



Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii Undergoes Major Restoration

FORT DERUSSY, Hawaii —The U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii, located in Fort DeRussy’s Battery Randolph, in the heart of Waikiki, is currently undergoing some major renovations to more than double its existing gallery space.

“With the exception of the massive coastal defense guns atop the structure, Battery Randolph’s gun decks will return to the way they looked when first completed in 1911,” said Lt. Col. Michael Ferrill, project manager. “The original gun parapets were razed during the attempted demolition of Battery Randolph in 1969.”

The construction of replica gun parapets will be the biggest restoration project for the old gun battery since the mid 1970s, when Battery Randolph was transformed into the home of the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii.

The construction activity taking place today is more than a restoration project, according to museum director Judi Bowman.

“The interior of the replica gun parapets will create an additional 7,400 square feet of desperately needed space to collect, preserve, interpret and display the U.S. Army’s collection of historical property,” Bowman said, adding that Battery Randolph is “an excellent example of the Army’s adaptive reuse of its historic buildings.”

Battery Randolph is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites and is one of 16 coastal fortifications built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1906 and 1917 for the protection of Honolulu and Pearl Harbors.

U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from the 980th Engineer Battalion, under the command of the 420th Engineer Brigade, 416th Theater Engineer Command, are working with the Corps of Engineers and will conduct the renovation as part of their annual training requirements.

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The project, which is estimated at \$725,000, is the result of a partnership between the U.S. Army and the Hawaiian Army Museum Society (HAMS), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii.

HAMS has raised funds and support for museum improvements over the years through generous donations from its members and from the community at large. So far, HAMS has contributed more than \$1 million for the construction, restoration and creation of exhibits at the museum.

“The Battery Randolph restoration project is very ambitious and will certainly reward the local community and museum guests through the expanded gallery space,” said Col. Matthew T. Margotta, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii. “The real benefit is that the museum will be able to more fully share the Army’s history and highlight the significant role Hawaii has played, and continues to play, in the defense of our nation.”

When originally built, Battery Randolph was defended on the ocean side of the battery by the equivalent of 30 feet thick fortified concrete walls called parapets.

“The parapets were capable of withstanding a direct hit from a 2000-pound artillery shell,” explained Dorian Travers, Museum Curator. “It’s from behind these walls that the largest coastal defense guns in the entire Pacific, from California to the Philippines, hid the battery’s two 14-inch guns on disappearing carriages which were capable of hurling its 1600-pound projectiles up to 14 miles out to sea.”

The parapets were solid when first built. The new construction will replicate the look of the original structure leaving the interior open for artifact storage and administrative offices, while opening up spaces on the first floor of the museum for additional exhibits.

Although an engineering marvel and weapon for its day, the emplacement started to become obsolete with the advent of aircraft carriers. With the end of World War II came the realization that the fort was no longer capable of meeting the needs of the U.S. military in Hawaii. The giant guns were cut and sold for scrap, having never fired a shot in anger or defense.

Efforts were made in 1969 to demolish Fort DeRussy’s batteries to free up the prime real estate for other useful purposes, but Battery Randolph proved stubborn. Although the parapets were removed, the rest of the structure repeatedly defied destruction, and the demolition company contracted to remove the structure eventually went bankrupt in the process.

The building remained an eyesore for about a decade. Then, prompted by the vision of the late Maj. Gen. Herbert E. Wolff, HAMS was founded and work began to convert Battery Randolph into a military museum.

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“In 1976, the Army designated Battery Randolph home of the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii.” Bowman said. “We continue to expand and improve exhibits in the museum, keeping the Army’s history alive, current and relevant. You cannot find a better educational venue to learn about the history of the U.S. Army in Hawaii and the Pacific, and the vital role Hawaii’s citizenry played in the defense of our nation.”

In addition to the Hawaiian Army Museum Society, the U.S. Army Museum of the Pacific also houses the Army Corps of Engineers’ Pacific Regional Visitor Center (RVC), on the second floor of Battery Randolph. Since 1983, the RVC has worked to enhance the public’s understanding of the diverse role of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with particular emphasis on the Corps’ civil works and water resource development which affect the lives of all of Hawaii’s residents and the people of the Pacific.

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MEDIA NOTE: Media who would like more information or wish to visit the construction site should contact Loran Doane, Media Relations chief, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs at (808) 656-3157 or cell (317)-847-2222.

Side Note:

The US Army Museum of Hawaii is located in Honolulu and is situated adjacent to the Hale Koa Hotel, at the ocean side corner of Kalia and Saratoga roads.

The museum houses a wonderful gift store that sells military memorabilia, books, clothing, military unit insignia, and World War era and patriotic music, all reasonably priced.

The museum is free of charge and open to the public, Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed on some federal holidays, but open on military holidays.

Audio tours are available in English and Japanese.

Validated parking is available across the street from the museum, and disabled parking spaces will again be provided in front of the museum once the construction is complete.

Group tours can be arranged by calling (808) 438-2825.