

## 'Doc' Hill, Julian Yates Recall

# 1,400 Big Islanders Were Called Up 50 Years Ago

By EUGENE TAO

Now it seems a long time ago. To be exact, it was one-half century ago.

On a rainy day in April of 1918, the SS "Maui" sailed quietly into Hilo Harbor. Several hundred young men marched aboard the vessel.

She continued her journey to Kona and picked up another batch of several hundred young men.

In all, the "Maui" picked up some 1,400 Big Islanders, before leaving for Maui.

It was a call-up for the Hawaii National Guard.

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First Lt. William (Doc) H. Hill, who had to close his optical and jewelry store on Kamehameha Avenue to answer the call, reminisced it was a shock to Big Islanders.

"It was a great shock . . . about like now," former Lt. Hill recalled.

The then Capt. Julian R. Yates from Kona, now retired, recalled, "You had no choice."

The "Maui" continued her journey to Kahului to pick up some more men. When the guards men finally reached Schofield Barracks, it was evening, dark and there was



W. H. (DOC) HILL  
... As 1918 Soldier

no food. When all Hawaii guardsmen gathered the next day, there were a total of 6,000 of them, divided into two regiments.

Both Lt. Hill and Capt. Yates belonged to the 299th Regiment, which was composed of soldiers from non-Oahu islands. Oahuans composed the 298th Regiment.

But guardsmen of those days preferred to call their regiment the "Hawaiian Infantry."

So they called the 298th regiment, the "1st Hawaiian Infantry" and the 299th Regiment, the "2nd Hawaiian Infantry."

Lt. Hill commanded Company L and Capt. Yates commanded Company C, both belonging to the "2nd Hawaiian Infantry."

"We marched, and drilled, twice in the morning," Lt. Hill remembered.

"They worked us pretty hard," Capt. Yates said.

But the major task in the barracks for the guardsmen was to clean up the camp.

"We kept on cleaning the camp and got rid of the guava trees," Lt. Hill said in describing his camp life.

Capt. Yates recalls his camp life as:

"We wound up fighting mosquitos and mud . . . The sky was black with mosquitos. I used a mosquito net to



W. H. (DOC) HILL  
... As 1968 Lawmaker

cover my face and head . . ."

But the call-up was for real. There was a war going on in Europe—World War I.

The "Hawaiian Infantries" went to Schofield to relieve the 3rd Cavalry Battalion, which was sent to battlefields in Europe.

There was a rumor in July that "Hawaiian Infantries" would be sent to Siberia, according to Capt. Yates.

But all ended well. The war ended in Nov., 1918. In February, 1919, all Hawaiian guardsmen, most of them Filipinos, were discharged. Instead of battlefields, most Big Island guardsmen returned to their canefields.

Both Yates and Hill later became prominent figures in Hawaii. Yates served in the Territorial Legislature and the County Board of Supervisors for a combined period of nearly 50 years.

Hill not only became successful in business; he also is one most popular senators in the State Legislature where he is the Senior lawmaker in the upper house.

Old days are gone. So are many of the Hawaii soldiers. Sen. Hill only can recall an orderly under his company who lives in Papakou, Sen. Yates still remembers Herbert Shipman in Hilo, Kenji Sakai in Kohala, John Rickard in

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Hilo and Peter Pakele in Hilo, all captains in 2nd Hawaiian Infantry.

The world has turned over many times since Hill's and Yates' bootcamp days.

But "old soldiers never die; they just fade away," and, they just love to tell stories to young soldiers.

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