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INSIDE

Army Family Covenant takes spotlight



Something good is cooking

8th Theater Sustainment Command Soldiers take top honors at the Army's culinary arts competition.

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Re-signing re-emphasizes commitment to Soldiers' and families' sacrifices for benefit of national security

Story and Photo by **BILL MOSSMAN**
News Editor

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS – Army senior leaders recommitted themselves to the promises they first made more than two years ago in improving quality of life services to Soldiers and their family members, with the re-signing of the Army Family Covenant, here, at the Nehelani Banquet and Conference Center, March 18.

In front of 100-plus onlookers, Maj. Gen. Michael Terry, commanding general, U.S. Army-Hawaii, led a group of commanders as they placed their John Hancocks on the AFC document immediately following the close of the 2010 Army Family Action Plan Conference.

Also participating in the re-signing ceremony were Col. Matthew Margotta, commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii; Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Williamson, command sergeant major, USAG-HI; and Command Sgt. Maj.



Command Sgt. Maj. George Duncan, command sergeant major, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, puts his signature on the Army Family Covenant as special guests, including Army senior leaders Col. Matthew Margotta, commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, at left, and Maj. Gen. Michael Terry, commanding general, 8th TSC, look on during an AFC re-signing ceremony, March 18, at the Nehelani Banquet & Conference Center, Schofield Barracks.

George Duncan, command sergeant major, USARHAW.

Calling it "time for a re-signing," Margotta said that combining the cere-

mony with the close of the AFAP conference was the perfect opportunity for Army leadership to demonstrate their commitment to continue creating an

environment in which Soldiers and their families can thrive.

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Road Closure

Devol Street, between Waianae and Kolekole avenues on Schofield Barracks, will be closed for road surfacing, March 29-April 11.-April 11. See News Briefs,

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Workgroups gives vital suggestions to leaders as AFAP conference closes

Story and Photo by **BILL MOSSMAN**
News Editor

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS – Army Family Action Plan delegates developed suggestions to improve the quality of life for Soldiers and family members at this year's conference brief-out, while also being reminded that strengthening Hawaii's education system remains the top priority among Army senior leaders.

Delegates representing five working groups – base operations, force support, single Soldiers, community and family support, and teenagers – convened, here, at the Nehelani Banquet and Conference Center, March 18, for the 2010 AFAP Conference closing ceremony.

Following three days of methodically ferreting out the top issues among the 120-plus solicited ideas from Army community members, group representatives made their recommendations to senior leaders and subject matter experts.

Their suggestions often drew immediate responses from their intended audience, as when the community and family support delegation championed the idea of establishing Department of Defense Education Activity schools on Hawaii military installations.

"(Education) is my Number 1 issue," said Maj. Gen. Michael Terry, commanding general, U.S. Army-Hawaii. "If there's anything keeping me up at night in terms of issues affecting our communities, it's education."

Terry advised delegates, as well as the greater Army community, to be on the lookout for a DoDEA survey,

SEE AFAP, A-6



Maj. Gen. Michael Terry, commanding general, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, addresses issues raised by delegates at the Army Family Action Plan Conference closing ceremony, March 18, at the Nehelani Banquet & Conference Center.

Oahu serves as host to MEDCOM's 'Best Warriors'

SGT. 1ST CLASS RODNEY JACKSON
18th Medical Deployment Support Command Public Affairs

FORT SHAFTER – Primed from numerous noncommissioned officer and Soldier competitions earlier in the year, 20 of the Army Medical Command's best of the best looked forward to claiming the title of "Best Warrior" for 2010 in a competition held March 13-19 on Oahu.

Staff Sgt. Adam Sahlberg, noncommissioned officer in charge at the Mary E. Walker Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., took honors as the Army Medical Command's 2010 NCO Best Warrior.

Spc. John Evans, an X-ray technician at Munsom Army Health Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., was recognized as Best Warrior Soldier.

Both represented the Western Regional Medical Command.

Hosted by Pacific Regional Medical Command and held in Hawaii for the first time, the competition tested the Soldiers' ability to withstand physically challenging events and still maintain the mental edge needed to perform effectively.

Soldiers from every major command under the Army Medical Department – the AMEDD Center and School, San Antonio, Texas; the medical commands for Europe, Western, Northern, Southern and Pacific regions; the public health, dental and veterinary commands; and the Medical Research and Materiel Command – bounced from Schofield Barracks to the Marine Corps Training Area at Bellows Beach, to the Tripler Army Medical Center gym, and finally, to Hickam Air Force Base for a dizzying array of events.

"The Soldiers competing are all so motivated," said U.S. Army Medical Command's Command Sgt. Maj. Althea Dixon. "They are out here with a winner's heart, and they all understand that at the end of this week, only two Soldiers will be announced as MEDCOM's Soldier and NCO of the Year, but they all know that they are all winners."

The competition started with oral boards, March 14, when each Soldier faced an array of sergeants major alone, who barraged them with questions about their knowledge of the Army.

The candidates were awakened at 3 a.m., March 15, so they could take the Army physical fitness test. They donned 60 pounds of gear to hike six miles up and down Schofield Barracks' Kolekole pass. Next, Soldiers participated in weapons firing at day and night rifle ranges.

The competition continued throughout the week with soldiering at Schofield, reflexive firing with M-4s, and day and night urban orienteering using the Defense Advanced GPS system.

March 17, the candidates were at Bellows Beach, where they participated through nearly four miles of lanes to test their proficiency with Army Warrior Tasks.

A combatives tournament at the Tripler gym, March 18, was followed by the "mystery event" at Hickam Air Force Base. A 100-meter kayak race was combined with a medical skills contest.

At the awards banquet, March 19, at Hickam Air Force Base, Sahlberg and Evans thanked other competitors, their chains of command and

SEE WARRIOR, A-6



A conservation 'tail'

Tia and Wicket, conservation working dogs, are helping to protect a special snail.

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Sunrise Service

The community is invited to attend the Easter sunrise service at Stoneman Stadium, Schofield Barracks, April 4, 6:30 a.m. Music and refreshments will follow the service.

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New ID card appointment system on the way

Story and Photo by **AMY L. BUGALA**
U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS – The U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii's identification card issuing facilities will soon transition from the current walk-in system to an appointment-only system creating a valuable time savings for customers, here.

"Right now, when customers walk in to the ID card/Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System facilities they are faced with an unpredictable wait time," said Sean Karamath, chief, Personnel Services Branch, USAG-HI. Implementing an appointment-only system will allow our customers to plan ahead and drastically reduce the long wait times and the associated frustrations, he explained.

The transition to the new system is scheduled to start late July. The new system will allow customers to book and cancel appointments online from a link through the garrison Web site, by phone, or at a kiosk located at the Schofield facility in Building 750, said Karamath.

Online users will be able to search



Jazmin Meekins, verifying official at the Schofield Barracks ID card/Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System facility, processes a new ID card for Michelle Carol's 2-year-old son, Beniah, Tuesday.

available appointments and schedule same-day services. Emergency walk-in requests, such as a lost or confiscated ID/Common Access Card or new enrollment in DEERS for urgent medical care will be accommodated.

"I think that this is a fabulous idea," said Michelle Carroll, a Department of Defense employee who recently stopped by the Schofield facility to get an ID card issued for her 2-year-

old son, Beniah. Carroll said she didn't experience a long wait, but with one glance at the rows of chairs in the waiting area, and the predicted wait-time chart hanging on the wall, she can see how the new system will benefit customers.

"You should have seen it yesterday," said Jazmin Meekins, a verifying

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A DOG TAIL

Kayla Overton | U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Wicket, a 6-year-old Black Labrador Retriever mix, plays with her ball after locating an invasive Rosy wolfsnail.



OF TWO SNAILS

KAYLA OVERTON

U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

WAIANAE MOUNTAINS – Some may say, "It's all in a hard day's work," but workdays are not so typical for Tia and Wicket.

Their job en-"tails" sniffing through some of Oahu's most beautiful forests looking for the *Euglandina rosea* (Rosy wolfsnail), a common predator of the endangered *Achatinella*, commonly known as the Oahu, or kahuli, tree snail.

Tia, a 3-year-old German Shepherd, and Wicket, a 6-year-old Black Labrador Retriever mix, are a part of the Oahu Army Natural Resource Program partnership with Working Dogs for Conservation.

The conservation is a non-profit organization, based in Montana, that trains scent-detection dogs to track the scents of endangered or invasive plants and animals.

"Over the past year, we've been conducting a pilot program to see if working dogs are able to detect the Rosy wolfsnail," said Kapua Kawelo, OANRP biologist, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii. "We're hoping that the dogs can aid our efforts in protecting the Oahu tree snail, while testing their ability to locate the Rosy wolfsnail."

Working dogs like Tia and Wicket use their keen sense of smell to detect endangered animals and plants around the world.

"Searching and locating the snails can be difficult, even for the dogs, because the Rosy wolfsnail doesn't give off a strong smell," said Alice Whitelaw, programs director, and Tia's handler with Working Dogs for Conservation. "Other environmental factors may also complicate the dog's ability, like rotting material, moisture, mold and other smells."

"Both dogs have located dozens of wild snails. Throughout their training, Tia has successfully located 375, and Wicket has located 422," Whitelaw said.

Tia and Wicket are two of eight dogs from Working Dogs for Conservation specially trained to locate certain smells.

"Once the dogs find their target smell, they are taught to sit and then are rewarded, linking the smell with the reward," Whitelaw said. "Tia's reward is a treat, and Wicket prefers her ball."

"The dogs that we work with are rare and valuable as we may find one out of 300 that show great potential as a working dog. About only 40 percent of those make it as a conservation detection dog," said Aimee Hurt, associate director

and Wicket's handler, Working Dogs for Conservation.

"We search for possible working dogs that are high energy, reward- or toy-driven, and from a network of shelters from across the country," Hurt said.

On The WEB

Visit www.workingdogsforconservation.org for more information on the Working Dogs for Conservation program.

"We knew conservation working dogs have been used on different types of endangered species projects, but to our knowledge, no one has ever tried to assess if dogs are feasible for tracking the Rosy wolfsnail," said Vince Costello, a rare snail conservation specialist with OANRP.

With the pilot study now complete, researchers have confirmed that dogs can detect the Rosy wolfsnail, and will re-evaluate and consider utilizing dogs for future conservation work.

"The Army, as a federal agency, is required to protect threatened and endangered species found

on its installations," Kawelo said. "On Oahu, the Army is required to stabilize the population of the endangered Oahu tree snail, in eight locations across the Waianae Mountains, each location includes around 300 snails per population."

The Rosy wolfsnail is a cannibal snail that was first introduced to Hawaii in 1955 to eradicate the Giant African snail.

However, the Rosy wolfsnail traveled to higher elevations in the mountains of Oahu, where it discovered a new meal, the endangered Oahu tree snail, according to Costello.

"[This cannibal snail] feeds upon the Oahu tree snail, (eating) whole populations of the small snail," Costello said. "We were finding fewer and fewer *Achatinella*, and if we wouldn't have intervened by eradicating the Rosy wolfsnail in some of these areas, a whole population of *Achatinella* would have been gone."

In keeping up with efforts to protect the Oahu tree snail, OANRP builds snail enclosures, sets traps for rats that also graze on the Oahu tree snail, builds fences to keep out pigs and goats, and conducts invasive weed control.

The OANRP staff will continue to evaluate innovative methods of protecting the Oahu tree snail and Hawaii's natural resources, Kawelo said.



Kayla Overton | U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Wicket puts her nose to the ground sniffing for the Rosy wolfsnail. Wicket, on loan from Working Dogs for Conservation, helps researchers and conservation managers protect endangered species across the world.



Courtesy of the Oahu Army Natural Resource Program

The endangered *Achatinella livida*, is commonly known as the Oahu, or kahuli, tree snail.



Loran Doane | U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Rosy wolfsnails, a common predator of the endangered Oahu tree snail, are used to train the dogs to detect the snail in different environments.



Loran Doane | U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Aimee Hurt, left, and Alice Whitelaw, from Working Dogs for Conservation, inspect a jar containing *Euglandina rosea* that are used to train dogs that will track the scents of endangered plants and animals.



Courtesy of the Oahu Army Natural Resource Program

Alice Whitelaw, programs director, Working Dogs for Conservation, documents one of working dog Tia's finds, a *Euglandina rosea*. Tia has located 375 wild snails during her scent-detection training.