

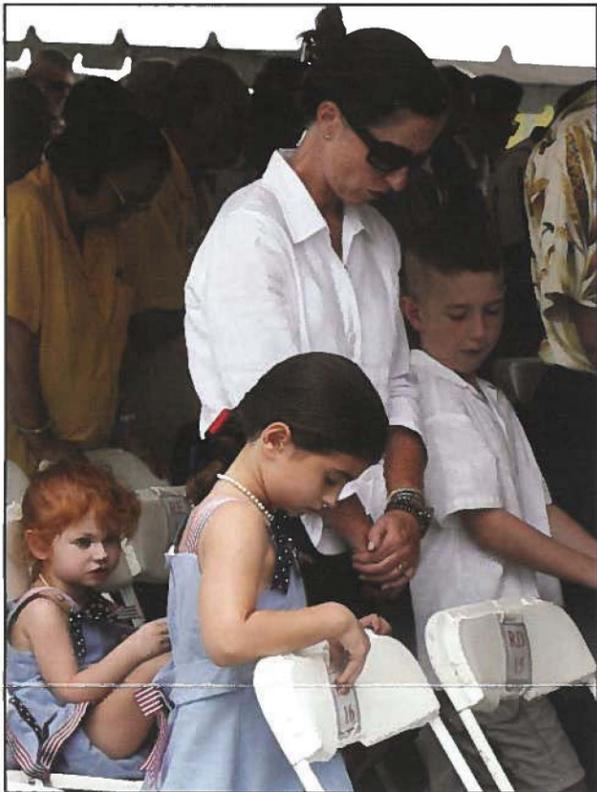


# HAWAII VETERAN

Vol. 11, No. 2 State of Hawaii Office of Veterans Services May-Jun 2007

## State of Hawaii remembers soldiers, sacrifice

By Shelly Ichishita



The family of Major Joseph McCloud, USMC who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in December of 2006 observes a moment of silence.

*Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige photo*

On the last Monday in May, approximately 800 veterans and families braved the traffic and the heat, not to picnic or laze at the beach, but rather to honor their fallen comrades by attending the Governor's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Hawaii State Veterans' Cemetery in Kaneohe.

This year, the audience was reminded that we need to honor all veterans. U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, through a letter read aloud by Master of Ceremonies Kimo Kahoano, urged those present to think about the "price of honor" and to remember the "tragedy and darkness of war"; especially when it comes time to extend a helping hand to those who have served. One method he suggested was to provide health and rehabilitation care to veterans.

Brig. Gen. Gary Ishikawa spoke about the long standing American tradition of honoring its fallen heroes, suggesting that it is this tradition that makes America prosperous and great. Memorial Day has been observed since May 30, 1868, when the Civil War dead at Arlington National Cemetery were remembered by the placing of flowers on their graves.

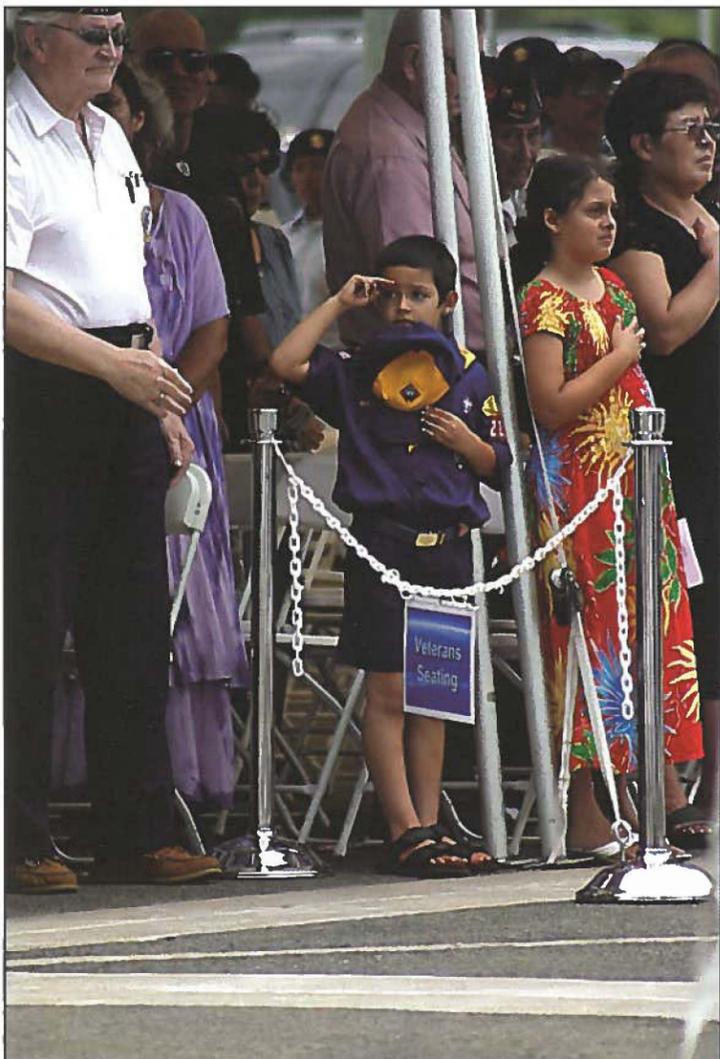
The keynote speaker, Governor Linda

Lingle, started her speech with the assertion that "for the majority of Americans, Memorial Day is the signal that summer is beginning." Memorial Day has a different meaning for those in attendance at Monday's ceremony. Gov. Lingle highlighted the importance of honoring Memorial Day: "it is important for us to continue to come, year after year, to pay tribute... so that the young people understand that it is because of the sacrifice that they [the veterans] made that we can go to the beach."

Many in the audience do come to the Governor's Memorial Day ceremony year after year. The Fleet Reserve Association Unit 46 has been to every Governor's Memorial Day since its inception 15 years ago, not only attending, but providing refreshments to the other attendees.

Another notable returnee is Kai Cazinha. This young boy has been assisting his grandfather, Robert E. Talmadge, president of the Aloha Chapter of The Chosin Few, in the parade of colors for three years.

120 Youth CHALLENGE Academy students, ranging in ages from 16-18, cleared away the chairs and tables used in the ceremony.



A young boy scout salutes during the Memorial Day Ceremony.

*Shelly Ichishita photo*



Robert Talmadge and his grandson, Kai Cazinha, proudly represent the Aloha Chapter of The Chosin Few.

*Shelly Ichishita photo*



## Director's Message

Col. Edward R. Cruickshank, U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Director, State Office of Veterans Services

We have some great news! This past legislative session we received approval for a clerk-typist position at our office located at Tripler, as well as the necessary funding for our cemetery at Kaneohe. Over 1.2 million dollars was

approved for new niches at our columbarium at Kaneohe. We are in the process of spending the \$564,000 for the slope and erosion control around the columbarium, to repair cracks in the columbarium and to repair a crack in one of the roads leading to the columbarium. The state Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) is currently negotiating the consultant fee with SSFM International to get this work accomplished.

We also received VA approval to proceed with our expansion plans for the West Hawaii Veterans' Cemetery. The first bid opening will be held on June 28. A prebid meeting was conducted by DAGS June 6. This is only the first phase of the revised master plan that my office is working hard on with VA to get approval and funding for.

The county of Kauai has set aside \$100,000 to fund the founda-

tion work for the columbarium at Kauai Veterans' Cemetery. Kauai Veterans Cemetery is anticipating the delivery of recast concrete columbarium niches.

We received approval to expand our advisory board members to include an additional representative from Kona. Ensuring that the Big Island veterans are adequately represented is very important and we thank Representative Cindy Evans for helping us gain approval.

Molokai is one step closer to a veterans home on their island. \$250,000 was allocated for the initial planning for a veterans home on the island of Molokai. This is a preliminary amount, but it's a great start.

In other legislative news, the State Legislature approved an additional \$100,000 for the upkeep of our neighbor island cemeteries. These monies have been needed for some time.

Our newsletter received funding for two more years. The \$47,500 will go towards printing and mailing of the newsletter. Currently, our mailing list includes 14,789 veterans, veterans' organizations, and officials.

By the time this newsletter gets to you, I will have stepped down as Director of Veterans Services for the State of Hawaii. It has been an honor to serve you, and my heart will always be with you as I move on. Together, we have accomplished a lot in the past three years, and I wish every success to my successor, Mr. Mark Moses.

## Memorial Day

By Ed Cruickshank

Memorial Day at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery was a tremendous success. Mr. Kimo Kahoano did a superb job as master of ceremonies and gave a moving rendition of the national anthem.

The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, performed for 15 minutes. The performance by The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, one of the premier bands in the U.S. Army, was flawless and awed the crowd.

The multi-talented Ginai (she's also a Jazz/R&B vocalist, songwriter, and percussionist in addition to performer) sang *Hawaii Pono'i* and *America the Beautiful*. Her performance of both songs was so very touching and brought tears to my eyes.

Thanks again to Miles Okamura, operations manager of the cemetery in Kaneohe, and his staff for doing such a wonderful job, and for making our cemetery such a special place for our loved ones.

It was also nice to see Tommy Kaluakakui Jr. at the ceremony representing his dad, the late Lt. Thomas Kaulakakui. The elder Kaulakakui was recently laid to rest at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery. Many know Tommy Kaluakakui Sr. as the quarterback on the



Governor Linda Lingle and Admiral Thomas Keating, Commander of U.S. Pacific Command place a wreath honoring all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country at the Memorial Day ceremony. Airman 1st Class Kimberly Lindell from the 15th Logistics Readiness Squadron served as wreath bearer on this occasion.

Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Iha photo

1925 University of Hawaii football team, and he was commonly considered to be the best football player in university history. During my remarks, I mentioned that the team now has their quarterback. Thank you to Tommy and all who attended the ceremony.

Congresswoman Mazie Hirono and Senator Daniel Akaka joined the 800 plus veterans and attendees at the Governor's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe. Senator Akaka is a veteran himself, having served in World War II. The senator also serves as Chairman of the U.S. Senate committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Iha photo



If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the Hawaii Veteran newsletter please mail your address to OVS at 459 Patterson Rd., E-Wing, Rm. 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819-1522. For any change of address please include both old address and new address.



### Hawaii Veteran

State of Hawaii Department of Defense

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**Gov. Linda Lingle**  
Commander in Chief

**Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee**  
The Adjutant General

**Col. (Ret) Edward R. Cruickshank**  
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# Advisory Board on Veterans Services



The members of the Office of Veterans Services Advisory Board on Veterans Services are appointed by the governor of the State of Hawaii.

This picture was taken at the June meeting hosted at the Oahu Veterans Council. A main topic of discussion at the meeting was the impending opening of the Yukio Okutsu Veterans' Home on the Big Island. See pg. 4 for more details.

The board meets the first Friday of every month to discuss issues affecting Hawaii veterans. Meetings are open to the public. Contact OVS for more information.

**Pictured left to right: Bill Honjiyo (Kauai), Anne Stevens (Oahu), Gil Hough (Oahu), Ed Cruickshank (OVS Director), Lloyd Sodetani (Maui), Patricia Wieland (Oahu), Herring Kalua (Big Island), and Tom Rosenswike (not a board member). Not pictured: Cynthia Stine (Oahu).**

*Shelly Ichishita photo*

## Survivor's Benefits: Caring for those left behind

By Tony Elliott, Kauai OVS

Each year on Memorial Day, Americans throughout the world unite to honor our 1.09 million veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice in our nation's wars. On this occasion, and while we pause to remember that "Freedom is Not Free", it is also appropriate that we remember their loved ones for the unthinkable sacrifices they too have and will make. The loneliness of losing a life-long companion is only the beginning as yesterday's hopes for the children's education, a retirement home and financial security turn towards family survival and uncertainty.

As a final tribute of respect to our fallen comrades, our nation remembers those left behind and provides assistance through a VA program called Survivor's Benefits. Understanding the eligibility criteria and benefit amount for each separate benefit enables veterans and their families to plan better.

Upon the death of a veteran, surviving spouses will find the Hawaii Office of Veterans' Services (HOVS) available to offer immediate assistance in understanding and applying for benefits. (NOTE: A legible copy of the veteran's military discharge papers and subsequently a copy of the death certificate are required to apply for all benefits.) While some benefits are provided only once, many of these benefits

continue to contribute monthly towards a lifetime of family financial security. All benefits are tax-free.

The following is an overview of the survivor's benefits available through the VA. It is important to note that benefits are legislated and funded by Congress, and are subject to change. For this reason, it is advisable to periodically visit the Office of Veterans' Services (OVS) nearest you, or call 1-808 (Oahu: 433-0427, Hawaii: 933-0315, Maui: 873-3145 or Kauai: 241-3346), or visit the VA website at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors/index.htm> to find out more about these and other possible benefits.

The unremarried surviving spouse and/or dependent children of any member of the U. S. Armed Forces who dies on active duty, or was honorably discharged after serving 24 months or more of active service is usually eligible for the following benefits:

### **Burial in a Veterans Cemetery**

- May be interred with the veteran upon death, includes gravemarker.

### **Burial Allowance**

- \$2,000 if the veterans' death was a result of any service-connected disability.
- \$300 if veterans' death was not a result of any service-connected disability, but veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation.
- \$300 plot allowance if the veterans' death was service-connected and the veteran was not buried in a veterans cemetery or the veteran was discharged from the U. S. Armed Forces due to a disability.

### **Improved Death Pension (Commonly referred to as Widow's Pension)**

- Veteran must have served during a period of war.
- Spouse must have countable income below the yearly limit set by law.
- Benefit amount varies depending on countable annual income.

*Income Limits for 2007: Surviving spouse with no dependent children - \$7,329. Surviving spouse with 1 dependent child - \$9,594.*

### **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)**

- Member died while serving on active duty.
- Veteran died as a result of any "service-connected" disability.

- Veteran was permanently and totally "service-connected" disabled for a minimum of 10-years prior to death (regardless of cause of death).
- Veteran is declared missing in action, captured in the line of duty, or is being forcibly detained by a hostile force.

*Benefit amount for 2007: Surviving spouse with no dependent children - \$1,066 (Amount increases \$265 for each dependent child).*

### **Veterans Life Insurance**

- Whether serving on active duty (SGLI)... or at time of discharge (VGLI), veterans may choose to enroll in the optional VA life insurance program.
- While serving on active duty, premiums are subsidized by the government.
- After discharge, veteran pays the full premium amount.
- The amount of insurance, if desired, is selected by the veteran at time of discharge.
- For the above stated reasons, advance enrollment is mandatory.
- Benefit amounts vary and range from \$5,000 to a maximum of \$400,000.
- Initial available entitlement is up to 25% of the purchase cost.
- VA guarantee's in the state of Hawaii are limited to \$134,868.
- Interest rate and down payment are determined by the lender.
- NOTE: VA charges a funding fee for this program.

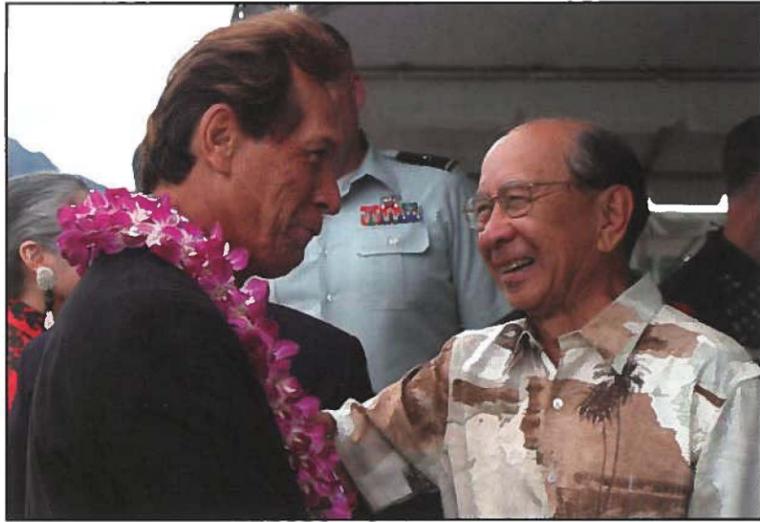
For more information about these and other benefits, please stop by the Hawaii Office of Veterans' Services nearest you.

## VA Makes Available a Specially Adapted Housing Grant

Veterans that have specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of constructing an adapted dwelling or modifying an existing home to

meet the veteran's needs. These are severe disabilities such as the loss of use of both lower and upper extremities. The goal of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment which affords the veterans a

level of independent living he or she may not normally enjoy. For more information on the SAH grant, please visit: <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm>. You may also contact the VA Regional Office, Loan Guaranty department at 1-800-827-1000 option 2.



**Kimo Kahoano, master of ceremonies at the Governor's Memorial Day ceremony, speaks with Vice Adm. Robert Kihune before the program.** *Shelly Ichishita photo*

# Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home update

The State of Hawaii's first veterans' home, the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans' Home, will open in Hilo, Hawaii in August 2007 and will be administered by Avalon Healthcare Hawaii.

The Yukio Okutsu Home will be a 95-bed facility with Medicaid and Medicare certifications. It is an intermediate care facility and skilled nursing facility. Adult day health services will also be available.

Criteria for admission to the state veterans' home is:

Applicant must be a veteran in good standing and meet general eligibility for VA benefits.

Applicant should be either a resident of the State of Hawaii prior to his/her induction into the military, and/or a resident of the State of Hawaii for more than one year prior to consideration of his/her application.

Interested applicants should contact the home's administrator, Mr. Neil Oyama at (808) 927-0950.

## Veterans Affairs news updates

### VA Stands Ready To Assist Veterans in Filing for Compensation

If you know of records that will support your claim, VA will help you by requesting them from the person, medical facility, company, or agency that has them.

Part B of VA Form 21-526, Veterans Application for Compensation and Pension, tell us the name and address of the person, medical facility, company or agency that has these records, the approximate time frame covered by these records, and the condition for which you were treated in the case of medical records.

If you received treatment from a military health care facility after your discharge from service, just tell us the name of the facility. If your treatment was by a private physician, or any other health care provider, complete VA Form 21-4142, Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We will use this form to request these records. You can find the form at: <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-4142.pdf>, or call the Honolulu VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000 for further assistance.

### General Eligibility for VA Benefits

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service

under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service, other than active duty for training, as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, Environmental Science Services Administration or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey. Generally, men and women veterans with similar service may be entitled to the same VA benefits.

A veteran is one who has served in the armed forces and has an honorable discharge; a common misconception is that one has either been in combat and/or is retired from active duty to be called a veteran.

Dishonorable and bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar VA benefits. Veterans in prison and parolees must contact a VA regional office to determine eligibility. VA benefits will not be provided to any veteran or dependent wanted for an outstanding felony warrant. For additional information on eligibility for VA benefits, contact the Honolulu VA Regional Office 1-800-827-1000, or for health care benefits the Spark Matsunaga VA Medical Center at 433-0600.



**Program coordinator and OVS counselor Caz Ross helps direct the Honorable Kang Dae-Hwyn, Counsel General of the Republic of Korea, and his wife to their seats.** *Shelly Ichishita photo*



**An instructor from the Hawaii Army National Guard's Youth Challenge Academy stops to "talk story" with Medal of Honor recipient, Allan Kellogg.** *Shelly Ichishita photo*

### Criteria for Eye Treatment at the VA

Eye care services are available at the Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center. The following veterans are eligible to receive eye care and eyeglasses from VA: veterans rated 10% or more service-connected for any condition; veterans who are rated service-connected for an eye condition that requires corrective lenses; former prisoners of war; veterans currently enrolled in a VA approved Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program; veterans in receipt of increased VA non-service connected pension based on need of regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound. For more information call the VA Medical Center at 433-0600.

### Veterans Employment Preference

The Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 expanded the federal government's definition of "veteran," changing eligibility requirements for veterans' preference. The first provision gives preference to those who served on active duty during the period beginning Sep. 11,

2001 and ending at the close of OIF, provided they meet other conditions. The provision also expands the number of individuals who may be entitled to preference, including OEF participants. Anyone who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 consecutive days, during this period of time, regardless of location, is entitled to veterans' preference if otherwise eligible. This applies to candidates seeking employment and to federal employees who may be affected by reduction-in-force. For further information, the Office of Personnel Management's Vetguide is available at <http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp#2>.

### Combat Veterans Who Separate are Eligible for Two Years of VA Health Care

During the two-year period following their separation from active duty service, these Operation Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans have no co-payments for any medical service related to condition(s) that: was/were made worse by or during service; did not exist before joining the service; started before leaving the service; or is/are clearly related to service, based on the VA clinician's judgment. In other words, a combat veteran might have to make co-payments during the two-year period if: their care does not meet any of the criteria above, and they classify into a priority group with co-payment requirements.

After the two-year period is up, the veteran will be moved to the appropriate enrollment priority group and co-payment category based upon their income and other eligibility factors. If their income places them into Priority Group 8, co-payment required, their VA enrollment will continue regardless of the date of their original VA application.

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