

FEB 1984

Page 7 ('Ao'ao 'Ehiku)

OHA Monitors Clearing of Waikane Explosives

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs again reminds hikers, hunters and Windward residents of a serious potential danger from unexploded military ordnance in Dahu's Waikane Valley.

OHA has been assisting the Kamaka Family Hui, which owns the property, in establishing and developing their "Waikane Diversified Agriculture Institute" in the valley.

Early this year, the Kamakas discovered large numbers of exploded and unexploded shells and rockets at the remote former military training site.

Back in 1976, when the military lease expired, armed forces explosive teams swept the area for munitions and the land was returned to private ownership. At that time, the surface was cleared of all known explosives. However, over the years, erosion and other natural causes have exposed additional ordnance.

Currently, a team of military Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) experts is engaged in a 90-day effort to clear the area of all dangerous surface material. However, it is questionable whether the valley can be made safe enough for the Kamakas to proceed with their diversified agricul-

ture project.

OHA will be monitoring this situation to insure that the rights of the family are protected.

Meanwhile, OHA Trustee Rockne Freitas, Vice Chairman of the Resource Development Committee, warned residents and visitors to stay away from Waikane Valley while the clearing operation is in progress. The military is finding it necessary to detonate some of the partially buried ordnance on site in order to safely dispose of it.

Freitas pointed out the potential for serious injury or death if a live shell or rocket is mishandled. He noted that last year, two eight-year-old boys were killed in California while playing with a live shell they found in a canyon near San Diego.

An unknown number of shells or rockets are believed to have been taken from Waikane by a civilian work crew more than a year ago. Freitas urged anyone having such material to contact the Honolulu Police Department immediately by dialing 911. A military EOD team will pick up and dispose of the munitions with no questions asked.



OHA Trustee-at-Large Rockne Freitas looks at some papayas grown by the Kamaka Hui in their diversified agriculture program in Waikane. With the Trustee is Ray Kamaka. The two shortly thereafter left the safe confines of the agricultural site to hike into the valley and a potentially dangerous situation where large numbers of exploded and unexploded shells and rockets lay buried and exposed in an adjoining area of the Kamaka property. The photo below clearly shows five such ordnances. More are partially buried in the background.



