

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5549

To authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to Doris Miller posthumously for acts of valor while a member of the Navy during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2020

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to Doris Miller posthumously for acts of valor while a member of the 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

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

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

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

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

17 (5) Doris Miller was recognized by the Navy
18 and awarded the Navy Cross Medal with the citation
19 reading “For distinguished devotion to duty, ex-
20 traordinary courage and disregard for his own per-
21 sonal safety during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl
22 Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, by Japanese forces on
23 December 7, 1941. While at the side of his Captain
24 on the bridge, Miller, despite enemy strafing and
25 bombing and in the face of a serious fire, assisted

1 in moving his Captain, who had been mortally
2 wounded, to a place of greater safety, and later
3 manned and operated a machine gun directed at
4 enemy Japanese attacking aircraft until ordered to
5 leave the bridge.”.

6 (6) On May 27, 1942, Admiral Chester Nimitz
7 personally pinned the Navy Cross to Miller’s left
8 breast pocket while on board the aircraft carrier
9 USS Enterprise.

10 (7) Doris Miller died in action on November 24,
11 1943, on board the USS Liscome Bay in the Pacific
12 Ocean after a single Japanese torpedo sank the ves-
13 sel off the coast of Butaritari Island.

14 (8) Of the 15 sailors who were awarded the
15 Medal of Honor for similar actions taken during the
16 attack on Pearl Harbor, not one was African-Amer-
17 ican.

18 (9) Doris Miller deserves the highest honor the
19 United States can bestow upon a member of the
20 Armed Forces.

1 **SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF**
2 **MEDAL OF HONOR TO DORIS MILLER FOR**
3 **ACTS OF VALOR WHILE A MEMBER OF THE**
4 **NAVY DURING WORLD WAR II.**

5 Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in sec-
6 tions 8298(a) and 8300 of title 10, United States Code,
7 or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding
8 of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed
9 Forces, the President is authorized to award the Medal
10 of Honor posthumously, under section 8291 of such title,
11 to Doris Miller (service number 356-12-35) for acts of
12 valor during World War II while a member of the Navy.

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