



Safeguarding the Territories: 27th ID Stationed in Hawaii, 1942

On February 27, 1942, the first elements of the 27th ID, now 22,000 strong, sailed from San Francisco on an 11 day trip to Hawaii. After landing at Hilo, Hawaii on March 10, the division's infantry regiments dispersed to their assigned duties--the 165th Infantry Regiment Combat Team (IRCT) to Kauai Military District; the 108th IRCT to Maui; 105th IRCT to defend the Ewa Plain, next to Pearl Harbor, and the 106th IRCT stationed in the Honolulu area between Diamond Head and Pearl Harbor. In August, the 27th ID was reduced from four to three infantry regiments with the 108th Infantry, and a battalion of the 104th Field Artillery reassigned to the 40th Division in late August 1942.



The 165th Infantry patrolled Kauai, the northernmost Hawaiian Island, and practiced amphibious landing skills needed when US forces began assaulting Japanese-held Pacific islands, c.1942.
New York State Military Museum

When off duty, soldiers of the 27th ID unwound by relaxing on the gorgeous beaches, deep sea fishing, going to USO shows, attending Sunday religious services, playing sports, and participating in local events. Lei Day, May 1st, a traditional holiday to celebrate the culture and heritage of the Hawaiian people,

was celebrated with US military personnel stationed in Hawaii. Events included elaborate hula dances and band concerts.

Training specific to tropical island landings and fighting was conducted to familiarize soldiers with the jagged coral shorelines and dense jungle environment of Pacific islands and prepare them for the anticipated island-hopping campaign. Private Glen A. Wynn, 104th Field Artillery, remembered the intense training: "We had some tough jungle training and hand-to-hand combat. We also moved from point to point at night, through the jungle, by just using a compass. Also, we conducted amphibious training on Oahu beaches and made a landing on Maui from a ship."



Members of the 27th Infantry Division disembark from a Landing Ship, Tank (LST) and wade across a reef to the beach during the Battle of Saipan, June 1944.
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During a training exercise, soldiers of the 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th ID practice transporting wounded personnel to hospitals, 1943. New York State Military Museum

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A soldier of 165th Infantry demonstrates the use of a rifle to members of the Hawaiian Defense Volunteers (HDV), in Kauai, c.1942. The HDV, one of many local militias formed during the war, consisted of well-organized Chinese and Filipino citizen-soldiers who trained with the US Army and participated in mock battles. New York State Military Museum

