

USS Brinkley Bass DD-887

Service Record

Brinkley Bass

Harry Brinkley Bass--born in Chicago, Ill., on Independence Day 1916--was appointed a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy on 11 June 1934 and graduated on 2 June 1938. Appointed ensign the same day, Ens. Bass reported for duty in *New Orleans* (CA-32), then serving on the west coast, on 29 June 1938. Detached from *New Orleans* on 10 June 1939, he reported to *Farragut* (DD-348) two days later.

On 7 August 1940, Bass departed *Farragut* to proceed to the U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla., to begin flight training. He began his tour of duty on 25 August 1940. His training lasted until the beginning of 1941. On 7 February 1941, Ens. Bass was designated a naval aviator, and on the 20th, he was detached from the Pensacola Air Station. He moved to the Naval Air Station, Miami, Fla., on 24 February for additional instruction before joining Bombing Squadron (VB) 2 in *Lexington* (CV-2) on 14 May. During the fall of 1941, his ship moved from the west coast to Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands. He and his carrier operated from that base for the remainder of *Lexington's* career.

On 5 December 1941, two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Bass was promoted to lieutenant (junior grade) to date from 2 June 1941. At the time of the attack, his ship was at sea with Task Force (TF) 12 delivering Marine Corps Vought SB2U-3 Vindicators from VMSB-231 to reinforce the defenses of Midway Island. Following the outbreak of hostilities, he participated in missions against enemy installations and shipping--notably the raid on Lae and Salamaua on the northern coast of New Guinea. He was credited with sinking an enemy ship during those attacks on 10 March 1942--an action for which he received the Navy Cross. Later, Lt. (jg.) Bass received a gold star in lieu of a second Navy Cross for his part in helping to sink the Japanese small carrier *Shoho* on 7 May 1942 in the Battle of the Coral Sea. That same battle, however, brought the loss of his ship, *Lexington*. After suffering severe torpedo and bomb damage, she was scuttled by torpedoes from *Phelps* (DD-360).

Soon after that engagement, on 15 June 1942, Brinkley Bass was promoted to lieutenant. On the 26th, he was ordered to report to the newly established Fighting Squadron (VF) 29. His squadron was assigned to the escort carrier *Santee* (CVE-29) and, while assigned to that warship, he and his squadron provided air support for the landings in French Morocco between 8 and 11 November. His part in that operation earned him the Silver Star.

On 21 December 1942, Lt. Bass succeeded to command of VF-29. He and his squadron served in *Santee* for about another year. During that time they escorted convoys and conducted hunter-killer antisubmarine patrols. During the late summer of 1943, *Santee* planes carried out a successful series of actions against German U-boats in the region south of the Azores. For his leadership of VF-29 during that period, Lt. Bass received a letter of commendation and the commendation ribbon. He retained command of VF-29 into the spring of 1944, though the squadron left *Santee* at the end of 1943.

On 11 April 1944, he assumed command of VF-74, and received his promotion to lieutenant commander on the 15th. Late in June, Lt. Comdr. Bass and VF-74 reported on board *Kasaan Bay* (CVE-69). That escort carrier departed Quonset Point, R.I., on 30 June and arrived at Oran, Algeria, on 10 July. For the next month, his squadron and ship conducted antisubmarine patrols in the Mediterranean and prepared for the invasion of southern France. *Kasaan Bay*, with Lt. Comdr. Bass and his squadron embarked, departed Valetta, Malta, on 12 August 1944 and arrived off the invasion beaches on the 15th. For the next five days, he led his squadron in bombing and strafing runs on enemy positions and supply lines. Lt. Comdr. Bass was killed on 20 August 1944 when his plane crashed as a result of enemy action. For that last engagement, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart, posthumously.

(DD-887: dp. 2,425; l. 390'6"; b. 40'10"; dr. 18'6"; s. 34.6 k. (tl.); cpl. 345; a. 6 5", 16 40mm., 10 21" tt., 6 dcp., 1 dcp. (hh.), 2 dct.; cl. *Gearing*)

Brinkley Bass (DD-887) was laid down on 20 December 1944 at Orange, Tex., by the Consolidated Steel Corp.; launched on 26 May 1945; sponsored by Mrs. Verna Maulding Bass; and commissioned on 1 October 1945, Comdr. Philip W. Winston in command.

The destroyer spent the remainder of 1945 outfitting and conducting shakedown training in the Gulf of Mexico. She then put into Charleston, S.C., for post-shakedown availability. On 2 February 1946, the warship stood out of Charleston on her way to the west coast. After transiting the Panama Canal, *Brinkley Bass* arrived in San Diego on 20 February. She remained at San Diego less than a week. On the 26th, the destroyer was underway again--via Pearl Harbor--bound for the western Pacific. Early that spring the destroyer arrived in Shanghai, China, and began duty transporting mail between the various naval commands in China. She made the rounds between Shanghai, Tsingtao, and Hong Kong, and conducted maneuvers with Task Forces (TF) 58 and 77. In December, the destroyer began the voyage home, stopping at Guam and at Pearl Harbor before arriving back in San Diego in February 1947.

For the next year, *Brinkley Bass* participated in type training and independent ship's exercises along the coast of southern California. During the summer of 1947, she entered Hunters Point Naval Shipyard for regular overhaul. The repair period lasted until November, at which time the destroyer resumed local operations. In February 1948, she headed back to the Far East for a deployment of about eight months. During that cruise, she visited Tsingtao, China; as well as the Japanese port cities of Fukuoka, Osaka, Sasebo, Yokohama, and Yokosuka. The warship returned to San Diego in October and resumed local operations out of her home port. In February 1949, she departed the waters of southern California to participate in Operation "Micowex" conducted in Alaskan waters. *Brinkley Bass* reentered San Diego in March, and April saw her begin another regular overhaul, that time at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

In July, the warship resumed operations along the coast of southern California. In October, *Brinkley Bass* embarked upon her third tour of duty in the Orient. During that deployment, she alternated port visits in Japan, China, Okinawa, and the Philippines with training evolutions and patrols in Tsushima Strait. Returning via Guam and Pearl Harbor, the destroyer arrived back home in June 1950.

On 25 June 1950, communist North Korea invaded the Republic of Korea in the south. *Brinkley Bass*, however, did not get into the conflict immediately. Scheduled for regular overhaul, she entered the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard on 16 August and remained there until

8 October. After about a month of normal operations, the destroyer departed San Diego on 6 November, bound for her first tour of duty in the Korean combat zone. She made the normal stops--Pearl Harbor, Midway Island, and Sasebo in Japan--before joining TF-77 off the Korean coast on 25 November. *Brinkley Bass* served the carriers of TFF77 as plane guard and antisubmarine escort.

Such remained her mission until late in April 1951 when she and her division mates were detached to escort a convoy of transports to Japanese ports. On 16 May, she reported for duty with TF-95, the Blockading and Escort Force, for duty off Wonsan harbor. For the next 30 days, the warship shelled enemy installations continually and vectored in air strikes on other targets. On 20 May, a North Korean shore battery succeeded in wounding 10 *Brinkley Bass* crewmembers--one of them fatally--with shell fragments from a near-miss to starboard. On 27 June, she resumed duty as plane guard and escort to the carriers of TF-77. She and her division were relieved by Destroyer Division (DesDiv) 91 on 18 July, and they headed home via Yokosuka and Pearl Harbor. *Brinkley Bass* reentered San Diego on 6 August. After a post-deployment leave and upkeep period, the destroyer resumed normal operations out of San Diego.

That employment lasted until the first month of 1952. On 26 January 1952, she stood out of San Diego in company with *Arnold J. Isbell* (DD-869) and *Stickell* (DD-888) bound for the Korean conflict once more. After stops at Pearl Harbor, Midway, and Yokosuka, she reported for duty in the screen of TF-77 on 25 February 1952. That assignment lasted until 19 March when she rejoined TF-95 at Wonsan harbor. Over the next two weeks, the destroyer delivered gunfire on enemy installations. She also received return fire from shore batteries; and, on 25 March, she took a hit on the centerline amidships that injured three crewmen. Relieved of duty at Wonsan on 1 April, *Brinkley Bass* headed for Yokosuka and repairs.

Back on station with TF-77 by mid-April, the warship screened the carriers and participated in shore bombardments for the next six weeks. The last week of that tour saw her assisting the Republic of Korea frigate *Apnok* which had nearly been severed in half in a collision. On 27 May, she was detached from TF-77 for an eight-day respite at Sasebo. The warship was back off Wonsan on 6 June and spent two weeks bombarding the North Koreans. On 22 June, her division, DesDiv 52, was relieved at Wonsan and shaped a course for Okinawa whence she conducted two weeks of antisubmarine warfare

training. Following that, *Brinkley Bass* served a two-week tour with the Taiwan Strait patrol. On 28 July, the destroyer rejoined the screen of TF-77. On 31 July, she performed her last mission of the deployment--a gunfire mission on the eastern coast of Korea.

Brinkley Bass returned to San Diego on 26 August 1952 and began post-deployment leave and upkeep. On 15 September, the warship departed San Diego on her way to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. The overhaul lasted until late January 1953. On the 26th, she got underway to return to San Diego whence she operated through the second week in April. On 18 April, the destroyer stood out of San Diego on her way back to the Far East. Once again, she alternated between assignments with TF-77, TF-95, and the Taiwan Strait patrol. The mission lasted until 2 November 1953 at which time she departed Yokosuka to return to San Diego. Following a December of leave and upkeep, *Brinkley Bass* entered the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard for another overhaul. After those repairs, the warship resumed training operations out of San Diego in preparation for another deployment to the Far East.

The armistice ending hostilities in Korea had taken effect on 27 July 1953 during the warship's most recent deployment to the western Pacific. Consequently, her tours of duty in the Far East over the ensuing decade assumed a more peaceful and routine character. Between July of 1953 and June of 1963, *Brinkley Bass* deployed to the Orient seven times. In each instance, she coupled visits to various Asiatic ports with exercises with units of the 7th Fleet and intermittent duty on the Taiwan Strait patrol. Only during 1961 did she see no time overseas because of an extensive fleet rehabilitation and modernization (FRAM) overhaul.

The last of those peacetime cruises ended at Long Beach in June 1963. That was followed by 27 months of duty along the California coast that also included a four-month regular overhaul at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard between April and August of 1964. Just as she was preparing to leave the yard, an event--the Gulf of Tonkin incident--occurred off the coast of Vietnam. It helped to bring the United States into the Vietnamese civil war as a full belligerent. Though *Brinkley Bass* spent another year in peaceful operations along the west coast, that incident meant that her remaining Far East deployments would be of a combat nature.

On 28 September 1965, the destroyer departed Long Beach in a carrier task group built around Ticonderoga (CVA-14). The task group spent about two weeks engaged in exercises in the Hawaii operating area before continuing its voyage west. The warships arrived in Subic Bay in the Philippines on 30 October. Three days later, she was on her way to Vietnamese waters where she screened Independence (CVA-62) and served as her plane guard during air strikes on North Vietnam. That brief line tour ended 10 days later back at Subic Bay. On 21 November, the destroyer put to sea once again. After type training at the Tabones shore bombardment range, she headed for Danang, South Vietnam, where she trained for duty as a sea air rescue (SAR) ship in the Gulf of Tonkin. She then began a 30 day tour of duty on her SAR station.

Still engaged in SAR duties at the beginning of 1966, Brinkley Bass was not relieved of that mission until 5 February 1966. That relief occurred as a result of damage to her bow which she suffered in a collision with Waddell (DDG-24) on the night of 4 and 5 February. After a stop at Danang where the damage was inspected, the destroyer moved on to Subic Bay where she received a false bow. On 7 March, the warship departed Subic Bay on her way to the United States and permanent repairs. Following stops at Guam, Midway, and Pearl Harbor, she arrived in Long Beach on 8 April. About a month later, the destroyer began repairs at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. She left the drydock on 21 June and, soon thereafter, began normal west coast operations. That employment carried her through most of the remainder of 1966.

On 27 December 1966, Brinkley Bass stood out of Long Beach to return to the Far East. She made the usual stopover at Pearl Harbor and arrived in Yokosuka, Japan, on 15 January 1967. Four days later, the destroyer began the transit to Subic Bay where she arrived on the 24th. Following gunfire support training at the Tabones range early in February, she shaped a course for the south SAR station in company with Richmond K. Turner (DLG-20). The two warships arrived on station on 6 February. Over the next month, Brinkley Bass participated in one gunfire support mission and four SAR incidents. Relieved by Mansfield (DD-728) on 5 March, the destroyer headed for the northern fire support area of I Corps zone where she conducted one fire support mission on 8 March. She then steamed in company with Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) on Yankee Station before putting into Kaohsiung, Taiwan, on 19 March.

The warship remained at Kaohsiung until 27 March at which time she

headed back to Vietnam. On the 29th, she relieved Waddell as gunfire support ship in the I Corps zone. She joined Bigelow (DD-942) in supporting the closing phase of Operation "Beacon Hill," a combination vertical and horizontal amphibious assault on Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces threatening the Marine Corps artillery base at Gio Linh. That operation ended on 1 April; and, the next day, Brinkley Bass relieved McCaffery (DD-686) along the shores of the II Corps zone. She spent the next six days supporting the 9th Republic of Korea (ROK) Regiment's Operation "Pang Ma Tao." On 7 April, the destroyer joined the screen of Enterprise (CVAN-65) on Yankee Station. That assignment lasted until 13 April when she transferred to a task group built around Ticonderoga. Ten days later, the warship returned to gunfire support missions in the northern portion of the II Corps zone.

Relieved of that duty on 27 April, she joined Ticonderoga and Waddell on the 25th for the passage to Subic Bay. Stops at Subic Bay, Hong Kong, and Yokosuka occupied her during the first half of May. On 19 May, Brinkley Bass departed Yokosuka on her way back to the United States. The warship arrived back in Long Beach on the 29th. After the usual post-deployment standdown period, she began normal operations out of Long Beach. That employment lasted until 1 September when the destroyer began preparations for her overhaul. She entered the Long Beach Naval Shipyard on 17 October and remained there through the end of the year.

Brinkley Bass completed her overhaul on 13 January 1968 and resumed local operations out of Long Beach. Those operations continued until 18 July when she departed Long Beach for the Far East in company with Decatur (DDG-31), Samuel N. Moore (DD-747), and Harry E. Hubbard (DD-748). The warships arrived in Pearl Harbor on 24 July and then put to sea again on the 25th to escort Hancock (CVA-19) during the carrier's operational readiness inspection. Upon completion of that mission, the destroyer continued her voyage to the Orient in company with Hancock and arrived in Yokosuka on 8 August. The task group remained in Yokosuka until 11 August and then got underway for Subic Bay where it arrived on the 15th. Three days later, she was on her way to the Gulf of Tonkin. For almost five months, the destroyer divided her time between carrier escort duties and gunfire support missions. She completed her last line period on 8 January 1969 and headed for the Philippines. Brinkley Bass visited Subic Bay from 9 to 13 January and Yokosuka from 17 to 20 January. On the latter day, she got underway for home.

The warship arrived in Long Beach on 31 January 1969. There she began a leave and upkeep period that lasted until mid-April. On 14 April, she returned to sea to begin normal operations along the California coast. Training operations--including a midshipman training cruise to Pearl Harbor in July--occupied her time through the summer and fall of 1969. At the end of the year, *Brinkley Bass* began preparations for another tour of duty in the Far East. The destroyer departed Long Beach on 12 January 1970. After stops at Pearl Harbor, Midway, and Guam, she arrived in Subic Bay on 2 February. Once again, the warship spent five months alternating between Vietnamese waters and various ports in the Far East. When off Vietnam, she screened aircraft carriers and provided gunfire support for the troops ashore. In addition, she served one tour of duty on the Taiwan Strait patrol and conducted surveillance on Russian trawlers snooping the American warships. *Brinkley Bass* departed Subic Bay and shaped a course--via Guam, Midway, and Pearl Harbor--for California. She arrived in Long Beach on 2 July.

After post-deployment leave and upkeep, the destroyer resumed training missions out of Long Beach. On 10 September, she entered the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for a three-month overhaul. The warship left the shipyard on 10 December and resumed normal operations along the California coast. That employment continued through the end of the year and well into 1971. On 14 May 1971, *Brinkley Bass* embarked upon her last deployment to the Orient. Steaming in company with *Oriskany* (CVA-34), she made a stop at Pearl Harbor before arriving in Subic Bay on 29 May. For almost four months, the warship served the familiar line periods off the coast of Vietnam screening carriers and providing gunfire support for the ground troops. She completed her last mission on 5 September and headed for Subic Bay. From there on 19 September, the warship embarked upon a circuitous voyage home. She made stops at the Australian ports of Darwin, Townsville, Sydney, and Napier before shaping a course for Long Beach on 11 October. She stopped at Pago Pago, Samoa, for fuel and at Pearl Harbor before returning to her home port on 24 October.

Brinkley Bass spent the rest of her active career in operations conducted between the west coast and Hawaii. For the most part, her duties consisted of training; and, after 1 July 1972, she became a Naval Reserve training ship. Thus, she trained reservists during their annual two weeks of active duty. At that same time, her home port was changed to Tacoma, Wash. She conducted her training missions

from that port until decommissioned at San Diego on 3 December 1973. Her name was struck from the Navy list that same day and, she was simultaneously transferred to Brazil. The Brazilians commissioned her as *Mariz E. Barros* (D 26).

***Brinkley Bass* earned seven battle stars during the Korean conflict and nine battle stars for service in Vietnamese waters.**

Raymond A.Mann