

Kauai residents voting in a tent



By Ken Igo, Star-Bulletin

Residents of Anahola cast their primary election ballots this morning in a makeshift polling place set up by the Army National Guard.

The Hawaii Army and Air National Guard are helping with the election

By Gregg K. Kakesako
Star-Bulletin

ANAHOLA, Kauai — Lihue Planation worker Joe Contrades was in line early this morning to vote at Hawaii's first tented polling place in this tiny Hawaiian Homes community.

But Contrades wasn't the first person to cast his vote and the delay had nothing to do with the devastation of last week's Hurricane Iniki.

Contrades discovered after he voted that he had accidentally thrown away the special Board of Education pink ballot

and had to go back to poll workers to get a new set of ballots to repeat the process.

The distinction of being Hawaii's first voter to cast a ballot in an Army tent went to Robert Marchino, who works for Barking Sands' crash, fire, and rescue team, and his wife Gay, a Hanalei Elementary School teacher.

He whizzed through the check-in process and had finished voting 12 minutes after the polls opened at 7 this morning.

Marchino examined the ballot box, signed the affidavit that he was the precinct's first voter and then handed his ballot to Hawaii Air Guard Sgt. Kevin Fukuda, who had volunteered to serve as a poll worker.

Darlene Pa, Anahola precinct worker, said the Guard was asked to provide poll workers because elections officials weren't sure how many of the regular

workers would show up today.

But Pa said she is lucky all seven of her workers reported to work. "Now I have two extra workers," referring to another Hawaii Air National Guard volunteer, Ronald Reclusado.

Lt. Gov. Ben Cayetano, the state's chief elections officer, is depending heavily on resources of the Hawaii National Guard.

Besides providing 150 volunteer poll workers, the Guard also has the important mission of airlifting to Oahu all of the ballots cast after 12 noon to Honolulu at 7 p.m. today.

Pa wasn't too optimistic that Anahola's 665 voters would match their past high voter turnout reputation.

"There is just too much other things happening," Pa said. "I don't think people are worrying about voting; they are just too worried about their homes."