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Guard members say aloha to Garden Isle

By Kris M. Tanahara
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About 1,000 Hawaii National Guard troops from Oahu, Maui, Molokai and the Big Island will return home this weekend from duty on Kauai, the state Department of Defense said yesterday.

More than 525 soldiers from the Hawaii Army National Guard's 1st and 2nd Battalions, 299th Infantry, have been on Kauai since Sept. 12. They were the first to arrive and will be replaced by 175 soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery, based on Oahu.

About 515 members from the Hawaii Air National Guard also will be returning after nearly a week in Lihue. They participated in Operation Garden Sweep, a coordinated action to pick up trash and debris for transportation to landfills.

The Air Guard members are from the 154th Composite Group and 201st Combat Communication Group, both based at Hickam Air Force Base.

In other developments:

■ The USS Bristol County, a Navy amphibious landing ship that is in Hawaii for scheduled training, will deliver electrical generators and civilian relief supplies to Nawiliwili Harbor tomorrow.

Since hurricane recovery operations began, Navy ships have transported nearly 2 million pounds of military and civilian relief material to the Garden Isle.

■ Personal loans of up to \$25,000 and business loans of up to \$50,000 are available at 5 percent interest through the Hawaii State Disaster Loan Program.

They supplement U.S. Small Business Administration loans and are offered on-site at disaster application centers.

■ The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the state Department of Health — with the help of Bank of America Hawaii, the U.S. Army "Toys for Tykes" program and Aloha Airlines — will be holding a toy drive for children traumatized or suffering from stress from Hurricane Iniki.

■ Hawaii Foodbank will be collecting canned food and other non-perishable items during a benefit concert 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. tomorrow at Waikiki Shell.

Food is still being collected at all Bank of America branches on Oahu; LeSea Broadcasting, 1188 Bishop St.; and Gold's Gym, 1680 Kapiolani Blvd.

Volunteers are needed to sort and pack food. For more information, call Hawaii Foodbank at 847-4655.

■ The American Red Cross has a toll-free hot line that Hawaii residents can call to get the latest information about disaster relief services provided by the Red Cross.

The hot line is staffed from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The number is (800) 773-1141.

People who still haven't been able to get in touch with immediate family members on Kauai can call their local chapter of the Red Cross or the Hawaii state chapter, (808) 734-2101, for assistance.