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**Helfrich recognized as first Hawaii island Civilian Aide**

FORT SHAFTER, July 5, 2007 -- The Honorable Pete Geren, acting Secretary of the Army, and Lieutenant General John M. Brown III, commander, U.S. Army, Pacific, conducted an Investiture Ceremony for Paula Z. Helfrich, formally recognizing her appointment as the first Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Hawaii Island. A luncheon and ceremony for invited guests, including military officials and Hawaii civic leaders, was held July 1 at the Hale Koa Hotel at Fort DeRussy.

“We’re very fortunate to have Paula on the Pacific Region CASA team at this critical point in our Army’s history,” Brown said. “Pohakuloa Training Area, (PTA) is a vital part of Army Transformation and a place to train our Soldiers to fight and win. We are a Nation at war, but at the same time, we are dedicated to preserving Hawaii as a national treasure while protecting our nation’s strategic assets.”

Helfrich, a prominent businesswoman and civic leader, is the chief executive officer for the Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii and president of the Hawaii Island Economic Development Board. A long-time Big Island resident, Helfrich served as the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and has broad knowledge of the issues facing the state of Hawaii.

She is working closely with state and federal leaders on sustainability issues and was involved in the community-based planning of the Saddle Road Task Force. Through the years, Helfrich has supported discussion of other issues impacting Hawaii Island, such as fuel and agriculture.

Helfrich will continue to help bring diverse groups together to learn about Army Transformation initiatives impacting the Island of Hawaii, while maintaining the quality of life for Big Island residents and balancing the Army’s training requirements.

The Army is investing millions of dollars in PTA because of its strategic importance to the future of the Army and other military services in Hawaii and the Pacific.

At the same time, the Army is working to protect and preserve the island’s precious cultural and natural resources while providing support to more than 16,000 Soldiers and other military personnel who train at PTA each year.

“As the Army transforms and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams take their place in the way the Army fights, PTA will be even more valuable to Pacific-based forces,” Brown

explained. PTA is ranked among the top three Army training areas in the nation. He said training Soldiers at PTA has saved countless lives.

As a Civilian Aide, Helfrich serves as a liaison with the Secretary of the Army. She joins Bill Paty, a former director of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, who has served as a Civilian Aide since 1994 and is now Hawaii's Civilian Aide Emeritus, and Christina Kemmer, executive vice president of Communications, Pacific, who has served as the Hawaii Civilian Aide since 1998.

Helfrich will join fellow CASAs in attending national and regional conferences and inform Hawaii citizens about the Army's missions and objectives. She will also provide the civilian community's viewpoints to the Army Secretary and other senior Army officials, including the National Guard. Civilian Aides serve a two-year term without pay. Civilian Aides are designated for all states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico and Federated States of Micronesia.