

LT. (JG) HARRY DUGAN BROWN

September 6, 1944 - US Navy, VF-20 Squadron

F6F-5 Hellcat from the carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6)



The Man: Lieutenant Harry Dugan Brown Jr. was born on November 27th, 1919 in Delaware, Ohio and was raised in Lakeville, a suburb of Cleveland. Harry enlisted in the Naval Reserve in October 1941 and was appointed Lieutenant (junior grade) in August, 1944 while assigned to the VF-20 squadron based on the USS Enterprise. In the early afternoon of September 6, 1944 Harry and thirty-four fellow US fighter pilots ascended from the flight decks of the carriers USS Enterprise, USS Franklin and USS San Jacinto to conduct a fighter sweep of the already battered island of Yap. The island had been hit hard over the previous months by high flying long range B-24 bombers of the US Army Air Force. They circled around to attack from the southwest out of the sun. On the first pass of what was thought to be a routine neutralization strike (milk run), the situation quickly proved more serious. Harry's F6F-5 Hellcat was hit by anti-aircraft fire and streamed a cloud of black smoke before crashing into a hillside near Talguw, Yap. Two other Hellcats flown by Ens. Joseph Cox and Ens. Howard Holding were also hit and crashed within seconds of Harry. Harry's body and the wreckage were not found at the time. He was presumed missing and eventually declared dead in February, 1946. Sixty years later in September of 2006, his plane and remains were finally discovered. Not yet married at the time of his death, Harry was survived by his parents, Mildred and Willard Greiner, and his sister, Jenna Lou Sandberg.

The Plane: The Grumman F6F Hellcat was a fighter aircraft descended from the earlier F4F Wildcat fighters. The Hellcat and the F4U Corsair were the primary US Navy carrier fighters in the second half of WWII. The Hellcat proved to be the most successful aircraft in naval history destroying 5,171 enemy aircraft.

The Carrier: The USS Enterprise (CV-6), the Big "E", was the sixth aircraft carrier of the US Navy and the most decorated ship of WWII. She participated in more major actions of the war against Japan than any other US ship. Her aircraft and guns downed 911 Japanese planes; her bombers sank 71 ships and damaged or destroyed 192 more.

This marker is in memory of LT. (Jg) Harry Dugan Brown and all the other brave men who lost their lives on Yap Island during World War II.

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