

Nelson M. Kunitake
P.O. Box 189
Mt. View, Hawaii 96771
April 9, 2024

Dawn N.S. Chang
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621,
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

Subject: Letter of Support for Army Land Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area

Dear Chairperson Dawn Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources

I am writing to express my strong support for the U.S. Army's proposed retention of approximately 23,000 acres of state-owned land at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawaii. As a concerned citizen and President of the Hawaii National Guard Retirees Association (BINGRA), I recognize the critical role that PTA plays in military training and preparedness, we believe that Army retention of PTA is essential for the for the following reasons:

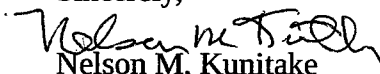
PTA is removed from the Continental U.S. where training bases are more readily accessible. With the urbanization within the state also limits where training can be done. The training conducted is not available on other areas within the state. Beside the maneuver space, the elevation offers high altitude training for aviation units, a desert type climate and a mountain which affects the weather. The conditions encountered at PTA are similar to what National Guard troops have encountered throughout hot spots they deploy to.

The Hawaii National Guard responds to Natural Disasters which are beyond the scope of local counties. Because of the inherent design of military units which stresses teamwork, the National Guard is successful in meeting this goal, whether responding to volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods, earthquakes or fires. Individual soldiers train and develop much of the necessary skills at sites that permit military combat training such as PTA and in turn concurrently develop other skills.

Mutual support from the military through Mutual Aid Agreements with the County of Hawaii Police Department, Fire Department, Civil Defense, State Office of Homeland Security. These agreements enhance and supplement the response and scope of our local agencies. Partly attributed to global warming, invasive species and urbanization, these events occur more frequently and with a greater intensity. When a hurricane occurs in Hawaiian Waters or on land, we will also need assistance if the effects exceed the capability of local agencies.

Thank you for considering these concerns. Please feel free to contact me for further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Nelson M. Kunitake
President
BINGRA

Primasita M. Menor
94-301 Malana Place
Mililani, HI 96789

April 5, 2024

Dawn Chang
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, HI 96707

Subject: Letter of Support for Army Land Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area

Dear Chairperson Dawn Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

I am writing to express my strong support for the U.S. Army's proposed retention of up to approximately 23,000 acres of state-owned land at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawaii. As a concerned citizen and someone who recognizes the critical role that PTA plays in military training and readiness preparation, I sincerely believe that Army retention of PTA is essential for several reasons:

As a retired member of both the US Army and Hawaii Army National Guard, I fully understand the critical retention PTA represents in terms of essential military training and national security. PTA represents the only expansive training area for the military (Army, Reserves, Guard and USMC) in Hawaii. I was a senior logistician working for US Army Pacific for the last 40 years until retirement. On numerous occasions, the military tried to fire 155mm projectiles at Schofield Barracks ranges only to have too many charges in the projectile which resulted in gunners overshooting the trajectory and rounds landing in the Waianae community. Pohakuloa Training Area allows for the extended range charges to be used. This is an essential part of the core training for artillery so that when confronted with actual events such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, our Soldiers and Marines would be in high readiness. Furthermore, I worked for US Army Pacific Command when 9-11 occurred and the Hawaii Army National Guard and other Guard units

were elevated from a tier III to a tier I type unit. That means that the Guard went from training every other year to full combat readiness. Hawaii Guard was better trained than other Guard units but other Guard units suffered heavy casualties in the war against terrorism. PTA would ensure our military personnel would remain in high readiness.

Safety of Hawaii: Our state relies heavily on the National Guard to ensure the safety of its people and to help mitigate the devastating effects of natural disasters such as Hurricane Iniki, the Kilauea eruption that wiped out Leilani Estates on 2018, Kauai's flooding in Hanapepe and the Wainiha areas of Kauai's north shore. They were instrumental in providing state-wide response to mitigate the COVID-19 virus of 2020-2022, in addition to support of the wildfires in Lahaina. In order for them to retain their expertise, training at PTA is vital to their mission capability.

PTA is essential in supporting Hawaii's First Responders. The Hawaii Police Department, State Civil Defense agency, State Office of Homeland Security, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency and the Hawaii emergency First Responders have all used PTA to ensure continued readiness when needed. There is no other place in the state of Hawaii which can accommodate these personnel and provide the land resources required for them to maintain their skill sets.

The Army has provided expert archeological and cultural staff assets to catalog and preserve Hawaiian archeological and cultural sites. The Army is committed to compliance and sustainability through its Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan. US Army Garrison-Pohakuloa conducts archeological surveys of sites and also monitors over 35 archeological sites for effects from troops and hooved animals, or ungulates such as pigs and goats. The Cultural Team also preserves and ensures the protection of cultural shrines, habitation caves, burial sites and pictographs that date back to around the 15th century.

The Army has been an excellent steward of these sites and have been respectful of the Hawaiian culture while striving to minimize any adverse environmental impacts.

As a former senior logistician, I worked to ensure that all brass residue was brought back to Oahu and turned into our Ammunition Supply Point for retrograde back to continental United States munitions depots for recycling

or demilitarization. We were diligent in policing up our ranges and ensuring the safety of future units who required training at PTA.

There are probably more points but these are a few of what I felt was critically important to the retention of PTA for the Army. Thank you for taking the time to read this and I sincerely hope these are taken into consideration when planning for the future of PTA.

I am currently in my Colorado residence, but I retain full residency in Hawaii. I am here until Nov when I return home. I can be contacted the address above, or my email: pmenor48@gmail.com. My phone number is 808 497-0474.

Colorado address until Nov 2024: 8251 Allison Ct., Arvada, CO 80005
(720) 535-6106n(landline).

Sincerely,


Primasita Menor

Second Vice Commander
American Legion Post 17
US Army (Retired)

Francis E Riddell
92-100 Hoina Pl
Kapolei, HI 96707
4 April 2024

Dawn Chang
Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 621,
Honolulu, HI 96809

Subject: Letter of Support for Army Land Retention at Pohakuloa Training Area

Dear Chairperson Dawn Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources

I am writing to express my strong support for the U.S. Army's proposed retention of up to approximately 23,000 acres of state-owned land at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA) on the island of Hawaii. As a concerned citizen and someone who recognizes the critical role that PTA plays in military training and preparedness. I believe that Army retention of PTA is essential for several reasons:

Military Training and National Security-

Military training at Pōhakuloa Training area (PTA) has been critical to National Security since World War II in preparation for battles across the Pacific. PTA's terrain, climate, and size is ideal for simulated real-world scenarios, joint exercises, and live-fire drills. If the Army is unable to retain this land, it will significantly impact the readiness of our military and our military's ability to train effectively in the Pacific.

It also allows our Hawai'i National Guard to train to be prepared to respond to natural disasters or hazardous events that impact the people of the State of Hawai'i.

High Altitude and desert like conditions-

The high altitude, and desert like conditions of PTA provides rigorous training experiences that prepares our troops for this type of environment across the world. Similar terrain can be found in Asia, portions of Southeast Asia, West Africa, and the Middle East region where hybrid warfare threats to the United States of America exist.

Critical for the Hawai'i Army National Guard-

Army Retention of PTA is critical for our Hawai'i National Guard training. PTA played and continues to play a critical role in training our own Hawai'i Army National Guard Troops. PTA was very instrumental in preparing our Guardsman for their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan from 2004-2013, and 2023.

Training at PTA was also critical for our Hawai'i Guardsmen in preparation for their 2019 deployment to the Sinai in Egypt and to Kosovo. Under presidential orders, the Hawai'i Army National Guard continues to deploy our Hawai'i Soldiers across the world, with 8 Soldiers to West Africa in support of Operation Juniper Shield in 2023, and the 2-641 Aviation Regiment deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom - Spartan Shield in 2024.

Army Retention of PTA ensures that our Guardsman have the best training in preparation for their deployments into operational contingencies and combat zones.

For these reasons, and many more, I ask you to please support the Army's plan to retain land at PTA and utilize it to keep Hawai'i and America safe.

Thank you for considering these points. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Francis E Riddell
SMSgt Retired, USAF