

## 100 years of Elks in Hawaii: World War II - 1942 Allies (& Elks) take a beating

### **Bad News**

World War II in the Pacific in the first half of 1942 was a series of losses as bases and ships, soldiers and sailors were lost to the enemy. For mainland citizens it was headlines in a newspaper or grainy newsreels before the movies at their theater. For Honolulu it was all very real when Mar 4, 1942, two Japanese flying boats bombed Pearl Harbor. At 616, members noted the raid as evidence citizens should continue vigilance. Most of 1942 the news was bad, then Apr 18, the whole country got a morale boost. The US Army Air Corps, led by Lt Col James H Doolittle, flying B-25s off the USS *Hornet*, and busting known capabilities of fuel vs. flight distances, bombed Tokyo.<sup>1</sup>

Doolittle's raid was one positive event. The list of negatives was long as Singapore, Burma, Indonesia, and the Solomon Islands fell to the Japanese. US troops were pushed steadily out of the Philippines, penned in at Corregidor. Low points: U.S. forces surrendered unconditionally on Bataan<sup>2</sup> Apr 9 and on Corregidor May 6.

Elks were in all the military services with addresses reading USS *Lexington*, *Indianapolis*, or *Minneapolis*, serving in mobile hospitals and Seabees, in infantry and engineers. Almost every phase of the war involved members of 616. The surrender of the Philippines was no exception.

616 Elk Ensign **Tom Hayes Carden**, native of Hillsborough, TN, initiated May 17, 1940, had benefited from his membership for only a few months before his Naval Air Patrol unit VP-102 was transferred to Cavite in the Philippines. He kept sending in his dues, but that stopped in 1942. Elizabeth, his wife of 25 years, would learn he was taken prisoner May 6, 1942. Lodge 616 knew only that he was in arrears 4 payments when he was dropped from the rolls in 1944. In 1945 he would be released from Camp #1 Cabanatuan Nueva Province, Luzon, PI, and reunited with Elizabeth in Pensacola, FL.

Fellow Elk Chief Boatswain **Charlie Hammon**, initiated Jan 29, 1939, born in Leon Springs, TX, had been in and out of 'Pearl'. Some time in 1940, with his transfer to USS *Canopus*<sup>3</sup>, he was off to the Philippines. Still he was sending his dues until 1942. Also taken May 6, he became a prisoner at Fukuoka Camp #1, Kashii, Kyushu. When liberated at war's end, he also would migrate to Pensacola, FL. Both Carden and Hammon rest at Barrancas National Cemetery, on the Naval Air Station at Pensacola.

### **Matson and Lend-Lease**

Even before the attack on Honolulu Dec 7<sup>th</sup> the US had been aiding allies in the European war against Germany and the other Axis powers.<sup>4</sup> Pres. Roosevelt had managed passage of the 1941 Lend-Lease Act allowing assistance to "any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States, to sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government any defense article" not expressly prohibited. Aid to the United Kingdom is most well known, but nearly 40 countries<sup>5</sup> benefited, including the USSR. By the Reciprocal Aid Agreement popularly called "reverse lend-lease," American troops stationed overseas received assistance from host nations.<sup>6</sup> August 1945, at war's end, lend-lease costs totaled \$48+/- billion, minus \$6B+ received in reverse lend-lease. Allied nations, slowed by the cost of repairing war damage, repaid most of their bills by the late 1960s - except the USSR. With less than one-third repaid, in 1972 the U.S. settled for \$722 million by 2001.

When you visit Punchbowl's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific look at the maps in the covered arcade. The first map shows a white line between Alaska and Russia and is labeled 'neutral supply line.' Along these pathways before and after Dec 7th, American Lend Lease material flowed to the USSR on US ships crewed by men of the Merchant Marine. After Dec 7th, it wasn't long before many commercial vessels worked exclusively for the military. This included Matson's passenger ships *Lurline* and *Matsonia*, and freighters *Honomu* and *Olopana*.

**James F. Murphy** was born Apr 9, 1906, Weymouth, MA, first son to parents Annie, a Canadian immigrant, and Michael Murphy, an Irish immigrant. In the 1920's James was a Merchant Mariner working on commercial vessels. Nov 6, 1924, he docked in Seattle on the SS *President Jefferson*, signed on as a Water Tender. By May 1938 he was working Matson ships. During a Jan 1940 trip to Honolulu, Murphy was proposed for membership in Elks 616. Probably due to his sailing schedule, although promptly elected to membership, he wasn't initiated until Apr 11, 1941.

Elk and Merchant Mariner Murphy was working as 2nd Engineer on the SS *Honomu* when with sister ship SS *Olopana* they were assigned the hazardous duty of delivering needed war supplies to the Soviet Union under the Lend-Lease program. Making the trip from Iceland to Murmansk, Russia, the SS *Honomu* and SS *Olopana*<sup>7</sup> were sunk on July 5, 1942, by a German submarine. Most of the crew, including Murphy perished in the frigid waters.

He was not alone. During the war Matson lost 11 freighters and 4 passenger ships to enemy action. Many crew members lost their lives. Many others would be years in POW camps. None would receive veterans' recognition or widows survivors' benefits. Their dead and missing are not found on tablets at Punchbowl or similar memorials.

Unaware of Murphy's death, 616 dropped him from membership in 1944.

### Anita Manning, 616 Lodge Historian

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National Archives World War II Archival Databases

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<sup>1</sup> Doolittle's raiders and how they got home - see <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=1514>

<sup>2</sup> Future Elk, Pvt. John J. Moyer, US Army Corps Engineers, was among the prisoners and represents the many veterans who joined 616 after the war.

<sup>3</sup> Read about the fate of *Canopus* & crew <http://www.evperry.com/canopus.html>

<sup>4</sup> Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain in degrees of agreement vs. coercion

<sup>5</sup> Including Belgium, China, Free French, and Netherlands

<sup>6</sup> USS *Echo* (IX-95) was reverse lend lease from New Zealand. Made famous by *The Wackiest Ship in the Army*, 1960 CinemaScope comedy with Jack Lemmon, Ricky Nelson and Chips Rafferty; filmed at Pearl Harbor and Kauai.

<sup>7</sup> Elk Elbert R. Davis had only recently left the *Olopana* for an Atlantic merchant marine berth.