



News Release

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PTA archaeologist leaves eight year legacy

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii—The archaeologist for Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) will soon leave an eight year footprint of his work in this Army installation on the Big Island of Hawaii. William Godby, or “Bill” for those who know him at PTA, is ready for his next journey on April 27.

Godby has done a lot since first arriving at PTA.

“I first came to PTA during a field school with the University of Hawaii-Manoa Anthropology Department in 1997, so I was already somewhat aware of the archaeology and terrain, what the drive would be like up and down the road from Hilo,” Godby said. “My first venture up Saddle Road to PTA was a learning experience.”

“I had never seen a landscape change so dramatically, from a rainforest to barren lava fields,” he added. “I did not quite understand the landscape at that time as I do now, and I remember having many questions. I was also not aware how large PTA really was and how varied the landscape is.”

Godby first worked as PTA's senior cultural resource specialist under the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) in 2001 and eventually became PTA's archaeologist in 2004.

"I oversee and direct five contract archaeologists in implementing the U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii Cultural Resources Program management goals and objectives, surveys, site evaluation and eligibility determinations, site monitoring and protection," said Godby.

He also has responsibility for the administration of a small-in-house curatorial facility, carrying out all Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) regulations that include repatriation and reburials that occur in a culturally sensitive manner, serve a cultural liaison for the U.S. Army as the subject matter specialist for cultural resources at PTA, direct and coordinate public outreach actions that include field trips to sacred sites and landscapes within PTA, and coordinates and provide cultural sensitivity briefings to all Soldiers before training at PTA. The list goes on.

Godby's eight years have brought various accomplishments and two of them stand out for him.

"First, I have never had to oversee data recovery, the destruction of an archaeological site for the purpose of new construction," Godby said. "All projects that occurred at PTA have accommodated cultural resources. This has been achieved through the excellent work of the cultural resources staff performing on ground surveys as well as monitoring projects, teamwork and cooperation of various proponents on projects with Army staff and contractors. It is a testament to the commitment that the U.S. Army has in funding our program and being flexible that results in the protection of cultural resources here."

"The second accomplishment is the development of a cave survey and mapping program" he said. "I had only a very basic understanding of lava tubes prior to going underground with Don Coons (a caver and a full-time farmer who winters on the Big Island and works for the PTA cultural resource program)," he added.

Godby noted that "going caving with Don the first time was an 'eye opening' experience in a dark place. My focus was always on the archaeology and Don opened a door for me to see each and every cave as a unique place. From that moment, I changed my understanding of this resource that composes about 50 percent of our inventory. Since that time, myself and our entire staff have gained a significant understanding of lava tube systems and the role they played in Native Hawaiian activities at the upper elevations of the Saddle Road area."

"We have in place a solid program that incorporates our cave mapping team to acquire various data, including detailed maps, photos and geospatial information system (GIS) information for more than 12 miles of lava tubes within PTA. Many unknown caves remain to be mapped," he said.

Some memorable moments stick out for Godby, including flying in a Blackhawk helicopter 150 feet above the entire PTA training area at 180 miles-per-hour and spending four days at 11,000 feet at the Mauna Kea Adze Quarry Complex with Dr. Pat McCoy (formerly Big Island archaeologist for Department of Land and Natural Resources who devoted a great deal of his career to the complex), collecting global positioning system (GPS) data in joint effort to both assist in management resources on Mauna Kea and support U.S. Army requirements for high elevation helicopter training.

"We also drafted a court ordered archaeological site protection plan for the Stryker Mounted Gunnery System training at Range 11T," he added. "This plan involved many elements, including detailed archaeological surveys and complex GIS analysis. This site

protection plan was developed with the Stryker strategic planning team, reviewed by the Staff Judge Advocate, and the Department of Justice. The U.S. Army Stryker Brigade Combat Team's training was very important due to the war in Iraq and was in jeopardy because of the court order. I am very proud that our team was able to come together along with the use of GIS technology to successfully support this important Army training. That is why we are here."

Godby's next journey, along with his wife Jennifer, and children Melody, 8, and Gillian, 6, will be at New Mexico where he'll report to another U.S. Army installation.

"We will be moving from a rainforest to a desert (as in Hilo to Las Cruces)," said Godby. "The interesting thing is that Pōhakuloa looks a lot like White Sands Missile Range (in New Mexico). I am very excited about the archaeology. I've read and seen photographs of it, but now, I get to see it in person."

Now, having been here and done eight years at PTA, Godby's advice for the next archaeologist, "Go to bed early. The days are long up here."

NOTE: Godby has a Master's degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Hawaii. He received his Bachelor's degree in Anthropology, and degree in Philosophy, from the University of Michigan. He is a member of the Society of Hawaiian Archaeology, American Anthropological Association, and the National Speleological Society. Prior to PTA, Godby worked as a research assistant on the Global Research Center Curriculum Project for the University of Hawaii in Manoa in 2000 and worked as a cultural resources assistant for the Hawaii Army National Guard in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1999-2000. The soon-to-be vacant PTA archaeologist position will be announced to the public in the near future.