Miss Black Teenage Nevada



Maria MacDonald, winner of the title, "Miss Black Teenage Nevada" can be seen on the Black Teenage America 1972 Miss TV special Friday Night, August 18th from 7 to 8 p.m. on Channel 8.

Black Man In The Navy

Robert Penn, also a native of Virginia, was on duty near the boiler room of the USS IOWA a few months later. Suddenly the ship was ripped by an explosion. Penn, a firemen second class, rushed to the scene and found boiling water pouring from a ruptured boiler. The hot coals had to be removed from the steam boiler or else there might be another explosion.

Penn placed a board across two buckets in order to keep his feet out of the scalding water covering the deck. Then he carefully began the process of transferring the fire to a safe place. For this act, performed at the risk of serious injury, Penn earned the Medal of Honor.

During World War I the Navy first began showing partiality in its treatment and use of black personnel. Some 10,000 black Americans volunteered for the Naval service during that time, but for the most part, they were assigned non-combatant roles. Fully-integrated living quarters were maintained aboard Navy ships until 1920, at which time segregation became apparent. In addition, black Americans were only allowed to enlist as stewards or to fill jobs on supply-type vessels.

Such conditions did not prevent individuals from serving valiantly during World War II. Dorie Miller, for example, was a steward aboard the battleship USS WEST VIRGINIA docked at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

During the attack by Japanese aircraft, Miller helped this wounded captain to cover. He then manned a machine gun, which he never had been trained to operate, and destroyed at least two attacking airplanes. He was later awarded the Navy Cross by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

In 1943, Miller was one of the many men killed when the aircraft carrier USS LISCOMBE BAY was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine.

Leonard Roy Harmon was also a steward during World War II. During the battle for the Solomon Islands in the western Pacific, Harmon rendered valuable assistance in evacuating the wounded on board the USS SAN FRANCISCO

and caring for them at a dressing station He was killed by enemy gunfire while trying to protect a shipmate. A destroyer escort named USS HARMON was launched in 1943.

Beginning in 1942, the Navy demonstrated an enlightened view toward desegregation and equal opportunity for all of its personnel. Over 30 directives were issued between 1942 and 1947 in order to make equal opportunity a reality in the fleet.

One of the first steps taken was to tackle the long-neglected area of procuring officers from the black community. During the period between the Civil War and World War II, no black Americans were commissioned as officers in the Navy.

In 1943 however, the Navy announced its intention of training those who met officer candidate school qualifications. Between 1943-54, a total of 60 black officers were sworn into the Navy from this program.

In 1949, Wesley Brown became the first black man to graduate from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. Several other black Americans had been appointed to the Academy before Brown, the first in 1872, but none had ever completed the required course of study.

By the time of the Korean conflict, the black officer and enlisted man were once again in integral part of the Navy's operating forces, and a fleet-wide competitive examination system was instituted to insure promotions based on ability instead of a man's racial heritage.

Among the officers who served with distinction in the Korean War was Ensign Jesse L. Brown, a native of Mississippi. Ensign Brown was the first black American to win the wings of a Navy aviator. For a daring series of attacks on enemy ground troops and supply lines, costing him his life on Dec. 5, 1950, Brown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.

In a further effort to recruit black officers, the Navy established a Reserve Officer Training Corps unit at a predominantly black college, Prairie View A&M in Texas in April 1968. The first class of officer candidates graduated in May 1970.

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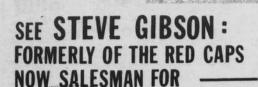
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