

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6990

To award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Doris Miller, in recognition of his acts of valor while a member of the United States Navy during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2022

Mr. MFUME introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Doris Miller, in recognition of his acts of valor while a member of the United States Navy during World War II.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Doris Miller Congres-
5 sional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Doris Miller, like other African-American
2 sailors of his day, was generally relegated to service-
3 based roles on ships, as the Navy did not allow sail-
4 ors of color to enlist in combat roles.

5 (2) On December 7, 1941, Doris Miller was
6 serving aboard the USS West Virginia in Hawaii
7 when Japanese torpedo bombers attacked his ship
8 and others at the Pearl Harbor Naval Base—head-
9 quarters of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. During this infam-
10 ous attack, Doris Miller manned a gun magazine
11 amidships. When a torpedo damaged the magazine,
12 Doris Miller helped carry the wounded to safety, in-
13 cluding his ship’s commander, Captain Mervyn S.
14 Bennion. Doris Miller then manned a .50 caliber
15 antiaircraft gun, for which he had no training, and
16 continued firing on the enemy until he ran out of
17 ammunition and received the order to abandon ship.

18 (3) Doris Miller was acknowledged in the USS
19 West Virginia Action Report, individually, along
20 with other brave personnel for having “carried out
21 every order promptly and enthusiastically, even when
22 it meant danger to themselves. They did not attempt
23 to abandon the bridge until ordered to do so.”.

24 (4) Doris Miller aided other service members
25 and “was instrumental in hauling people along

1 through oil and water to the quarterdeck, thereby
2 unquestionably saving the lives of a number of peo-
3 ple who might otherwise have been lost.”.

4 (5) On December 15, 1941, the Navy released
5 its commendations for actions in Pearl Harbor
6 which included one “unnamed Negro”. It wasn’t
7 until March of 1942, at the behest of the NAACP,
8 that the Navy formally recognized Miller’s heroism.

9 (6) Doris Miller was recognized by the Navy
10 and awarded the Navy Cross Medal with the citation
11 reading “For distinguished devotion to duty, ex-
12 traordinary courage and disregard for his own per-
13 sonal safety during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl
14 Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, by Japanese forces on
15 December 7, 1941. While at the side of his Captain
16 on the bridge, Miller, despite enemy strafing and
17 bombing and in the face of a serious fire, assisted
18 in moving his Captain, who had been mortally
19 wounded, to a place of greater safety, and later
20 manned and operated a machine gun directed at
21 enemy Japanese attacking aircraft until ordered to
22 leave the bridge.”.

23 (7) On May 27, 1942, Admiral Chester Nimitz
24 personally pinned the Navy Cross to Miller’s left

1 breast pocket while on board the aircraft carrier
2 USS Enterprise.

3 (8) Doris Miller died in action on November 24,
4 1943, on board the USS Liscome Bay in the Pacific
5 Ocean after a single Japanese torpedo sank the ves-
6 sel off the coast of Butaritari Island.

7 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

8 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
9 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
10 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
11 for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of Congress,
12 of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration
13 of Doris Miller, in recognition of his acts of valor while
14 a member of the Navy during World War II.

15 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
16 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
17 of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
18 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
19 blems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the
20 Secretary.

21 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
23 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
24 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where

1 it shall be available for display as appropriate and
2 made available for research.

3 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
4 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution shall
5 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
6 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
7 appropriate locations associated with Doris Miller.

8 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

9 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
10 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at
11 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
12 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

13 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

14 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
15 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
16 51 of title 31, United States Code.

17 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
18 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
19 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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