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**SPORTS**

**UHH does not enjoy block party**

Page C1



**CALENDAR**

**Cajun music tops What's Hot list**

Page B1



**NATION**

**First living soldier wins Medal of Honor**

Page A2

# Military use of Kulani nixed

## State panel approves youth camp but not National Guard training

By **JASON ARMSTRONG**  
*Tribune-Herald staff writer*

Military training should be prohibited on the former Kulani prison property, but a quasi-military program for at-risk teens and an expanded conservation area allowed.

Those are the recommenda-

tions the state Board of Land and Natural Resources made at its meeting Thursday in Honolulu.

The Hawaii Department of Defense had sought approval to operate a pistol range, conduct explosives and building-entry training, and perform helicopter evacuations involving up

to 170 soldiers at one time. Those activities were to occur on approximately 600 acres of the old Kulani Correctional Facility site located about 20 miles south of Hilo.

The land board, however, amended the request to

See **KULANI** Page A5



The guard post at the main gate of the former Kulani prison is seen in 2009.

**WILLIAM ING/**  
*Tribune-Herald*  
file photo

# Iran balks at release of American woman

explicitly prohibit military uses and training, said secretary Adaline Cummings.

Big Island representative Robert Pacheco cast the only dissenting vote, she said. He's not listed in the telephone book and couldn't be reached for comment Friday.

"There was just quite a bit of community input that was opposed to any and all 'military-type training,'" said Lt. Col. Chuck Anthony, spokesman for the Hawaii National Guard, which includes both Army and Air Force personnel.

Anthony, who attended the land board's meeting, said the board's concerns prompted Brig. Gen. Gary Ishikawa to declare he'd be happy to take the training component off the table. Ishikawa was unavailable for comment Friday.

The Big Island's National Guard soldiers will now be flown to Oahu to train at military sites there, Anthony said.

"It's not as efficient as if these soldiers were able to stay on the Big Island and get that training," he said. The interisland travel will increase costs and reduce the amount of time available for training.

The land board did recommend approving the state Department of Defense's related request for the Hawaii Army National Guard to operate a Youth ChalleNGe Academy for at-risk kids ages 16 to 19 at Kulani.

Expected to start in January, the 22-week residential

program will offer working-skills training and the possibility of obtaining a high school diploma, Ishikawa said recently.

"The Youth ChalleNGe was the main objective, and that was met," Anthony said. "So, we're happy."

In recommending Gov. Linda Lingle approve the request, the land board added a requirement that the Hawaii Army National Guard conduct a hearing on the Big Island to inform the public about its mission and intended activities on the former prison grounds, Cummings said.

Also, the board removed the old boys' school and part of an internal road from the area slated for the Youth ChalleNGe Academy, she said. Instead, those sites are to be added to the Puu Makaala Natural Area Reserve.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife wants to have 6,600 acres surrounding the prison included in the 12,106-acre reserve.

The area is critical habitat for seven types of birds and 11 endangered plant species, according to Paul Conry, DOFAW administrator.

That proposal now goes to Lingle for her consideration.

Not everyone is happy with the land board's recommendations.

Three people requested a contested-case hearing over the Youth ChalleNGe Academy, Cummings said.

A contested-case hearing is like a trial in which the parties submit evidence and conduct cross-examinations of witnesses in an attempt to justify their respective positions to a hearing officer, who then makes a recommendation to the board.

The Mauna Kea Recreational Users Group, comprised of hunting, bicycling and other outdoor enthusiasts, wants to use the state land.

"... our position is that the public deserves access to and through the former Kulani prison site exclusive of NARS (Natural Area Reserve System) or DOD control," Wayne Blyth, the group's chairman, wrote in written testimony submitted to the land board.

After 63 years of continuous use, the state last November closed the minimum-security Kulani Correctional Facility and transferred the 123 male inmates to other Hawaii prisons.

The move will save an estimated \$2.8 million a year, Public Safety Director Clayton Frank said at a July 24, 2009, press conference announcing the move.

The closure created an opportunity for different uses of the 7,244-acre site located off Stainback Highway, between the 4,500- and 6,200-foot elevation levels, according to the DOFAW's proposal to expand the natural area reserve.

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**By NASSER KARIMI**  
*Associated Press*

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian authorities abruptly halted plans to release an American woman today after more than a year in jail with two friends, dashing their mothers' hopes and pointing to the internal rivalries within Iran's leadership.

The about-face was an embarrassment to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who had personally intervened to get Sarah Shourd released as an act of clemency at the end of the holy month of Ramadan, according to state media.

With just hours to go, judiciary officials blocked the release, indicating she must stand trial before an amnesty could be granted.

The 31-year-old Shourd was detained with two other Americans, Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal, along the border between Iraq and Iran on July 31, 2009.

They have been accused of illegally crossing the border and spying in a case

that has deepened tension with the U.S., a relationship already strained over Washington's suspicions that Tehran is trying to build nuclear weapons — something Iran denies.

Their families say they were hiking in Iraq's scenic north and that if they crossed the border, they did so unwittingly.

The postponed release was not the first mixed signal in the case. Judicial officials have said several times that a trial would start soon, but few details have been made public, including whether the three Americans have even been formally charged.

President Ahmadinejad and other officials have also suggested the three could be traded for Iranians they say are in custody in the U.S., indicating Iran might be holding them just as bargaining chips.

In May, Iran allowed the mothers of the three Americans to visit them in Iran, releasing them temporarily from Tehran's Evin prison

for an emotional reunion at a hotel in the capital where they were treated to a lavish meal.

On Friday, state media reported that Ahmadinejad's intervention helped secure Shourd's planned release in part because of the "special viewpoint of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the dignity of women."

Reporters had even been invited to witness the release at the same hotel where the Americans were briefly reunited with their mothers in May.

Later, the IRNA state news agency quoted the deputy chief of communication for the president's office, Mohammed Hassan Salihimaram, as saying the release was postponed and details would be announced later.

Tehran's chief prosecutor, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi, said the release could not take place because "judicial procedures have not been completed," according to the semiofficial ILNA news agency.

## U.S., Iraq settle Saddam-era claims

*Associated Press*

BAGHDAD — Iraq has agreed to pay \$400 million to Americans who say they were abused by Saddam Hussein's regime, U.S. and Iraqi officials said Friday.

matized under Saddam's regime.

But the deal is likely to anger Iraqis who consider themselves the victims' of both Saddam and the 2003 U.S. invasion, and wonder why they should pay money

Sept. 2. He gave no details of the agreement, including who the specific claimants are or the dollar amount involved.

A senior Iraqi government official confirmed