



# HAWAIIAN ENGINEERS

# SUPPORT BORDER MISSION

*By Specialist Matthew H. Oda*

**M**ore than 80 Soldiers from the Hawaii Army National Guard's 230th Engineer Company helped support California's Operation Jump Start Southwest border mission in April. As part of the nation's Homeland Security effort, the operation uses National Guard troops to support the United States Customs and Border Protection mission of preventing illegal crossing and drug trafficking along the border with Mexico. The engineer unit, with headquarters in Maui, worked out of San Diego and was attached to Task Force Steel Castle, the California National Guard's engineering slice of Operation Jump Start.

Engineering missions included retrofitting an existing fence, moving electrical boxes, and constructing a drainage ditch. The engineers tried to finish about 300 feet of the fencing project every day, straightening the galvanized steel sheeting and attaching bolts to reinforce the poles. They took only about four days to complete that portion of the project. Another team rebuilt electrical boxes along the fence line, raising them a foot aboveground to make them more visible and building concrete platforms around them as protection.

Even though many of its Soldiers were infantrymen retraining as engineers, another crew completed a brow ditch ahead of schedule. They dug the ditch and lined it with concrete to redirect rain water to a culvert, preventing the water from running down the hills and causing erosion below (see photo above.) The only obstacle the 230th faced was not having enough time to accomplish all they wanted. The Task Force Steel Castle hosts provided the materials and equipment the 230th needed to get the job done. Although many of its troops were new to the field, they were willing and motivated to learn the engineering mission.



**Soldiers build forms to surround electrical boxes and protect them from damage.**

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