

Schofield Barracks
Centennial 4th of July Spectacular
4 July 2009

Aloha and good evening, (VIPs), General officers, Soldiers, family members and friends. Today, we have much to celebrate: Our Independence, 100 years here at Schofield Barracks, The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer, and our Army Families.

Independence Day is a time to celebrate all that we hold dear on the earth, peace, security, liberty, our family, our friends, our home. We know our own democracy's strength ultimately depends on adhering to our nation's values and ideals. Many of you are familiar with President John F. Kennedy's famous quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country." There is a second sentence that applies very much to the Soldiers and families who have answered the call of duty here in the Pacific. President Kennedy then said, "My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." America has paid a significant price to fight aggression, deter potential adversaries, extend freedom, and maintain peace and prosperity in this part of the world. We have done so over many generations and continue to work with our allies toward a secure environment for all mankind.

America's freedom originated on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a [Resolution of Independence](#) which legally separated the American colonies from Great Britain. Congress then turned its attention to a statement explaining this decision - the [Declaration of Independence](#). Prepared by a committee with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author, Congress debated and revised the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4th.

Though John Adams writing to his wife Abigail stated, "The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America." He believed it would be celebrated by succeeding generations as 'The great anniversary festival.'

We proudly celebrate our independence on July 4th, the date shown on the much-publicized Declaration of Independence, rather than on July 2, the date the resolution of independence was approved. We are grateful to the Second Continental Congress and Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, the two men who signed the Declaration of Independence and later became president.

We are fortunate to live in a state that values and honors our Soldiers and families and welcomes our military service members into Hawaii's Ohana. As Hawaii celebrates fifty years of statehood, this year also marks

the centennial anniversary of the US Army officially settling the land that is now known as Schofield Barracks Military Reservation.

LTG John M. Schofield, a former US Army commander visited Hawaii to evaluate the defense capabilities of Hawaiian ports. He was one of the first to recognize Hawaii's strategic value. This site was selected as the base for Oahu's mobile defense troops and was officially named in honor of LTG Schofield in April of 1909.

The history of Soldiers assigned to Schofield Barracks is extensive. During World War I, the Hawaiian National Guard assumed responsibility for the care of the installation from active duty troops called into action in Europe. At the conclusion of WWI, the Army experienced a growth period from 1921 to the mid 1940s. Several Quad barracks and officer housing areas were constructed. The change in the Army's structure established the Headquarters of the Hawaiian Division at Schofield Barracks and – in 1941, the 24th & 25th Infantry Divisions were formed.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, some of the first bombs were dropped on neighboring Wheeler Field. Schofield barracks received some damage from hostile fire but escaped massive destruction or loss of life. Wheeler Field was one of the first flight lines attacked and suffered extensive damage and heavy casualties.

In mid 1942, the primary mission of the 25th Division became the defense of Oahu. Schofield Barracks became a major training, staging, and supply center for the Pacific theater. Temporary buildings were constructed to meet the needs of over one million troops that passed through the post in waves; sometimes as many as 100,000 men at a time. In January 1943, operating as part of the XIV Corps, the 25th Infantry Division began offensive operations throughout the Pacific.

The 25th Infantry Division did not immediately return to Schofield after peace was declared in 1945. Serving in post-war Japan, they were subsequently ordered to South Korea in July of 1950 to engage North Korean forces. Schofield Barracks' population sank to a low of 2,000 troops in the late 1940s. In 1954, the 25th Infantry Division was finally ordered back to Schofield Barracks.

The 25th Division was heavily engaged in combat operations in Vietnam from 1965 through 1969. From the summer of 1966 to spring 1967, the 25th ID was the largest division in Vietnam with four Brigades under its command. During the Vietnam War a requirement existed to maintain a strategic reaction force for other contingencies in the Pacific. Originally, the Hawaii National Guard was federalized to serve in that capacity. On 6

December 6th, 1969, the 4th Brigade, 25 ID, was activated for that mission and placed under the command of the US Army Pacific.

During the 1980s, US Military planning efforts required development of a quick response force to third world 'hot' spots'. The Army's Chief of Staff directed the development of a light division of approximately 10,000 Soldiers. The conversion of the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks to a light configuration was a result of this mandate and was completed in the Fall of 1986.

The events of 9-11-2001 changed the Army's focus to what is now commonly known as Full Spectrum Operations and resulted in the reorganization of several units on Schofield Barracks. In October 2004, units of the 25th Infantry Division and 45th Corps Support Group supported democratic elections in Afghanistan, the first ever in the history of that country. In 2005, other elements of 25th ID supported the first free elections in Iraq held in over 50 years.

In 2005, as part of the Army's program to transform into a more versatile, agile force, USARPAC units on Schofield Barracks began reorganizing. The Division's brigades were restructured to include the transformation of the 1st and 2nd Brigades into Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCT). Because of these changes, the 25th Infantry Division

officially dropped its “Light” designation on 1 January 2006. Organizations assigned to Schofield Barracks continue to deploy in support of Overseas Contingency Operations.

Today we also celebrate the world’s most accomplished group of military professionals, the Non Commissioned Officers of the United States Army. The achievements of our NCOs date back to the American Revolutionary War and have continued through the current conflicts in the Middle East. We pay tribute to all the Non Commissioned Officers of our Army, to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, to those who served honorably, and to those who continue to bravely support and serve our nation.

The history of Noncommissioned Officers dates back to the Revolutionary War and is intertwined throughout the conflicts previously mentioned. NCOs fought valiantly in battles throughout World Wars I and II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. Many continue to deploy and engage threats throughout the world. In recognition of their commitment to service and willingness to make great sacrifices on behalf of our Nation, the Secretary of the Army established 2009 as Year of the NCO. Also acknowledging the contributions of our noncommissioned

officers, Hawaii became the first state to declare 2009 as the Year of the NCO. On behalf of our NCOs, we thank you.

Lastly, I want to focus on our Army Families. In October 2007, key leaders signed the Army Family Covenant. Recognizing while Soldiers may be the strength of the nation, their strength is in their Families. General Casey said, "Sustain Soldiers and Families-that's the number one thing that we have to do." "I can assure you that your Army leadership understands the important contribution each and every one of you makes." The covenant represents a commitment to improve quality of life for Army Families and has resulted in privatized and improved housing, new and improved childcare centers, and the addition of healthcare providers.

In keeping with The Army Family Covenant, "We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day. We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families." As you continue to support our deployed Soldiers also keep in mind their loved ones at home. As many of you know, the families of our Soldiers also make sacrifices in support of our Nation.

God Bless You, God Bless the Army, and God Bless the United States of America. Have a safe and sensational 4th of July.

One Team!

Army Strong!