Monday Maritime Matters

Description



Jesse Leroy Brown, born 10/13/1926. 22 years later, in Oct 1948, Midshipman Jesse L. Brown, USN was the first African American to be designated a Naval Aviator. Assigned to VF-32, he was commissioned an Ensign in 1949.

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Ens Brown entered combat shortly there after. In 1950, while flying from USS LEYTE (CV-32), conducting close air ground support missions in the F4U-4 Corsair for the Marines in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir.

> â€œI think I may have been hit. Iâ€™ve lost my oil pressure and Iâ€™m going to have to go in.â€•

On 12/4/1950, Jesseâ€™s Corsair was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed. He didnâ€™t survive.



For his actions in the Korean Conflict, ENS Jesse Leroy Brown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.A more detailed page covers Jesse L Brown in depth here, telling the story of LTJG Thomas Hudner and Jesse Brownâ€™s friendship as squadron mates:

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> Eight thousand badly outnumbered Marines shivered in the sub-zero temperatures of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea on December 4, 1950 as eight F4U-4 Corsairs left the deck of the carrier USS Leyte. Each of the eight heavily armed but outdated fighters was piloted by a Naval aviator rushing to defend their comrades on the ground. Most of the pilots were young, in their early twenties, but all were dedicated â€œbrothers in armsâ€• who would risk their lives for the soldiers on the ground, men they didnâ€™t even know, but defended because they were Americans at great risk.
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> Lieutenant Commander Richard Cevoli led his squadron inland, over the rugged mountains of North Korea just north of the Chosin Reservoir. The eight fighters skimmed 1,000 feet above the snow covered terrain, eyes alert for the movement of enemy troops. It was a general support mission, one of many Naval pilots had been flying recently to give air cover to the withdrawing Marines below. Cevoliâ€™s pilots had been flying over Korea for only about two months, but in that short time they had become skilled combat veterans. They had also become closeâ€¦like brothers.
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> Off in the distance flying â€œwingâ€• for Ensign Jesse Brown was Lieutenant (j.g.) Thomas Hudner. Hudner was senior to Brown, but the Ensign had more experience. In the perilous skies over North Korea, rank didnâ€™t matter. It was experience that counted. The two pilots were good friends, though they had little more in common than a boyhood fascination with airplanes and a determination to some day soar above the clouds. Their dream had come true. That dream had also become a nightmare of death and destruction. On this day they would confront the nightmare once again, and Lieutenant Hudner would do all the wrong thingsâ€¦..
>
> BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT!
> [â€¦]



The USS JESSE L BROWN (DD-1089) was named to honor our first African American Naval Aviator. Commissioned February, 1973 as a frigate in the KNOX Class, with a primary mission to detect and engage submarine targets. BROWN was assigned to the Atlantic Fleet and also made three UNITAS cruises, one in 1979, one in 1983 and another in 1989.During UNITAS XXIV, the BROWN also sailed to the West Coast of Africa to show the flag for the WATC (West African Training Cruise). I was aboard USS CONOLLY (DD-979) and had to devise a plan to refuel her part way across the Atlantic, as she didnâ€™t take on enough fuel before leaving Brazil. The â€œSea Storyâ€• of that event is here.

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From Oct, 1985 to May, 1986, USS JESSE L BROWN was assigned to the USS CORAL SEA (CV-43) and USS SARATOGA (CV-60) Battle Groups for a deployment to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.In December, 1985, I was embarked on the BROWN as we transited from the North Arabian Sea to Singapore for a Christmas port visit. During that almost month long transit, we conducted the exercise we nicknamed â€œThe Never Ending ASWEX (Anti-submarine exercise)â€• for the legendary time span the training mission spanned. CDR Kelly O. Spears was the captain of the BROWN and later made Captain, serving as a Destroyer Squadron commander himself a few years later.After the port visit to Singapore, the SARATOGA Battle Group headed for Diego Garcia, from where to left on short noticed to return to the Med to conduct operation in the vicinity of Libya. The BROWN was assigned to the anti-submarine forces for the 4 months of operations, shielding the three carries and the many logistics ships from subsurface attack.Decommissioned in 1994, BROWN was transferred to the Egyptian Navy and renamed the ***Damietta (F-961)***.

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