

Utah National Guard HISTORY HIGHLIGHT



January 2024

Utah National Guard in Hawaii

***“The men of Company K earned golden opinions from the residents of Honolulu. They were general favorites and when they left, were honored with a demonstration and laden with flowers.”
W.F. Flanagan, 1899.***

During the Spanish-American War and World War II, several units of the Utah National Guard spent numerous months in the Hawaiian Islands under federal service.

In August 1942, elements of the 40th Division began arriving on the Hawaiian Islands for training and island defense. In July 1943, the 40th Division took over assignment from the 24th Division in defense of the northern portion of Oahu. The defense of the island was critical due to its strategic location, command presence, and for its logistical importance. Utah units serving in the 40th were the 222nd Field Artillery Battalion, 213th Field Artillery Battalion, 115th Engineer Battalion, and the 640th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

The 213th took up howitzer positions near the Eucalyptus Forest on Oahu’s north shore. After spending a short time in the Schofield Barracks, the 222nd moved to take over defense near Kaneohe and the islands eastern sector. The 115th Engineers stayed busy with construction projects such as building bridges, roads, and houses along with continuous training. In October 1943, the defense of the island changed again and the 40th began amphibious and jungle training in preparation for combat operations.

Jungle training on Oahu replicated well the types of environments combat units would face in the Pacific theater. The jungle training, in conjunction with others such as city combat, proved difficult but highly effective. The typical training cycle consisted of Hut City located at Schofield Barracks, Kahuku for jungle warfare, and finally Pali camp in south Oahu.

Engineers at Work

The Second Regiment of Volunteer Engineers was comprised of members from Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. Company K was primarily formed from members of the Utah National Guard.

Mustered into federal service on July 9, 1898, and after training in California, were relocated to the island of Oahu and performed multiple important tasks before being mustered out on May 16, 1898.

Company K contributed in the survey of Pearl Harbor and Pearl City, established harbor lines and constructed permanent barracks at the base of Diamond Head.

At the end of the Spanish-American War and the acquisition of Guam and the Philippines, Pearl Harbor was highlighted as “the key to Pacific” by then Secretary of State Alfred Meyer. Efforts from Company K contributed to the construction and use of Pearl Harbor as a major naval base.



Members of Company K, Second Regiment of Volunteer Engineers at camp near Diamond Head, Oahu, Hawaii, 1898. *Library of Congress Photograph*



Return of Colors, November 11, 1946

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On December 7, 1941, the 145th Field Artillery was on a ship bound for the Philippine Islands. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the ship returned to its departure point in San Francisco and the 145th received new orders. On December 21, 1941, the 145th arrived on Oahu and took on defensive efforts of the island with the 24th and 25th Division.

Members of the 145th were given assignments ranging from coastal defense to repelling enemy beach landings, utilizing multiple batteries and guns ranging from 75 mm to 240 mm. With the island defense mission and continuous training, they remained busy until called to action for the Marshall Islands campaign in December 1943.

After the Marshall Islands campaign, the 145th returned to Oahu in February 1944 where they were

stationed at Schofield Barracks and assigned again to defensive positions near Makikilo in southern Oahu. That May, they were called to combat in the Marianas and not return to Hawaii for the duration of the war.

Sources: *Home From Honolulu*, Salt Lake Tribune, May 19, 1899. *The History of the Utah Volunteers in the Spanish-American War and in the Philippine Islands*, A. Prentiss, 1900. *Legacy, History of the Utah National Guard*, Richard Roberts, 2003.



Members of the 145th firing practice shells on the shores of Oahu, Hawaii, 1942.



Aerial view of Schofield Barracks, Oahu prior to the onset of World War II.
Library of Congress Photograph