

Preservation and Partnerships

Sacred Places on Army Lands in Hawaii

The 25th Infantry Division Light and U. S. Army, Hawaii (USARHAW) is comprised of 28 sub-installations covering 161,000 acres on the islands of Hawaii and Oahu. These lands, hereinafter referred to as the Installation, include six active training ranges and three large cantonment areas. The training ranges contain over 400 archeological sites, two of which (Ukanipo Heiau and Hanakaoe Heiau) are on the National Register of Historic Places. The sub-installations of Fort Shafter and Wheeler Army Airfield each contain a National Historic Landmark district. Schofield Barracks and Kilauea Military Camp each contain a large National Register of Historic Places district. In all, there are 750 buildings listed on or determined eligible for the National Register and two archeological sites.

Many of the sites on installation lands can be classified as either traditional cultural places or sacred sites, areas important to the native Hawaiian population as traditional religious, hunting, gathering, and fishing areas. These sites include shrines, temples or *heiau*, taro fields or *loi*, and natural areas having religious significance. These sites also include “new” traditional

cultural places, such as this *heiau* near the Makua Military Reservation.

In 1998, the Installation began a process to open the Ukanipo Heiau site to native Hawaiian religious practitioners under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. A National Register site complex covering 105 acres, it is located outside the active training area at the Makua Military Reservation (Reservation) on land leased from the State of Hawaii. The Reservation, composed of two valleys, Makua and Kahanahaiki, consists of fee-simple lands, ceded lands, and lands leased from the State of Hawaii. Because of the complex land issues that affect site access and management, a cooperative effort was envisioned between the native Hawaiian community in the Waianae/Makua area, the State of Hawaii as landowner, and the Army as land-user. The goal was to give the native Hawaiian community curatorial oversight of the Heiau with financial and personnel support from the Army under the State Custodial Management Program.

In March 1998, the Army asked the native Hawaiian community to provide volunteers to sit on a Ukanipo Heiau Advisory Board that would be responsible for drawing up:

- a site stabilization plan,
- a site access and use plan, and
- a long-term management and maintenance plan.

Per the request of the native Hawaiian community, the Army agreed to allow them to choose a Native Hawaiian, who would be a paid consultant, to be the leader or facilitator of the group. On March 23, 1998, the Heiau was officially “opened” in a ceremony, allowing members of the community to visit the site for the first time in 50 years. In 1998, the Ukanipo Heiau Advisory Council O Wahipana O Makua, was formed, consisting of 14 members of the Waianae/Leeward Coast community and advisors from the Army and the State of Hawaii Historic Preservation Division. The members from the community represented families with ancestral

“Opening” ceremony for Ukanipo Heiau, March 23, 1998.





After action review of detonation of 500-pound bomb by Native Hawaiians and EOD, Makua.

ties to Makua, as well as interested organizations such as Malama Makua, Koa Mana, and the kupu`o ka`aina O Wai`anae.

Beginning in August 1998, five World War II-era bombs, ranging in size from 100 to 1,000 pounds, were discovered within the site complex over a four-month period while surveying and mapping the site. After six months of intense consultation between the Army, the native Hawaiian community and the State of Hawaii, these bombs were successfully detonated while minimizing impact to the site. The detonations took place on three separate occasions. The Ukanipo Council worked closely with the explosive experts to determine how to avoid site elements during detonation. Several members volunteered to accompany the unexploded ordnance detail (EOD) to inspect the bomb locations prior to detonation and to designate important sites that needed to be avoided. The Army provided helicopter support and personnel who took measures to cover portions of the sites to protect them against bomb fragments. Almost all of the members of the Ukanipo Council were present during each pre-detonation site preparation, each detonation, and post-detonation site inspection to ascertain damage. The EOD subsequently located and detonated 81 other smaller pieces of unexploded ordnance.

Beginning in January 1999, the Ukanipo Council met every two weeks to work on the formation of a programmatic agreement for the management of the Heiau. They examined the maps prepared by the archeologists that had surveyed the site, discussed details of cultural protocol and access, and discussed initial planting and landscaping plans. The Ukanipo Council wrote

the programmatic agreement with input from the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Ocean Division. On October 12, 2000, all of the parties signed the programmatic agreement for the management of Ukanipo Heiau. Under the terms of the programmatic agreement, the Installation

- recognizes the Ukanipo Heiau Advisory Council O Wahipana O Makua as the stewards of the site,
- guarantees access to the Ukanipo Heiau site complex,
- agrees to provide all maps, survey reports, photographs, and other survey materials for the Heiau to the Ukanipo Council,
- agrees to aid in site maintenance activities including stabilization of stone structures, building a fence, and providing water for landscaping, and
- agrees to complete a survey of archeological features associated with the Heiau.

The Ukanipo Heiau Advisory Council O Wahipana O Makua agrees to

- maintain the landscaping and erosion control features,
- monitor effects of site use, develop interpretive and educational programs, and
- implement access and cultural protocols.

The State of Hawaii agrees to

- serve in a technical assistance capacity on all aspects of preservation, and
- act as a conduit for other State of Hawaii agencies.

The Ukanipo Council is now overseeing the implementation of the management plan.

Because of the successful establishment of the Ukanipo Council, the Installation has since 1999 hired two native Hawaiians to participate in the Traditional Cultural Places Surveys at Makua Military Reservation, Schofield Barracks, and Pohakuloa Training Area. Informal partnerships have also been established with Hawaiian civic clubs, other native Hawaiian organizations, and families and individuals from various communities to help the Installation identify and manage sites. A public outreach program also is being developed to permit native Hawaiians, especially the *kupuna*, or elders, to tour archeological sites as safety permits.

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Photos by the author.