



# Media Release

Pohakuloa Public Affairs

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Army selects PTA for best fire unit award**

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POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii—No one knows about fires and emergencies better than the firefighters/emergency medical technicians of Pohakuloa Training Area.

The U.S. Army recently selected PTA Fire and Emergency Services as the Army Fire Department of the Year 2007 (Small Department category).

“These firefighters are the best, and it’s nice that these firefighters are recognized for the work that they do here,” said Eric Moller, deputy fire chief/acting garrison fire chief, PTA Fire and Emergency Services. “PTA’s fire department responded to 900 emergency calls last year.”

“PTA’s Fire and Emergency Services personnel have been supporting PTA and the Big Island communities over the years, doing lots of EMS (emergency medical services) and assisting in car crashes on Saddle Road,” Moller said. “Our firefighters put a lot of effort and professionalism (in their job).”

PTA Fire and Emergency Services personnel saved at least 38 lives on the Big Island last year.

“We do an array of fire and emergency operations from structural fires and damages, crash fields, wildland fires, search and rescue missions, and emergency medical responses with ambulances,” Steve Coloma, acting captain, PTA Fire and Emergency Services, said.

PTA has 21 firefighters/emergency medical technicians who keep themselves prepared for all types of responses on a daily basis.

“Besides identifying daily tasks and assigned apparatus equipment, we also do a lot of mental preparations everyday,” Coloma said. “Between wildland fires, emergency medical services and, structural fires, and car crashes, we keep ourselves prepared by continuing to check our apparatus and equipment, and reviewing certain procedures based on our certification levels.”

“The other thing we do is physical fitness,” Coloma added. “We do one-and-a-half hours to two hours of working out each day. We do wildland pack training, which consists of 45 minutes of activities with 45 pounds of gear on our backs.”

“We also incorporate physical fitness by doing squats, aerobic workouts like walking and running, and arduous work such as digging and bench presses as part of our workout,” Coloma said.

The selection process was meticulously done by the DA-level selection board.

This was a difficult task as each of the nominations represented outstanding service and accomplishments, according to Maj. Gen. John A. MacDonald, deputy commanding general, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Installation Management Command. Those selected were exceptional candidates and will represent the Army well as nominees before the Department of Defense selection panel (when the awards will be announced and presented at the DoD Awards Banquet in August).

Brig. Gen. Dennis E. Rogers, U.S. Army Director of Operations and Facilities, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Installation Management Command, had much praise for PTA Fire and Emergency Services in a letter addressed to Deputy Fire Chief Moller.

“Your department’s accomplishments ensure the type of service our Soldiers, civilians, and their families deserve, and truly provide an organization for other Army Fire and Emergency Services departments to emulate,” Rogers wrote.

“The comprehensive and professional fire and emergency medical services you provide to the Army, Air Force, and Marine live fire training area on the Big Island of Hawaii is commendable,” he added.

“This significant accomplishment reflects great credit on the Pacific Region, and the commitment of its garrisons, to provide outstanding service and protection of life, limb, and property on the installation,” Rogers wrote. “Your department is truly top notch at serving the Soldiers, family members, and civilian personnel who live, work, and train at PTA and is a key element in making it one of the Army’s finest installations.”