



Ramblin' Man

Jeffrey Kapowai Aveiro's long journey has lead from Kukui Street to Arizona, via Vietnam, North Carolina and Michigan

By Keaumiki Akui

Jeffrey Kapowai Aveiro belonged to the Kukui Street Stonewall Gang. It was the late 1950s, and the street ran from Pua Lane clear up to Central Intermediate School on Queen Emma Street. At the time, Kukui Street was where dozens of produce stores sold cloves of garlic for a dime and a bag of poi for a quarter. There was a maze of three-story rooming houses built around courtyards. Just past Hall Street, the stone wall rose 15 feet high with stairs that led to a community so confined that only its own denizens dared to enter.

The tough guys there had names like Blah, Tweet, Jumbo, Small and Skippa. K-POI played Bill Haley and the Comets, and KDI sold five hamburgers for a buck. This area is now just a memory, as are the chicken fights that kids stopped to watch on their way to school in the morning. Those were the days!

Jeff lived behind that stone wall where life was no lū'au for him, his four sisters and kid brother. It was a time when being on welfare was nothing to brag about. Jeff was six-feet-one entering the seventh grade at Central Intermediate School and took some ribbing from other kids. Life was better at McKinley High School, where he joined the swim team under coach Harry Mamizuka, the quintessential mentor to kids looking for a way out. Jeff learned fast where the exit was. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps with nine other Hawaiians. Following 16 weeks of boot camp in San Diego, even his mother Mary Pahia did not recognize him. The year was 1963, and Jeff's destiny was in a land he



Jeffrey and Mary Aveiro on their Arizona spread.

had never heard of.

The Corps sent him to Santa Ana Marine Air Facility in California, then to "no man's land," Twenty-Nine Palms, for intense combat training. Okinawa followed with more training, this time with the Marines' elite Force Recon Unit. They prepared him well for his next duty station: Vietnam, 1964.

Jeff was a member of the Marines' Combat Recovery Team and soon realized that he was good at it.

Thirteen months later, he was back stateside at a facility in New River, North Carolina, where complacency replaced combat. There he married Gloria, a Michigan girl, then returned for a second tour in Vietnam attached to the 1st Marine Division. By the time he was honorably discharged in 1967, Jeff knew that law enforcement was his future.

Jeff joined Gloria back in Michigan and seven months

later became a patrolman with the Lansing Police Department. Over the next 26 years, he did the gamut of police work, from larceny to armed robbery, before earning his detective's badge in homicide.

Then tragedy struck, as Jeff lost Gloria to cancer. But in time tied the knot again with Mary, a fellow homicide detective on the force. During his last five years at Lansing, he worked in the department's Special Ops Division before retiring in 1994.

Today Jeff and Mary are retired in Sierra Vista, Arizona, 70 miles south of Tucson and just 20 miles from the Mexican border. He has taught criminal justice at Cochise Community College and is currently working as an implementer of Homeland Security access guidelines at Fort Huachuca, one of the oldest forts in the American West and once the home base of the renowned Buffalo Soldiers. Since 1971, it has been an intelligence center and school for all military branches.

The journey from Kukui Street to Cochise County has been a long one indeed for this Hawaiian on the continent.

Keaumiki Akui is the public affairs specialist with OHA's governance division. If you are a Hawaiian on the continent with an interesting story to tell, or if you know of one, please contact OHA Outreach Coordinator Aulani Apoliona at 594-1912, or via e-mail at aulania@oha.org.



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- April 20, 2005 - Mitchell Pauole Kaunakakai, Molokai
- May 11, 2005 - Kealakehe Elementary School, Hawaii
- May 18, 2005 - Kauai Veteran's Hall, Kauai
- June 1, 2005 - Lanai High School, Lanai
- July 6, 2005 - Lahaina Civic Center, Maui
- July 13, 2005 - Blanche Pope Elementary School, Oahu

HOAP is a Department of Hawaiian Home Lands program, administered by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

