

## World War II - Elks in the European Theater 1944

There were fewer 616 Elks in the European theater of World War II than in the Pacific. As with World War I, most Hawaii Elks were exempt from the draft by age, or reserve officers activated to the higher ranks and unlikely to see the battle field. Yet a few Elks and many of their sons were of draft age. With other Hawaii recruits, most traveled to the mainland for training and on to Europe. With families in Hawaii reporting, 616 got more information about them than about the newer military Elks. Newspapers ran notes about recruits training, graduating, being assigned to units. Reports noted soldiers taken prisoner, wounded, lost or killed in action.

**Earl Emerson Holmes**, a St. Louis High School graduate, had about 2 years at University of Hawaii on Dec 7, 1941. With many others, he left school and joined the Territorial Guard. Around the same time, Holmes joined the Antlers, a group for future Elks. Making Sergeant in the Guard, Holmes returned to his birthplace, Los Angeles, Oct 1942, to join the US Army Air Corps to train in Deming, NM, as a flier. Making Lt. quickly, he flew several missions and was awarded an Air Medal with Oak Leaf cluster. Then Feb 1944, shortly after he wrote his parents that “If they report us missing, for Pete’s sake don’t give up,” a telegram to their Sierra Dr. home brought the news.

Parents Thurston and Hazel, fellow Antlers, and 616 learned that in January Earl was “lost in action over Germany.” Not until April was Earl reported as a POW at Stalag Luft in Germany. After his liberation by Russian forces in 1945, Honolulu learned of his crash, hiding with friendly help, capture by Gestapo, and POW life. Elks 616 proudly advanced Holmes from Antler to Elk Oct 27, 1945. Holmes chose to remain in the military serving until May 1963. He remained a 616 member until 1961, passing away Mar 1990 with burial at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

**Earl Frederick Frandsen** was born in Honolulu Jun 21, 1919, to Henry, a Danish immigrant, and Eva, daughter of Portuguese immigrants. He grew up on Lunalilo St. as his dad, an Elk, worked as a plasterer and building contactor. A 1937 Roosevelt High School graduate, Earl was active in Sea Scouts, traveling to a jamboree in Washington, DC. Fate introduced him there to his future wife, Catherine.

In Honolulu, Henry Frandsen proposed his son for 616 membership with initiation Sept 1940. Working as an estimator, Earl joined the National Guard Oct 15, 1940. After Dec 7, 1941, he became a ‘regular’ Army Infantry sergeant, but soon transferred to Officer Candidate School. With graduation Sept 1942, Lt. Frandsen and Miss Catherine May Fisher followed many war time couples down the aisle of a small Army chapel at Ft. Benning, GA.

“US Army issue” chapels were identical on bases across the country.



Assignments followed at OK, LA, TX, and then on to North Africa. After 6 months of action in Italy, Lt. Frandsen's unit participated in the Jul 9-13 battle at Laiatico, Italy. Intense rifle and artillery fire, tanks, and bobby traps accounted for 23 killed, 70 wounded on day 1. July 10, 1944, saw 18 killed, 84 wounded, including Frandsen. His severe wounds caused a long recovery and rehabilitation. Two years at Walter Reed were followed by months at Tripler Hospital in Hawaii. Promoted to Capt, Frandsen was released Sept 1946. He picked up his life, having an active business career including Sales Dept head at Mid-Pac Lumber. E. F. Frandsen remained an Elk until 1959, and passed away in Honolulu Jun 19, 1998.

For other Honolulu Elk families the story of war and service did not end as well. Feb 1945 the Lodge 616 minutes reported the death in Italy of member R. J. Hafford's son, 2nd Lt. **George H. Hafford**, US Army Air Corps. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Lt. Hafford is buried at North Africa American Cemetery, Tunisia.

We salute them all with our thanks for their sacrifice and service.

Anita Manning, 616 Lodge Historian

References:

*616 Membership records and Minutes*

*Advertiser-Star Bulletin* morgue-names, University of Hawaii Hamilton Library

American Battle Monuments [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

National Archives World War II online Archival Databases

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) & [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)

[www.mtmestas.com/Military/88th\\_infdiv/88th\\_InItaly/88thInItaly](http://www.mtmestas.com/Military/88th_infdiv/88th_InItaly/88thInItaly)

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[www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com)