

TRIBUTE TO RETIRED CAPTAIN
THOMAS JEROME HUDNER, JR.

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today in tribute to retired United States Navy Captain Thomas Jerome Hudner, Jr. of Concord, MA, a true American hero. For his uncommon valor and dedication to the highest principals of our military, the Navy announced this week it will name the Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer DDG-116 the USS *Thomas Hudner*.

It is a distinct honor, for an individual to have a Navy vessel commissioned in their name; it is an extremely rare honor indeed for a warship to be named after a living person. Yet there are few, if any, people more deserving of this honor than Tom Hudner.

A native of Fall River, MA, Hudner was a student at Philips Exeter Academy when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Already a leader on his school's athletic fields and in its student government, he responded to the call of duty and was admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy. Though World War II ended before his commissioning at Annapolis, Hudner began a storied Navy career that would ultimately earn him our nation's highest military honor.

During his first few years in the Navy, Hudner served as a communications officer aboard various warships before being accepted to the Navy's flight school in Corpus Christi, TX. After earning his "wings of gold," Hudner became one of the "Fighting Swordsmen" of Strike Fighter Squadron 32 (VF-32) aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Leyte*. Just a few years after the racial integration of the US military, Hudner began flying with a young ensign named Jesse LeRoy Brown, the Navy's first black pilot. Brown was born and raised in the segregated deep south town of Hattiesburg, MS, a world away from Hudner's upper middle class home in Fall River and the fields of Hudner's alma mater Philips Exeter Academy.

The relative calm of post-war life as a Naval Aviator aboard the Mediterranean-based USS *Leyte* would not last long. In the summer of 1950, less than a year after Hudner's flight certification, North Korean Communist forces invaded the Republic of Korea. Within months, President Truman would order the *Leyte* into action off the coast of Korea where Hudner and his wingman, Jesse Brown, immediately began flying reconnaissance and attack sorties against Communist positions. Not long after VF-32 joined the fight, China invaded and threatened to overrun US positions.

There are no routine missions in war-time, especially when flying close air support over enemy positions. Such was the case on the afternoon of December 4, 1950 when Hudner and Brown were on a mission to destroy enemy targets near the Chosin Reservoir. About an hour into the mission, Brown's Corsair was hit by enemy fire,

began to lose fuel and he was forced to crash land his aircraft into a snowy mountainside.

The events that transpired over the next few hours became enshrined in the history of American Naval Aviation.

Despite exposure to hostile ground fire, Hudner continued to make low passes over Brown, who was trapped in the wreckage of his destroyed aircraft. And, when Hudner saw that his wingman's plane was burning, he deliberately crash-landed his own aircraft and though injured in the violent landing, ran to Brown's rescue. You see for Hudner, never leaving one's wingman was more than a guideline, it was a covenant. Hudner, later a rescue helicopter pilot, tried in vain to free Brown from the wreckage. With night falling and Ensign Brown lapsing in and out of consciousness, Hudner was finally forced to evacuate the bitter cold crash site. Brown's final words to Hudner were to tell his wife, Daisy, that he loved her. He would have the chance to do just that in person. On April 13, 1951, Daisy Pearl Brown was in the audience when President Harry S. Truman presented Thomas J. Hudner, Jr. with the Medal of Honor for his heroic attempt to save Ensign Brown.

Over the next two decades, Hudner would continue to serve with distinction in the United States Navy. In addition to flying many of the Navy's newest jet fighters, Hudner's career would take him from various ships and air bases where he served in positions of increasing responsibility, including as executive officer of the USS *Kitty Hawk* during the Vietnam War.

Hudner and Daisy Pearl Thorne, she had since remarried, remained friends, their lives intertwined by the events decades earlier on a snowy mountainside on the other side of the globe. In fact, the two friends would be together at another ceremony some 22 years later when the US Navy commissioned the first American warship in honor of an African American, the USS *Jesse L. Brown*.

Hudner retired from the US Navy at the rank of captain in 1973, and while his day-to-day service in the Navy would end, this American hero would continue to serve his fellow veterans through the USO and a variety of veterans' organizations. For most of the 1990s, Hudner served with distinction as Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Affairs.

In closing, I will quote Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus:

Thomas Hudner exemplifies the core values of honor, courage and commitment the Navy holds dear. Naming the Navy's next DDG for him will ensure his legacy will be known, honored and emulated by future generations of sailors and Marines who serve and all who come in contact with this ship.

I thank Captain Hudner for his lifetime of exceptional service to our nation and his dedication to his fellow veterans and wish him and his wife Georgia all the very best in the years ahead.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

2012 ACADEMIC DECATHLON
CHAMPIONS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the hard work and remarkable accomplishments of Granada Hills Charter High School's Academic Decathlon team for winning the 2012 Academic Decathlon—its second consecutive national championship. I want to congratulate all the members of the team: Christian Koguchi, Stella Lee, Priscilla Liu, Kimberly Ly, Hamidah Mahmud, Lev Tautz, Julia Wall, Sean Wejebe, and Jimmy Wu, as well as its coaches Matthew Arnold, Nick Weber, and Spencer Wolf.

Each year, hundreds of high schools throughout our Nation compete for the honor of becoming Academic Decathlon National Champions. This year, Granada Hills Charter High School not only became one of three schools to ever win consecutive national championships, but also set the highest score ever achieved at the Academic Decathlon National Championships.

Competing in an Academic Decathlon is a daunting task. The Academic Decathlon's intense 2-day national final competitions include multiple-choice testing in seven different events, speeches, essay writing, and interviewing exercises. Students spend many hours studying, practicing, and competing, often away from their family and friends. I invite all of my colleagues to join me and the State of California in congratulating California's Granada Hills Charter High School Academic Decathlon team on becoming 2012 National Academic Decathlon Champions.●

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT
COLONEL ROBERT B. SHAIN

• Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of LTC Robert B. Shain, who passed away on Sunday, April 29, 2012. I would like to express my condolences to Lieutenant Colonel Shain's family, in particular his wife of 52 years, Sherry, his two daughters, Cynthia and Stephanie, his son, Michael, and his three grandkids, Bella, Jason, and Mia. He is also survived by his sister-in-law, Nancy, and many nieces and nephews.

Robert Shain had an honorable and extensive career which began upon his graduation from the Military Academy at West Point in 1959. He served in the US Army for 20 years as an infantry officer as well as a fixed-wing and helicopter pilot. He completed two tours of duty in Vietnam and was awarded the Legion of Merit, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars, 27 Air Medals with V for valor, Meritorious Service Medal, Vietnamese Medal of Honor, and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. He served as commander of the Executive Flight Detachment and pilot of the presidential helicopter,