Monday Maritime Matters

Description



RM3 Otis Lee Dennis, USN
Radioman Third Class Otis Lee Dennis is the subject of the day.From here is the little I can find on the web:

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Otis Lee Dennis, born 26 March 1913 in Scottsville, KY., enlisted in the Navy 26 October 1940. Radioman Third Class Dennis was cited posthumously for his heroic conduct as an aerial gunner in the initial attack on Kwajalein, in which he was killed in action on 1 February 1942.



USS DENNIS (DE-405)
In his honor, the USS DENNIS (DE-405), a JOHN C BUTLER Class destroyer escort was named for him.84 of these ships were planned, and 80 built. It took about 4 months to put these warships together from a steel keel on the building ways to a commissioned vessels sailing from the pier. Size: 306â€² LOA, 36 ft beam, 24 knots max speed and displacing 1,300 tons. Two 5â€³38 cal mounts, four 40mm mounts, 10 20mm guns and 3 21â€³ torpedo tubes comprised the armament of these ships. These were little ships, full of fight, to escort the larger vessels, particularly the CVEs (escort carriers) and older battleships during amphibious operations. They also served as RADAR picket ships.The USS

DENNIS (DE-405) was commissioned 3/20/1944, commanded by LCDR Sig Hansen, USNR. From Wikipedia:

> Dennis arrived at Pearl Harbor on 19 June 1944 to escort a convoy to Eniwetok and Kwajalein. She returned to Eniwetok on 29 July screening Belleau Wood (CVL-24). Joining the 5th Fleet, she escorted Carrier Division 22 to Manus for exercises, then sortied with Task Force 77 on 10 September to supply air support for the landings on Morotai Island 15 through 27 September.
>
> From 12 October Dennis screened the escort carriers supplying the air cover for the invasion of Leyte. On 25 October she joined her carriers in making history as they fought a gallant action with the Japanese counter-attacking force in the Battle off Samar phase of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Dennis rescued 434 survivors from the bombed St. Lo (CVE-63). For this action she shared in the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to TU 77.4.3, â€œTaffy 3â€• . Arriving at Kossol Roads, Palaus, on 28 October, she sailed 3 days later for the west coast, arriving at San Francisco, California on 26 November for an overhaul.

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More details of the Battle Off Samar and the role played by the USS DENNIS (De-405) are reported in James Hornfischerâ€™s excellent book, â€œLast Stand of the Tin Can Sailors,â€• which I used to find some of the info below.

A unit of the storied â€œTaffy 3,â€• USS DENNIS was and active participant in the last great naval surface force battle the world has seen. Of the four DEs in the formation on 25 October, 1944, LCDR Hansen was the senior skipper, and LCDR Copeland the most junior on USS SAMUEL B ROBERTS (DE-413). The geometry placed the DENNIS on the far side of the formation from the approaching Japanese battle force, lead by IJN YAMATO, with the â€œSammie Bâ€• on the near side. DENNIS stayed with the escort carriers for support, until directed to detach and engage to enemy force, where she fired her 3 21â€³ â€œfishâ€• at the Japanese from long range, adding to the attacks of the close side vessels, now engulfed in close quarters combat between large and small vessels.

As the Japanese retired, DENNIS was ordered to recover the survivors of the USS ST LO (CVE-63). With cargo nets draped over the sides, 1st Lt Frank Tyrell and BMC Joe Barry supervised the saving of 400 of the ST LOâ€™s crew, including 35 pilots, in the wake of the first Japanese kamikaze attack.Surviving the major sea battle, USS DENNIS participated in the assaults on Guam, Iwo Jima and finally Okinawa. Off Okinawa, she rescued 88 survivors of another kamikaze attack on the USS SANGAMON (CVL-26).Decommissioned in December, 1946, USS DENNIS (DE-405) had earned the Presidential Unit Citation and four battle stars for her WWII duty.

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