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**Media Release**

Public Affairs Office

(808) 969-2411

Release number: 2014-02-04

Feb. 13, 2014

## **Marines blaze a trail at Waimea Nature Park**

**POHAKULOLOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** – Sixteen Marines from the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing donated their time to support the Waimea community on Saturday January 25, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Taking a break from their military training at Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA), the Marines cleared over 200 meters of brushed covered trail at the Waimea Nature Park in less than 4 hours. The Marine volunteers worked hard using rakes, picks, hoes and other hand tools to blaze a walking trail adjacent to the local stream. They re-purposed the wood chips as cover for the newly cleared path.

"It was a privilege to give back to the local Waimea community that supports our training at PTA," said Cpl. Nicholas Nissen. Adding to the discussion, Cpl. Will Rouse stated, "It was a spectacular opportunity to give back to the local community and learn a little history of the Hawaiian heritage in the process."

Located on the Big Island of Hawaii, the park is also known by its Hawaiian name "Ula Laau", which means garden of trees. It is a favorite place to visit by the Big Island community.

The event was hosted by Mr. Leningrad Elarionoff. He was appreciative for the opportunity to bond with the Marines, while helping the local Waimea community. "These Marines know how to work hard, most volunteer groups quit on me!" said Mr. Leningrad Elarionoff.

Mr. Elarionoff went on to say, "This land is rich in history, a special place for the Warrior. Today, we honor those that serve with this trail through history that links ancient Hawaiian Warriors to present-day defenders of our country. We thank the Marines who were training at PTA for being with us today and the hard work done by all."

The workday ended with the group of volunteer Marines gathered for lunch while listening to the verbal history of Camp Tarawa. The trail is named Ke Ala Kahawai or the Stream Trail of Waimea and courses through the site of old Camp Tarawa. During WWII, Camp Tarawa housed over 40,000 plus Marines while they trained for battle in the Tarawa Islands. Sadly, many of those young Marines never came back alive.

Mr. Elarionoff hopes that this trail will pay special tribute and in some way help keep their memories alive for all the sacrifice they made for our freedom.

Chaplain (Major) Rich Lee stated that this was a fantastic opportunity to support the local community that has done so much for our Nation's defense in providing an excellent training opportunity within their backyards since 1943.

For more information, call PTA Public Affairs (808) 969-2411, or visit [www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/pta](http://www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/pta).