



Photo by Robert H. McElroy

# Pohakuloa Training Area Celebrates 50 Years of Service to the Military

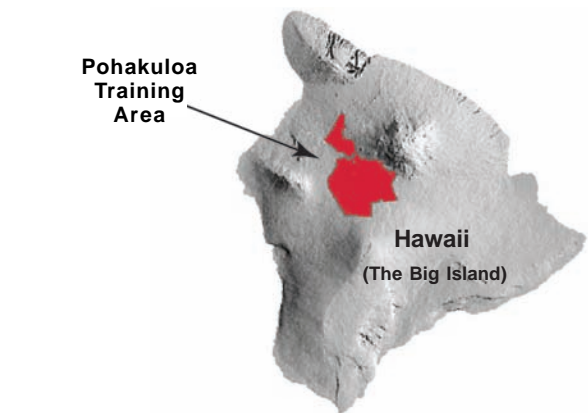
By Mr. Robert H. McElroy

**R**ecently, Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA), on the Big Island of Hawaii, celebrated 50 years of service as the prime military training area in the Pacific Region. First used as a Marine Corps artillery base during World War II, the 133,000-acre PTA came under Army control following the war. In the mid-1950s, Oahu-based Soldiers built the Quonset huts that have become the post's signature building.

Over the years, PTA has hosted units from every American military service, as well as military personnel from allied nations and other federal agencies. The post's numerous training ranges, impact area, and remote location make PTA an ideal place for up to battalion-size units to train.

Although the military has changed dramatically over the last 50 years, the mission of PTA has not changed—to support and sustain (the warfighter) military training. But even though we are a nation at war, it is also important to balance the training mission with protecting the environment. To that end, Hawaii has dedicated personnel and resources to ensure that its more than 300 sensitive cultural resources are here for generations to come. Balancing the training requirements of the military while promoting environmental sustainability practices is a top priority for the Army Installation Management Agency.

As the Army transforms and Stryker brigade combat teams take their place in the way the Army fights, PTA will likely become even more important. Some consider PTA the third most significant Stryker training facility—behind Fort Irwin,



California, and Fort Polk, Louisiana—and a linchpin in future Stryker training. The Army is investing millions of dollars in PTA because of its strategic importance to the future of the Army and other military services in Hawaii and the Pacific.

A commemorative service was held at PTA to mark the 50th anniversary, which included the blessing and unveiling of a pohaku or stone, as well as recognition of all the Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors who have trained and worked at PTA over the last half century.



*Mr. McElroy was the Pohakuloa Training Area Public Affairs Officer at the time this article was written. He is now the Public Affairs Officer for the United States Army Area III Support Activity, Camp Humphreys, Korea.*