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Soldiers visit ancient birthing site outside Wahiawa

Tripler Army Medical Center Public Affairs Office

by Rosemary Fox
Joint New Parent Support Program

HONOLULU--Eighteen expectant active duty-soldiers from Schofield Barracks honored a centuries-old Hawaiian tradition, by paying a visit to the nearby Birthing Stones of Wahiawa. In ancient times, babies born in this very sacred Hawaiian pre-historical site just outside of Wahiawa, were believed to acquire much 'mana' or power from the gods.

For centuries, only the Ali'i (Hawaiian royalty) could visit the site, which was "kapu" (off-limits) to commoners. The stones are said to have offered an easy and pain free birth, with the support system of 48 male birth attendants.

The more recent visitors visited the Birthing Stones as part of a weekly pre and postnatal education program offered on Tuesday mornings to pregnant soldiers. The program, sponsored by Schofield Barracks' Community Health Nursing and the Joint New Parent Support Program, conducts the visit to provide mothers-to-be a different perspective on motherhood. One of the mothers-to-be asked, "Does it matter if the guys are not here? Is it okay to give birth here without the 48 guys?" Tradition has it that as long as the pregnant women are of royal lineage and do not practice human sacrifice, the stones will welcome their stay there.

The Birthing Stones, called by Hawaiians as Kukaniloko, can be translated as "an inland area from which great events are heralded" and "to anchor the cry within." A seemingly timeless grotto nestled in a pineapple field, Kukaniloko is just outside the north end of Wahiawa town, past the old iron bridge. To get there, turn left at the first traffic light after the bridge, where you will also find a Hawaii State Historical marker for the Birthing Stones.



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