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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cause of brushfire is undetermined

PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM – The cause of the brushfire that began on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) Lualualei Annex on June 4 has been classified as “undetermined” by Federal Fire Dept. (FFD) investigators. This classification is based on analysis of statements from all creditable witnesses; evidence collected and inspected at the scene, fire scene reconstruction and burn patterns.

The fire was reported to FFD Station 11 on Lualualei at approximately 1:05 p.m. by maintenance workers who were cutting vegetation in the vicinity of Radford Street and Kolekole Road, which was identified as the point of origin.

“There was no evidence to support that the fire was caused by improper disposal of smoking materials,” said Fire Chief Glenn DeLaura, of the Federal Fire Dept. “We investigated the point of origin and there was no evidence of ignition sources from maintenance equipment, electrical, matches or of an intentionally set fire. The weather conditions did not support a natural fire caused by, for example, lightning, earthquake or wind.” said DeLaura.

The fire was reported in the middle of the day when vegetation had been exposed to the sun and warmer temperatures potentially allowing easier ignition and spread. Coupled with existing terrain, slope aspects, and strong variable wind gusts, affected and/or influenced the rate of fire and flame spread.

“When the first fire fighting unit arrived on scene, their ability to flank the perimeter to get the head of the fire was hampered since Radford Street is a dead end road and access to make a direct attack at the front of the fire was difficult,” said District Fire Chief Warren Ferguson, of the Federal Fire Dept. “The prevailing winds, wind speed, direction and topography greatly affected the speed at which the fire spread and pushed the fire away from our crew,” said Ferguson.

There were no reports of injuries or structure damage on the installation. More than 30 federal fire fighters daily worked alongside city and county fire fighters last week to extinguish a brush fire that burned approximately 400 acres on Lualualei, and more than 800 acres on Waianae.

The undetermined classification of a fire means that the fire investigator analyzed all possible causes of the fire but there is insufficient information to identify any one specific cause. In addition, there is insufficient information to substantially eliminate some or all of the other possible causes. The undetermined classification means that the case is now closed, and can be reopened if there were introduction or discovery of new information about the fire.

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