



DeLand Naval Air Station

MUSEUM

DeLand

Florida

THIS  
PLACE  
MATTERS

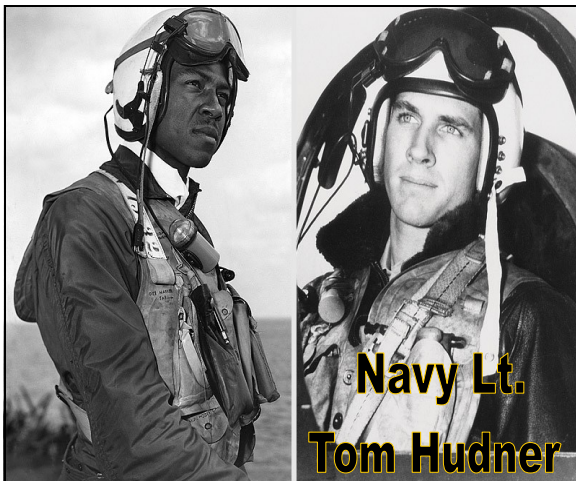
DNAS Museum News - February, 2019

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH Korean War History

Ensign Jesse L. Brown

United States Navy

First Black Carrier Pilot



Navy Lt.  
Tom Hudner



"He died in the wreckage of his airplane with courage and unfathomable dignity. He willingly gave his life to tear down barriers to freedom of others."—Hudner, speaking of Brown 17 February 1973, at commissioning of the USS Jesse L. Brown, the first Naval Ship named after an African American.



Daisy Brown

## First Black U.S. Naval Officer to die in the Korean War



President Harry Truman fastens the first Congressional Medal of Honor of the Korean War around the neck of Tom Hudner at the White House - April 13, 1951

# **'We'll Be Back For You'**



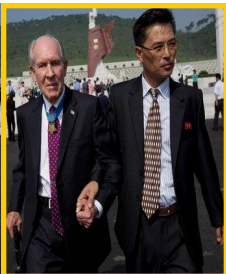
On Dec. 4, 1950, Navy pilot Ensign Jesse L. Brown, the Navy's first black carrier pilot, was shot down over North Korea while flying close air support to save U.S. soldiers and Marines who were surrounded at the Chosin Reservoir, and outnumbered 10 to one. Trapped in his Corsair fighter, he seemed destined to die alone during one of the coldest winters on record. Flying overhead was his wingman and friend, Lt. Tom

Hudner with Fighter Squadron 32 who knew that a rescue helicopter would not make it in time. This wasn't just a pilot in distress or a faceless shipmate. It was Brown – his friend, a married man and the father of a 2-year-old girl. To the shock of his squadron, Hudner announced on the radio "I'm going in". Hudner cranked back the canopy, set the throttle and steered for Brown's crash site. What he was about to do had never been tried before. He was going to make a carrier landing on a mountainside. His Corsair came screeching to earth, skidding against the rocks and plowing through the snow, its propellers bent back.

Lt. Hudner found Ensign Brown pinned in the wreckage, shivering, obviously suffering from internal injuries. He tried to pull him out but could not. He was able to douse the fire on the nose of the plane with snow and then returned to wrap Brown's frozen hands with his neck scarf. Hudner stayed with Brown waiting for rescue. Sadly Ensign Brown did not make it but before he died he gave a final message to deliver to his wife: "Just tell Daisy I love her." Ensign Brown became the first black U.S. Naval Officer to die in the war.

By the time a rescue helicopter arrived, Hudner was exhausted and defeated, but he couldn't leave without a word. He turned and shouted to his departed friend, "We'll be back for you."

When Lt. Hudner returned to the deck of his carrier, USS *Leyte*, Capt. T.U. Sisson announced there was no finer act of unselfish heroism in military history." In April 1951, President Harry Truman awarded him the Medal of Honor, and Hudner used his fame to personally put Brown's widow through college.



Over the decades, closure eluded Hudner. Brown's remains were never repatriated and Hudner was unable to keep his promise to return for his friend. In 2013, at 89, Hudner decided to attempt the impossible. He traveled to North Korea, where he met with a senior colonel of the North Korean People's Army. He asked his former enemies to help search for Brown's remains. The supreme leader, Kim Jong-un was impressed that he came so far to keep a promise and granted approval for his army to resume the search for the remains of missing U.S. servicemen, beginning with Jesse Brown. Lt.

Hudner did all that he could to keep his promise, but knew it might take years, even decades, for anyone to locate wreckage in those desolate mountains. In 2017 at the age of 93, Hudner died at his home in Concord, Massachusetts. "In Memory of All Who Served"





# Annual Membership Meeting 2019

## Jim West, Guest Speaker



Jim Shares The Plight of the Monarch Butterfly and the importance of saving them

Nancy, Mitzi and Fred with Jim



## DeLand First Florida City Designated Monarch City USA

Our thanks to DeLandite Jim West for his educational presentation of the importance of saving the Monarch Butterfly. The City of DeLand was designated the first Florida City to participate in Monarch City USA ([www.monarchcityusa.com](http://www.monarchcityusa.com)). Along with many other organizations, the DNAS Museum will participate in the future with landscaping on the museum grounds. It was great to meet with many of our members, including some of our student members, and to elect our 2019 Officers and Board of Directors.



## New DNASM Board Members Welcomed

Master Chief Ronald M. Wilson, US Navy, retired after a 30 year career. He served as Command Master Chief on the USS Reuben James. He also earned designations as a Master Training Specialist and Strategic Planning Facilitator and Instructor. Master Chief Wilson served on a variety of Naval combatants including 4 Vietnam combat deployments, 2 Mediterranean deployments and many special operations. He was awarded multiple Navy Commendations, Meritorious Service, Navy achievement and Combat Action awards. Ron is the Judge Advocate General (JAG) for American Legion Post 6 in DeLand, and the (PCO) Prospective Commander Officer for the new Sea Cadet Corp at DeLand High School.



Ron Wilson



Mary Lou Pepper

Mary Lou Pepper is a native Volusian, born in Daytona Beach and raised in DeLand. She earned a BA in Elementary Education and a MEd in School Administration from Stetson University. She was a teacher for Volusia County Schools at Lake Helen Elementary and the Home/Hospital Program Director prior to her retirement. Mary Lou is the outgoing President of the West Volusia Historical Society. She was the WVHS 2014 Volunteer of the Year and the 2016 Historian of the Year. She authored *Recording West Volusia Memories: An Introduction to Oral History Techniques* and is the lead organizer for the WVHS Oral History Project.



# Rodney Thomas Honored



**The Osteen Quest  
WWII Plane Crash  
SBD-5 ID Plate**



**SBD-5 ID Plate**



**Wreckage Identified**



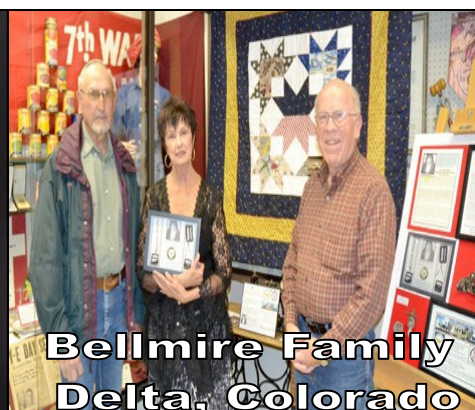
**Volunteers Searched Site**

When Osteen Florida resident Rodney Thomas started to find parts of a vintage aircraft on his property he set out on a mission to find out what type of plane had crashed, when it crashed and most important to him, who was the pilot. For three years he collected hundreds of pieces of the wreckage. Some pieces were small, some were a bit larger, but it was clear by the size of the crash field and the amount of debris that was being recovered, a catastrophic event had taken place. When he finally found an identification plate confirming a WWII SBD-5 aircraft the direction of the mystery started to take a turn. Rodney contacted The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum and learned that DeLand was the only Naval Air Station during WWII that trained potential pilots to fly SBD-5 Aircraft. Members of DNASM were honored to join him in the search. They were assisted in a grid search of the crash site by Community Partners from The United States Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington D.C., the Central Florida Metal Detecting Club, the K-9 Search and Rescue Team of Orange City, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office, West Volusia Historical Society and other volunteers, including the late WWII DNAS Line Chief Ken Torbett of Palm Coast. There was great public interest and news stories developed by FOX 35 Orlando, My News 13, County of Volusia-Volusia Magazine, CNN News, The Daytona Beach News Journal and other news affiliates and publications.

A Navy Public Affairs Officer and Archaeologist responded from Washington D.C. After extensive research, the Osteen SBD5 aircraft was identified as well as the pilot, 25 year old Ensign William Bellmire of Delta, Colorado. He is buried in Delta next to his parents. With the assistance of the Delta Colorado Historical Society, relatives of Ensign Bellmire were located and his personal belongings recovered at the crash site were returned to them. A beautiful military theme quilt made by DNASM member, Nancy Schweizer, was also sent and is on display at the Delta Colorado Historical Society.



**Recovered Wreckage**



**Bellmire Family  
Delta, Colorado**





DeLAND NAVAL AIR STATION MUSEUM, INC

DeLAND, FLORIDA - [www.delandnavalairstationmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairstationmuseum.org)

## RESOLUTION - OSTEEN QUEST

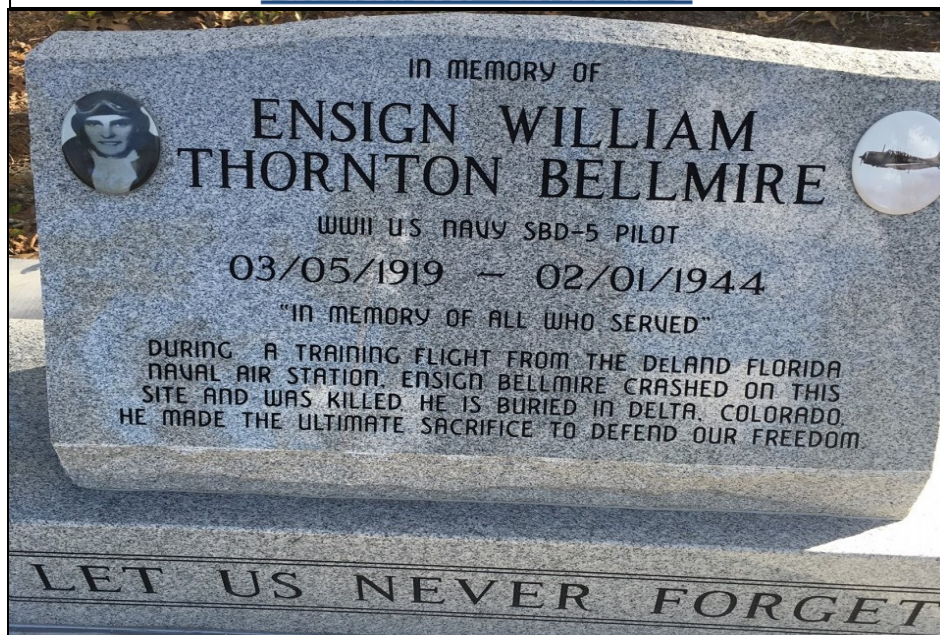
**WHEREAS:** Rodney Thomas, Osteen, Florida conducted a three year search of his property, finding hundreds of aircraft wreckage parts. After finding a metal aircraft ID plate from a World War II SBD-5 Dauntless aircraft, he contacted the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum in DeLand, Florida for information and assistance.

**WHEREAS:** On December 26, 2014 the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, Inc. Volunteers joined Rodney Thomas in his search for the details of the crash site and the identification of the young Navy Pilot who died in the crash. The search was named "The Osteen Quest". Other Community Partners who joined in the Quest included The United States Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington D.C., the City of DeLand, the Central Florida Metal Detecting Club, the K-9 Search and Rescue Team of Orange City, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office, West Volusia Historical Society, The Delta County Historical Society, and the Aviation Historical Society. Other volunteers joined the quest, including WWII DNAS Line Chief Ken Torbett of Palm Coast who served as a technical adviser. There was great public interest and news stories developed by FOX 35 Orlando, My News 13, County of Volusia-Volusia Magazine, CNN News, The Daytona Beach News Journal, Delta County Independent Newspaper, Delta, Colorado, The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Aviation Magazine, and many other news affiliates and publications.

**WHEREAS:** In October, 2015, The History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C., completed an extensive search of WWII Navy records and concluded that the plane crash in Osteen, Florida occurred on February 1, 1944. The pilot who died at the Osteen crash site was identified as United States Navy Ensign William Thornton Bellmire. Ensign Bellmire, age 25, was returned to Delta, Colorado with an escort from the DeLand Naval Air Station. Buried with military honors, he is beside his parents, Clarence L. Bellmire (1899-1957) and Shirley May Roady Bellmire (1896-1981) at the Delta Cemetery.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Harold Bradeen, President of the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, thank Rodney Thomas for his dedication and resolve that William Thornton Bellmire and his family will always be honored and remembered in DeLand, Florida, Volusia County and in Delta, Colorado for his bravery and ultimate sacrifice while serving the United States of America to ensure our freedom.

"IN MEMORY OF ALL WHO SERVED"



The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum presented Rodney Thomas with a Resolution for the Osteen Quest to document his efforts to identify the pilot of a WWII plane wreck discovered on his property.

The Resolution was signed by Past President Harold Bradeen, who was the President at the time of the initial crash site investigation. We thank Rodney Thomas for having the determination to continue his search for details about the WWII crash and the young pilot who died at the site.

The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum will continue to honor Ensign William Thornton Bellmire at the museum as well other pilots and personnel who died while training in DeLand Florida 1942-1946. We want future generations to know about the sacrifices made to protect our freedom.

Osteen Memorial

Honors Ensign Bellmire



Rodney Thomas has created a memorial site on his Osteen property. The granite stone was donated by Deltona Memorial Funeral Home. Rodney also placed a United States flag and a bench to honor Ensign Bellmire at the site of the WWII SBD5 crash.



# Educational Tours for Adults & Youth



Harold & Gene Conduct  
Public Educational Tours



Visitors View  
New F14 Educational Signage



PTF3 Vietnam Patrol Boat



# Community Outreach

## University High School EMS Military Expo

On January 25, 2019, Volunteers from the DeLand Naval Air Station Museum set up a museum display and participated in the 13th Annual EMS/Military Expo presented by the University High School in Orange City. Approximately 3,500 students attended, including University High Juniors and Seniors, along with students from other area high schools (DeLand, Deltona, Mainland, New Smyrna Beach, Pine Ridge, and Spruce Creek). University High is the only high school in the nation to host an event that gives students the opportunity to meet first responders and military experts from over 50 federal, state, and local agencies, and learn about possible future careers.

President Al and new Board Member Ron Wilson  
Promote DNASM, PTF3 and Sea Scouts



Isaiah Carlton's Army Unit Participated



Students Prepare For The Future

- Accel, NASA
- American Red Cross
- Orange City Fire Department
- Armstrong State University
- Orange City Police Department
- Arnold Palmer Hosp, Pink Truck Heels
- Bethune-Cookman University
- Seminole County Fire Rescue
- Central Florida Regional Hospital
- Southern Sprinkler
- Commemorative Air Force
- State Fire Marshall, CORA
- State of Florida Emergency Response Team
- Daytona State College EMS
- UCF College of Nursing
- DeLand Naval Museum
- United States Air Force
- Deltona Fire Explorer
- United States Army
- Deltona Fire Department
- United States Army Reserves
- Division of Forestry
- United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
- Embry Riddle ROTC
- United States Customs
- FAA, United States Marines
- Florida Air National Guard
- United States Navy
- Florida Army National Guard
- Vietnam Pilot
- Florida Department of Health
- Volusia County Animal Control
- Florida Department of Wildlife
- Volusia County Beach Patrol
- Florida Hospital
- Volusia County Emergency Operations Center, Force 10
- Volusia County Emergency Services
- Full Sail University
- Volusia County Sherriff's Department
- Halifax Health, Volusia Fire Services
- Haven Hospice, WyoTech
- Medical Reserve Corps 551, 7235th Army Reserve Medical Support





## T33 Restoration Continues



## Capt. Greg Is Master of the Paint Sprayer



## Ready For Fresh Paint



## Don Works On PTF3 Engine Cover



## Lee Continues F14 Maintenance



## WWII HISTORY - HOME FRONT IN DeLAND, FLORIDA



Our thanks to one of our new Board Directors, DeLandite Mary Lou Weaver Pepper, Past President of the West Volusia Historical Society, for sharing her recollections of growing up in DeLand, Florida during WWII. Mary Lou was asked about her memories of DeLand and the DeLand Naval Air Station. She shared the following recollections:

**"My parents and I moved to DeLand from Daytona Beach in 1943 when I was three years old. They had purchased and operated a big old apartment house on the southwest corner of Voorhis and Alabama Avenues. Since the Navy did not provide enough housing for families, many of the personnel rented homes and apartments in town.**

**I made many friends there in the years from 1943 to 1946 when the base closed and the families dispersed. A few of them returned or moved to Jacksonville, Florida and occasionally some of them would come back to DeLand for a visit. My biggest thrill was to be invited to go onto the base with some of our Navy renters and see all the planes lined up.**

**When WWII ended there was a big, spontaneous parade on Woodland Boulevard. My mother and I walked down to be a part of it and someone handed me a little American flag and told me to wave it. Bands formed, cars were heavily loaded with cheering guys and girls and everyone was singing and yelling "The war is over, the war is over!"**





# Please Join or Renew Your Membership

**Even if you can't actively participate,  
Support the Museum in 2019**

## DeLand Naval Air Station Museum Membership Application/Renewal Form



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SINGLE \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY \$40

\_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT (OVER AGE 18) \$20

\_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS/CORPORATE \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ LIFETIME \$500

**Great Gift**

**\*\*PLEASE TELL US YOUR AREA OF INTEREST**

**AS A VOLUNTEER:** (Restoration Crew, Museum Guide,  
Office, Museum Maintenance, Special Events, Other)

**\*OR \_\_\_\_\_ (I can't actively participate but join as a supporting member)**

### PLEASE MAIL OR DROP OFF:

**DeLand Naval Air Station Museum**

**910 Biscayne Boulevard—DeLand Airport**

**DeLand, FL 32724**

**(386) 738-4149 [www.delandnavalairmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairmuseum.org)  
[dnas.museum.org@gmail.com](mailto:dnas.museum.org@gmail.com)**

**DNAS Museum Needs Your Support**



# THANK YOU SPONSORS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**RONALD HERMAN & FAMILY**

**allqualityproducts.com**

**Rotary Club of DeLand**  
**delandrotary.org**



**CHRIS STUBBS FAMILY**  
IN MEMORY OF  
WWII COMMANDER  
**HARRY K. STUBBS**

**SANDRA TITCOMB & FAMILY**  
IN MEMORY OF  
**ELLWOOD TITCOMB**  
1ST DNAS MUSEUM PRESIDENT

THOMAS C. RYAN  
HONORING WWII COMMANDER  
THOMAS J. & MARY RYAN

DOUG & SARAH LANTIER  
MARTY TORBETT  
FAMILY & FRIENDS  
IN MEMORY OF  
**KENNETH S. TORBETT**

VIRGINIA BRUNER  
HONORING  
STEWART BRUNER



**DeLand Breakfast Rotary Club**  
**wildgamefeast.org**



**briansbbq.com** **jacobhac.com**

**mainstreetcbf.com**



**ATHENS THEATRE**  
**athensdeland.com**

**DELTRAN**



**batterytender.com**

**airportginmill.com** **bechtol.com**  
**The West Volusia Beacon**  
**EMBRY-RIDDLE**  
Aeronautical University  
**WDSC15**  
**DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE**



**ptf3restoration.org**



# VISIT VOLUSIA COUNTY

## SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



skydivedeland.com

**Mainstreet DeLand Association**  
mainstreetdeland.org



delandhouse.com  
Rodney Thomas  
Osteen, FL



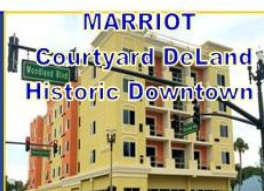
HAVEN HOSPICE  
beyourhaven.org



visitwestvolusia.com



daytonabahamahouse.com



marriot.com/dabdl



Winn-Dixie



African American Museum of the Arts

Athens Theatre - athensdeland.com

Barberville Pioneer Settlement

Butterfly World butterflyworld.com

Busch Gardens Tampa

Central FLA Nature Adventure Tours

kayakcentralflorida.com

Central Florida Metal Detecting Club

www.thecfindc.com

COUNTY OF VOLUSIA - ECHO Rangers

VETERANS SERVICES - volusia .org

Crankin A's Model A Club

Daytona Beach Area Visitors Bureau

Daytona Beach Navy League

Defending Freedom Warrior Weekend

DeLeon Springs State Park

\*Fountain of Youth ECO Tours

Deltona Memorial Funeral Home dignitymemorial.com

Diamond Productions Custom Audio/Video

Dr. Harry Price (386) 985-4788

Dottie's Florist-dottiesflorist.com

Don Nedobeck-Artist

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Youth Program

Great Tasting Tours DeLand

www.greattastingtours.com

Kennedy Space Center

Museum of Arts & Sciences History Con

Cecil & Hyatt Brown Museum of Art

New York Yankees Media-Raquel Julish

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Orlando Science Center

Orlando History Center

Persimmon Hollow Women's Club

Search & Rescue of Central Florida

Sea Scouts-Student Volunteers

Spruce Creek Scuba.com

St. Augustine Lighthouse Museum

Troy White -Artist

University High Student Volunteers

Walt Disney World Orlando

White Diamond Car Car Products

WEST VOLUSIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

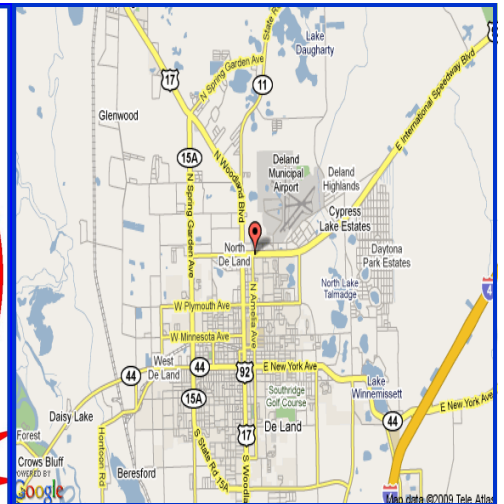
**Thank You Volunteers !!**



# Support DNASM By Joining or Renewing Membership in 2019 Tour Guides Needed - Individuals or Couples (Training Script Available)



**National Register  
of Historic Places**



**DeLand Municipal Airport**



**The DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, Inc.**

**Serving DeLand, Volusia County and the State of Florida**

**Preserving Military & Local History**

**In Memory of ALL Who Served**



DeLand Naval Air Station Museum, Inc.

910 Biscayne Boulevard

DeLand, FL 32724

Phone: 386-738-4149

[www.delandnavalairmuseum.org](http://www.delandnavalairmuseum.org)

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!!

Hours of Operation: 12 Noon—4 p.m.

Wednesday through Sunday

Call to Schedule Group Tours for Adult & Youth Groups



JOIN TODAY OR DONATE

(DONATE WITH CREDIT CARD ON WEBSITE)

**Thank You Museum Volunteers !!**

**View Past Newsletters on Website Under News/Events**

