

# Charles Richard Brown

9 March 1915 - 19 May 1943

## World War II Pilot, 325th Fighter Group

Charles Richard Brown was born in Omaha, Nebraska on 9 March 1915 to Robert J. and Bessie Dora Brown. He joined big brother Robert M, age 2. The 1920 Census showed family living in a house on Cass Street in Omaha. His father was a salesman in wholesale plumbing. The 1930 Census showed the family still on Cass Street. The house is valued at \$8,000 and they have a radio set. His father is a Commercial Traveler, still with wholesale plumbing. Charles was a National Honor Student at Central High School in Omaha, Class of 1932. After high school, Charles attended Crinnell College before graduating from the University of Nebraska, class of 1936. The 1940 Census showed Charles now has 4 years of College, lives in Hammond, Indiana and working as a Metallurgist at Inland Steel in East Chicago, Indiana.

His Draft Card, dated 16 October 1940, showed he was 5' 9" tall. weighed 160 lbs., had blue eyes and brown hair. He enlisted in the Army Air Corp as an Aviation Cadet 6 January 1942. He is single without dependents. His Service number was #16038186. He was in Class 42-H and did his Pre-Flight at San Antonio 6 January to 23 February 1942.

SERIAL NUMBER 1982	1. NAME (Print) CHARLES RICHARD BROWN	ORDER NUMBER 2615
2. ADDRESS (Print) 34 ORDEY ST HAMMOND LAKE IND		
3. TELEPHONE Hammond 4027	4. AGE IN YEARS 25	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Omaha
6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U. S. A.		
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mr. Robert James Brown Father		
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 8111 Cass St Omaha Douglas Nebraska		
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME Inland Steel Co		
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Indiana Harbor Ind		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. FORM 1 10-1710 Richard Brown (Registrant's signature)		

Then to Grider Field in Pine Bluff, Arkansas for Primary. This is where Aviation Cadets first learned to fly. Charles flew PT-19 planes, a primary trainer monoplane. He had 25:39 dual and 34:25 solo time, total of 60:04. On April 28<sup>th</sup> Aviation Cadet Brown went to Basic Flight Training at Perrin Field, Sherman, TX. Here he flew BT-13 planes. He had 27:10 dual, 52:25 solo, and a total time of 79:25. While at Perrin, he also had 7:45 'other than pilot' time and 15:50 in a Link trainer. Also at Perrin, A/C Brown spent a few days in the Station Hospital 16-20 May. The reason was not readily found. July 6<sup>th</sup>, he moved to Foster Field, Victoria, TX for advance training, flying the AT-6. He flew 11:05 dual and 69:40, total of 80:45 flight time. When he finished flight training on 6 September 1942, he was commissioned and given a new Service number #O-664511. At this time, he had 220:24 total training

flight time. After some leave time, Lt. Brown was assigned to the 318<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 325<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group as it was being formed under the command of the Boston Air Defense Wing. One of his first tasks was to solo in a P-40. He did so on 22 September and had 7 more flights for 10:30 in a combat plane. October was a busy month as the 318<sup>th</sup> Squadron moved from Bedford, Massachusetts to Grainier



Field in Manchester, New Hampshire. He also had 33 flights totaling 56:06 flight time. Looks like Lt. Brown took some leave time in early November. He only had 8 flights from 17-29, mostly in a P-40, but some time in a L-4 Scout plane. December was back to a full training schedule with 23 flights totaling 28 hours.

Early January 1943 the 325<sup>th</sup> pilots received orders to travel by train from Boston to Norfolk, Virginia. When they arrived, they were greeted with 72 brand new Merlin powered P-40Fs. The Navy had to teach these Army pilots how to fly off an aircraft carrier. January 7<sup>th</sup> planes and pilots were loaded onto the Ranger for a trans-Atlantic journey to North Africa. On 19 January all 72 P-40s flew off the Ranger to Casablanca. His flight log noted 'Ranger to Casab'. The Navy usually gives its pilots 390 feet of deck to take off. In a goodwill gesture, the Navy gave Army pilots 425 feet of deck.

A few days after arriving the 325<sup>th</sup> flew air patrols for President Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference. Later the 325<sup>th</sup> was ordered to transfer many of its planes to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Group, which was battling the Axis and needed them. Lt. Brown was one of the pilots who helped move these planes on 22 January. The group flew from Casablanca to Oran for a fuel stop, then on to Thelepte. Total 6:40 of flight time. Two more local training flights rounded out January. This gave the 325<sup>th</sup> extra time for training. But with few planes, February only had 11 flights for 12:30 time. Late February the 318<sup>th</sup> and 319<sup>th</sup> Squadrons were ordered to move up to Oran. March training flights picked up, with 24 flights for 44:45 time. In early April the squadrons moved again to Montesque Airdrome in Tunisia. Lt. Brown flew a few short hops moving planes around to the new base. Looks like Lt. Brown flew his first combat mission on 29 April. The 318<sup>th</sup> flew cover for the 319<sup>th</sup> carrying bombs to go after Axis shipping by Cape el Melah and Cape El Drekk.

No flight information was found for May 1943. On 18 May, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Brown was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. He was lost 19 May 1943 during an escort mission over Decimamannu Air Drone, Sardinia. Bombers of the 320<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Bomber Groups,

both B-26 units, were escorted. The enemy attacked the bombers hard, and the 325<sup>th</sup> protected them. The enemy lost 5 fighters, but Lt. Brown's plane was shot down. It was seen going straight down. His remains were not recovered. When Allied troops arrived on Sardinia about a year later, they did carry out searches for missing airmen and interviewed locals. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Charles Richard Brown is Memorialized at the North Africa American Cemetery in Tunisia.