Hawaii National Guard recognized by Legislature

On March 12, 2010, the Hawaii State Legislature adopted a resolution commending the efforts and bravery of the Soldiers of the Hawaii Army National Guard and the Airmen and Airwomen of the Hawaii Air National Guard.

The following is the floor speech by Rep. K. Mark Takai, who also serves as a Major in the Hawaii Army National Guard.

The National Guard, the oldest component of the Armed Forces of the United States and one of the nation’s longest-enduring institutions, celebrates its 374th birthday on December 13, 2010.

The National Guard traces its history back to the earliest English colonies in North America. Responsible for their own defense, the colonists drew on English military tradition and organized their able-bodied male citizens into militias.

The colonial militias protected their fellow citizens from Indian attacks, foreign invaders, and later helped to win the Revolutionary War.

Following independence, the authors of the Constitution empowered Congress to “provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia.”

However, recognizing the militia’s state role, the Founding Fathers reserved the appointment of officers and training of the militia to the states.

Today’s National Guard still remains a dual State-Federal force.

January 27, 2010 marked the 117th anniversary of the beginning of the Hawaii National Guard.

Like the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord, the first Hawaii Guardsmen were born in revolution and civil turmoil.

And like those revolutionaries of New England, many of the officers and sons had served with the royal army, foreign armies or citizen militia groups.

The beginning of the National Guard of Hawaii, as it was first called, formally came into being on January 27, 1893 - when the Executive and Advisory Councils of the Provisional Government passed an Act providing for formation of the Guard.

Through the decades since, the Hawaii National Guard has acted in civil strife, its members have fought in bloody wars abroad and have braved flood and fire and disease to aid the needy at home.

Throughout its history, the Hawaii National Guard has served an important role in peace-keeping and disaster relief with units being called into State and Federal service on numerous occasions.

And while civil disturbances and disasters have brought units of the Guard into active duty for short durations, World War I brought about mobilization of the entire Guard on June 1, 1918.

December 7, 1941 found the Hawaii Guardsmen setting up defenses along the coast of Windward Oahu and it was here that the first Japanese prisoner-of-war was taken – by Guardsmen.

Lieutenant Paul Plybon and Sergeant David Akui, members of Company “G” 298th Infantry, sighted and captured a two-man Japanese submarine that had washed ashore at Waimanalo.

One of the occupants, an ensign was captured by the two Guardsmen. The other crewman was found dead inside the craft.

In the summer of 1942, 1,406 enlisted men and 28 officers of Japanese ancestry were transferred from the Guard and organized into the 100th Battalion, later to become the Army’s most decorated unit.

Today’s Hawaii National Guard is a far cry from that first small band of citizens who helped form the Republic, but now as then, its members stand ready to lay down their lives for their State and Country.

Since October 7, 2001, the United States and coalition forces have been conducting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom missions in Iraq and Afghanistan against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in retaliation for the September 11th terrorist attacks and to prevent further terrorist attacks around the world.

Such a massive mobilization and deployment of US forces has not left Hawaii untouched.

As of today, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan has taken from us 23 members of the Hawaii National Guard, which includes the famed 100th Battalion and other attached units.

Finally, in addition to thanking the great men

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Benefits provided to National Guard members

The following are some of the benefits provided to members of the Hawaii National Guard.

The Hawaii National Guard Association has played and continues to play an active role in urging more support for our HNGA members.

The following information is provided by Rep. K. Mark Takai, who serves as the coordinator of the Hawaii State Legislature’s Military Appreciation Package.

For additional information on these benefits, please contact Takai at 586-8455.

Taxation
Income received by members of the armed services reserve components and the National Guard as compensation for performance of duty, may exclude from gross income, adjusted gross income, and taxable income an amount equivalent to pay received for 48 drills and 15 days of annual duty up to a maximum amount that would be earned by an E-5 pay grade after eight years of service. (Exemption is $5,609 for Tax Year 2009).

Exemption of certain income received for service in combat zone or hostile fire pay area.

County and State weight taxes are waived for one vehicle for reserve members who claim Hawaii as their residence of record and who are in good standing.

Civil Relief for State Military Forces
Chapter 657D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), provides temporary protection or limited relief to any person ordered to report to state military service (i.e., state active duty) during the period of actual military service from various civil actions, including: Protection from default judgments; actions for compliance with terms of a contract, residential lease agreements, mortgages, and installment contracts; insurance contracts; and actions for unpaid taxes and assessments.

Educational Benefits
University of Hawaii Board of Regents may grant, modify, or suspend tuition waivers for nonresident tuition and fee differential for members in good standing of National Guard and federal reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard who attend drills with units located in the State.

The adjutant general, subject to funding, may award tuition assistance to qualified members of the National Guard to attend any campus of the University of Hawaii.

Employment and Licensing
Every employee of a private company who is a member of the National Guard shall be entitled to be absent from the employee’s employment when engaged in the performance of ordered National Guard service and when going to and returning from such service.

All officers and employees of the State or any county who is a member of the National Guard or any organized reserves shall be entitled to be absent from the officer’s or employee’s duties or service while engaged in performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from duty.

All officers and employees of the State or any county who is a member of the National Guard or any organized reserves shall be entitled to be absent from the officer’s or employee’s duties or service while engaged in performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from duty.

An architect licensee shall not be subject to continuing education requirements if the architect otherwise meets all other renewal requirements and is a member of the armed forces, national guard, or a reserve component on active duty and deployed during a state or national crisis.

Any member of any component of the United States Armed Forces and who is on active federal service outside the State at the time the member’s vehicular driver’s license is required to be renewed may file an application for renewal within ninety days of the member’s return to the State.

Enlisted personnel of the National Guard while participating in annual training or when ordered to state active duty are entitled to uniform maintenance allowance of $1.50 per day.

A grateful state shows appreciation to our Guard

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and women in uniform here today and those who they represent, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Hawaii State House of Representatives.

In 2004, we created the Hawaii State Legislature’s Military Appreciation Package, which comprises of legislation supporting our military forces, especially those in the National Guard and Reserves.

And since 2004, we have passed numerous bills and resolutions that have supported our honorees, including the Guard and Reserve tax exemption and the recently approved waiver of the vehicle weight taxes. For this, we thank you.

These pieces of legislation not only show our Soldiers and Airmen that we support them. It shows them that we take care. That we take care of our ohana.

And while they may be fighting the good fight somewhere a half a world away, they can be assured that the State of Hawaii and all its people are praying for them, but most importantly, that we are caring for their families – their children, spouses, and extended family.