

Council of the City and County of Honolulu

Certificate

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING ELEVEN U.S. MARINE CORPS AIR STATION EWA MEDAL OF HONOR RECEIPIENTS DURING THE 2012 MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY CONVENTION WEEK

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor that can be bestowed upon a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. The award was created on July 14, 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Medal of Honor award.

The Medal of Honor sets specific provisions for recipients where at least two eyewitnesses must provide "incontestable evidence" to a deed that proves to "be so outstanding, that it clearly distinguishes gallantry beyond the call of duty from lesser forms of bravery, involve the risk of life, and be the type of deed, which, if not done, would not subject the recipient to any unjustified criticism."

We stand today on the site of historic MCAS Ewa Field, which was the birthplace of United States Marine Corps aviation in the Pacific when it was Ewa Mooring Mast Field, and subsequently attacked on December 7, 1941 during the Pearl Harbor air raid by Imperial Japanese naval air forces. Four US Marines were killed defending the air field and it is sacred, hallowed ground, where bullet strafing marks in this concrete ramp still give testimony to that early morning air attack and the deaths of those Marine Corps defenders.

2012 is the year of the United States Marine Corps Aviation Centennial, recognizing 100 years of US Marine aviation, and so with 2012 Medal of Honor Society Convention Week, it is especially fitting that we recognize the special contributions made by the eleven Medal of Honor awarded US Marine Corps pilots from MCAS Ewa Field during WW-II.

Today called Kalaeloa, during WW-II the still existing streets of former MCAS Ewa, built by US Marines and US Navy SeaBee Construction Battalions, were later given the names of naval sea battle as a result of the Ewa marine air base closing in 1952 and being incorporated into Naval Air Station Barbers Point. In 1999 the base lands were processed into various land holders, which is still on-going.

Today called Bismarck Sea Road, the original MCAS Ewa street name is Elrod Road for Henry T. Elrod, the first USMC aviator to receive the Medal of Honor during World War II, for his heroism in the defense of Wake Island, who died in combat on December 23, 1941. President Truman posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor in 1945.

Today called Philippine Sea Road, the original MCAS Ewa street name is Fleming Road for USMC pilot Richard E. Fleming. On June 5, 1942, during the Battle of Midway, Fleming led a dive-bombing assault on the Japanese fleet. His plane, was hit and caught fire, crashing into an enemy cruiser. Fleming was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President Franklin Roosevelt.

Today called Vinson Road, Lieutenant Colonel Harold William Bauer, commonly referred to as "Joe" Bauer, was a U.S. Marine Corps air group commander and fighter pilot ace credited with destroying 11 Japanese aircraft during World War II. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions as a fighter squadron commander during the Battle of Guadalcanal which was credited with downing 92 Japanese planes and helping to sink two destroyers.

Today called Essex Road, the original MCAS Ewa street name is Hanson Road for Robert M. Hanson a USMC aviator of VMF-215 from MCAS Ewa who shot down 25 Japanese planes before being killed and posthumously received the Medal of Honor by President Franklin Roosevelt. Hanson was the third and last Marine Corsair pilot to receive the Medal of Honor and also the youngest.

We also wish to honor and remember the names of these courageous Medal of Honor winning US Marine Corps aviators and survivors of World War II from MCAS Ewa whose names include the legendary ace pilot Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, Marine Corps aces Joseph "Joe" Foss, John Lucian Smith, Kenneth A. Walsh, James Swett, Jefferson DeBlanc, and Robert Edward Galer.

In 2012, the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program recognized the historic significance of MCAS Ewa with a \$54,000 grant to begin a process of historic identification and cultural documentation of MCAS Ewa Field.

This honorary certificate and ceremony today on the MCAS Ewa December 7th battlefield site presents an appropriate occasion to honor and respect these visiting Medal of Honor recipients by the Honolulu City Council and the City and County of Honolulu and remember those brave US Marine Corps pilots who sacrificed themselves so that our land can remain free.

DATED: October 2, 2012


TOM BERG, Introducer


ERNEST Y. MARTIN, Chair






