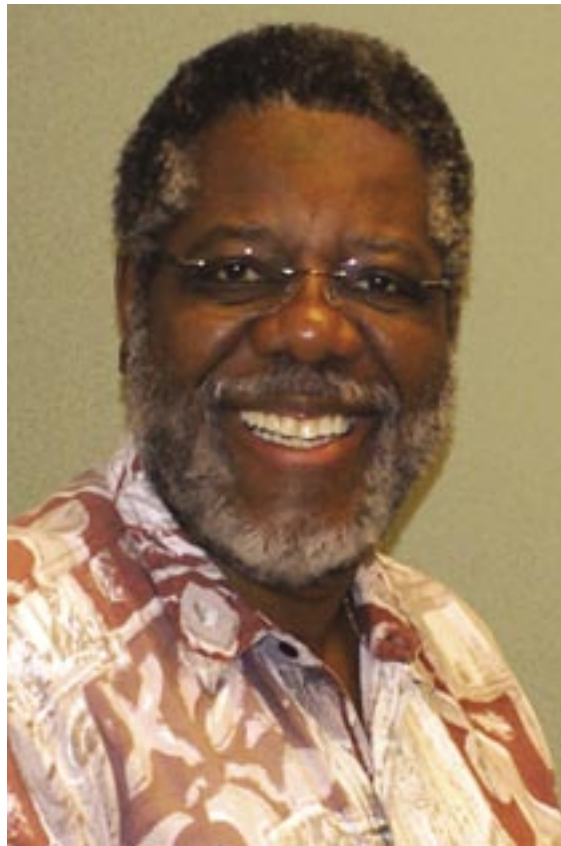
Thank you Carswell J. Ross Jr. for your hard work and dedication to the Office of Veterans Services

By Jennifer Aina
Executive Secretary

Carswell J. Ross, Jr., who is Carswell Ross, I ask myself? I could tell you of his many accomplishments while being in the Air Force, the Hawaii Air National Guard and the State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; or his time in college while working towards his Bachelors in Psychology and finally receiving his Masters in Counseling and Guidance. But, I am not going into details on his career endeavors or on his numerous accomplishments.

Instead, I will only tell you of my experience while working with him at our State of Hawaii Office of Veterans Services since the day he started in November of 1988. Sure, I've met him briefly while working at the Governor's Office. But, I never got to really know him until the year 1988 to the present.

Caz, as everyone calls him, generally speaking, is an easy to talk to kind of person. He makes conversations interesting and hilarious; his wide range of knowledge or views on any given subject is just so very intellectual but yet "down to earth". His ease and comforting stanzas in his discussions with



Carswell (Caz) J. Ross Jr. has a total combined of 43 years as a State Civil Servant.

everyone he comes into contact with is not only genuine, but also noticeably sincere. One example is when veterans walk into the office. Many times they are anxious and argumentative. And why? Because of having to continue

their fight to receive their "right to benefits"; continually being misunderstood by society or simply trying to get HELP! Oh sorry, got off the track somehow. Anyway, the veteran walks into Caz's office, sits down and spends the hour sharing their personal issues. He calmly listens attentively and reviews their incidences while in the military. As I witness this, I later see the veteran walk out of his office with a totally different outlook. The veteran's attitude is more positive and there is a display of confidence with exuberant satisfaction. Most of all, there is a feeling of greater respect for our office and the man they spent their time with, Caz.

I witness others asking his advice on life, politics, work, school, love, you name it, Caz has got the answers. Is he a walking encyclopedia or is he in touch with the Dalai Lama? Or is he phenomenal Caz Bear, as he is called by a co-worker?

Directors from various departments, Legislators from the federal to state levels, co-workers, and VA staff members, they all depend on his knowledge and advice on especially rules and regulations concerning veterans and the history of OVS.

Lastly, this is the Caz I know. I am sure that many who have been in contact with him have experienced this firsthand. There is so much more to say about him. For me, this is who Caz is; a most wonderful human being that sees everyone on an equal level. He doesn't see their color, their level of education, their level of hierarchy or gender. Caz only sees a person who he would like to help.



Caz Ross with the previous OVS Directors. From left to right. Retired Officers Maj. Mark Moses, Lt. Col. Larry Lee, Chief Master Sgt. Caz Ross and Col. Edward Cruickshank.

Photos by Jayme Sato

Gov. Neil Abercrombie
Commander in Chief

Maj. Gen. Darryll D.M. Wong
The Adjutant General

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Frequently Asked Questions

By Joseph Flores

Hilo Veterans Services Counselor

OK so you got a denial from the Veterans Administration (VA) and now what?

Let's explain a few VA words that are often confusing:

NOD: Notice of Disagreement

VA Form 4138: Statement in support of claim

BVA: Board of Veterans Appeals

DRO: Decision Review Officer

Just because the VA denied you doesn't mean that's it! Now we have to prove to them that we still have a case and a good argument. Now we can try to appeal your claim.

The first step in appealing a claim is to send the VA regional office a "Notice of Disagreement" (NOD). There is no official NOD form. Generally, the NOD can be a written statement on VA Form 21-4138 (Statement in Support

of Claim) or a letter that states that you disagree with the decision (but make it legible). Be sure to include in your NOD the date of the decision that you disagree with. Include the issues you disagree with and that you intend to appeal. You have one year from the date of the VA's notice of its decision to file your NOD with the VA regional office.

During that one year, use that time to gather additional information regarding your case. (Find medical files, letters and anything that will help your case). If you miss this deadline, you can only reopen your claim based on new and material evidence or you need to establish that the VA denial was the product of a clear and unmistakable error (which is very difficult to prove unless you can show that they missed something that you had previously sent and it wasn't included in your files).

After the VA receives your NOD, you should receive a letter that ac-

knowledges your NOD. (Usually 30-60 days.) You will be asked whether you wish to have your appeal sent to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) in Washington, D.C., or whether you wish to have your claim reviewed on a de novo (new review) basis. The latter refers to the VA's Decision Review Officer (DRO) program. This is an informal process within the regional office (In Hawaii). The DRO has the authority to reverse or modify a VA rating board decision. This is why it's important to have all documentation to prove your case. We recommend that you seek a DRO review and discuss your case with a qualified benefits counselor before you request a BVA appeal. The DRO process is frequently successful and is generally faster to get to see someone face to face and explain your side of the disagreement.

Be patient! It can take up to more than a year to be successful with the total review of your case.

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