Monday Maritime Matters

Description

Required reading: Fred Fryâ€™s Maritime Monday 108 and Eagle 1â€™s link to the US Naval Institutesâ€™s â€œAmericans at Warâ€• interview series.
BT

Todayâ€™s subject:



ADM Jesse Oldendorf, USN

Born February 16th, 1887, he graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1909.Jesse Oldendorf was a man who achieved something other surface officers never got to do: He went toe to toe in a night action, battleship to battleship.
Born February 16th, 1887, he graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1909. From the Microworks site, some background of this battle tested officer:

> Oldendorf made pre-WWI cruises in cruisers and destroyers, commanded the armed guard of a freighter and was officer aboard a transport. Both of the latter ships sank. Then he was

engineering officer aboard the cruiser Seattle, and exec of the transport Patricia. Land assignments in Pittsburgh and Baltimore followed, as did an assignment as flag secretary to three successive commanders, Special Service Squadron.

Was aide to three commandants of the navy, and CO of the destroyer Decatur (DD-341).

Was navigation officer of battleship New York and taught navigation at the Naval Academy. Commanded cruiser Houston until September 1941, then went to the staff of the Naval War College. In February 1942, he was assigned to command the Aruba-Curacao sector in the Caribbean, a vital chokepoint of coastal and tanker traffic, in the rank of Rear-Admiral. In August 1942, he was moved to the Trinidad sector. He remained in the anti-submarine business when transfered to Argentia, Newfoundland, as Commander, Western Atlantic convoy escorts, from May to December 1943.

He appeared in the Pacific in January 1944 as commander, Cruiser Division Four, flagship Louisville, and supported the landings in the Marshalls, Palaus, Marianas, and Leyte Gulf. There, he led his bombardment force to intercept the enemyâ€™s Southern Force and annihilated the Japanese with minimal losses to his own force. He then commanded his units on a sweep following the Southern Force.

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On the night of 24 October, 1944, he led a battle force into the Surigao Strait to â€œcross the teeâ€• of the approaching Japanese Southern Force in the early morning hours of 25 October.

His capital units were the phoenixes of the US Navy (*West Virginia* , *Maryland*, *Mississippi*

, *Tennessee*, *California*, and *Pennsylvania*, all but the *Mississippi* having been sunk or damaged in the attack on Pearl Harbor

) who took their fury to the Japanese battleships and escorts, besting them in a night battle (which was specialty of the Japanese at the beginning of WWII), sounding defeating them in detail, while supporting forces from PT boats, to subs and destroyers and cruisers, that harassed and channeled the enemy to their destruction.

ASW, amphibious landing support by gunfire, and ship to ship slug fests. What a life, what a career.

ADM Oldendorf retired in 1948 at the rank of Admiral (four stars), and passed away April 27th, 1974.

And the vessel that carried his name to sea:



USS OLENDORF (DD-972)

Commissioned March 4th, 1978, USS OLDENDORF (DD-972) was the 10th hull of the SPRUANCE Class of destroyers. Initially homeported in Everett, WA, she later was re-assigned to the forward deployed homeport of Yokosuka, Japan. in 1991, she changed her homeport to San Diego, CA. OLDENDORF deployed to the Pacific theater, the Indian Ocean and the Perisan Gulf, as well as performing duties in drug interdiction operations off South America.

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USS OLDENDORF (DD-972) was decommissioned June 20th, 2003 and was sunk as a gunnery target by the USS RUSSEL (DDG-59) in 2005.

Category

1. Navy

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