

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1252

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

FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Mr. MFUME (for himself, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARSON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. TITUS, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Mr. CONNOLLY) 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”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

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

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

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

1 (4) Doris Miller aided other service members
2 and “was instrumental in hauling people along
3 through oil and water to the quarterdeck, thereby
4 unquestionably saving the lives of a number of peo-
5 ple who might otherwise have been lost.”.

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

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

1 (7) On May 27, 1942, Admiral Chester Nimitz
2 personally pinned the Navy Cross to Miller's left
3 breast pocket while on board the aircraft carrier
4 USS Enterprise.

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

9 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

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

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

23 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
25 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal

1 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
2 it shall be available for display as appropriate and
3 made available for research.

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

9 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

14 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

15 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
16 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
17 51 of title 31, United States Code.

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

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