

By: White

H.C.R. No. 45

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, During the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7,
2 1941, Petty Officer Doris Miller of the U.S. Navy demonstrated
3 valor above and beyond the call of duty, and he is long past due for
4 full recognition of his extraordinary courage and initiative on
5 that day; and

6 WHEREAS, A native of Texas, Doris "Dorie" Miller was born in
7 Waco on October 12, 1919, to Henrietta and Conery Miller; he was a
8 fullback on the football team at Moore High School in Waco, and he
9 went on to work on his father's farm; and

10 WHEREAS, In September 1939, Mr. Miller enlisted in the U.S.
11 Navy as a way to see the world and earn money for his family; at that
12 time, African Americans were only permitted to perform menial tasks
13 in the Navy, so Mr. Miller was trained as a mess attendant at the
14 Naval Training Station in Norfolk, Virginia; after a brief
15 assignment on the ammunition ship USS *Pyro*, he was transferred in
16 January 1940 to the battleship USS *West Virginia*, where he won
17 distinction among the crew as the ship's heavyweight boxing
18 champion; his rank at the time was mess attendant, second class; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Miller rose at 6 a.m. on the morning of December
20 7, 1941, and he was collecting laundry when the Japanese attack
21 began and the alarm for general quarters was sounded; even mess
22 attendants had a battle station, but Mr. Miller's, an antiaircraft
23 battery magazine, had already been destroyed by a torpedo, so he
24 went up on deck where, as the ship began to sink, he hauled wounded

1 shipmates through oil and water to safety on the quarterdeck; he was
2 then ordered to the bridge, where he picked up the ship's mortally
3 wounded captain and carried him to an aid station; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Miller then returned to the bridge, and on his
5 own initiative, he began firing a .50-caliber Browning antiaircraft
6 machine gun at the attacking Japanese planes; he had never trained
7 on the weapon, but, as he reported later, "It wasn't hard, I just
8 pulled the trigger and she worked fine"; with no concern for his own
9 safety, he continued firing until the gun's ammunition ran out,
10 possibly bringing down one of the enemy aircraft; in the meantime,
11 the *West Virginia* had been hit by five enemy torpedoes, and
12 Mr. Miller was finally forced to abandon ship with his surviving
13 crewmates; and

14 WHEREAS, In the aftermath of the attack, Mr. Miller was
15 commended by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and on May 27, 1942,
16 he became the first African American to receive the Navy Cross, the
17 service's second-highest honor, which was personally presented to
18 him by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the commander of the Pacific
19 Fleet; he went on to serve on the USS *Indianapolis* and then the USS
20 *Liscome Bay*; that ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine on November
21 24, 1943, and though his body was never recovered, Mr. Miller was
22 eventually listed among the 646 sailors who died that day; at the
23 time of his death, his rank was cook, third class; and

24 WHEREAS, In the years since, Mr. Miller's actions have become
25 an important part of the legacy of Pearl Harbor; during the war, a
26 poster from the U.S. Office of War Information featured his image
27 and urged African Americans to join the war effort, and in 1973, a

1 Knox-class frigate was christened the USS *Miller* in his honor; in
2 1991, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority dedicated a bronze plaque to him at
3 the U.S. Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, and in 2001, he was portrayed
4 by the actor Cuba Gooding Jr. in the blockbuster film, *Pearl Harbor*;
5 more recently, his story has been featured prominently in the
6 National Museum of African American History and Culture in
7 Washington, D.C.; in addition to the Navy Cross, he was also
8 entitled to the Purple Heart, the American Defense Service Medal,
9 Fleet Clasp, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War
10 II Victory Medal; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1939, when the clouds of world war were gathering
12 in Europe and Asia, Dorie Miller chose to enlist in a Navy that did
13 not trust black men to serve in combat, and at a moment of direst
14 need, he picked up a weapon he had never used before and fought back
15 against a savage enemy, performing brilliantly and courageously
16 under fire in defense of his ship, his crewmates, and his nation;
17 his valiant service on that day, and afterwards, warrants the
18 highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the armed forces
19 of the United States; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
21 hereby urge the United States Congress to bestow on Doris "Dorie"
22 Miller the Congressional Medal of Honor; and, be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward official copies
24 of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the
25 secretary of the Navy, to the speaker of the House of
26 Representatives and the president of the Senate of the United
27 States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to

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1 Congress with the request that this resolution be officially
2 entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of
3 the United States of America.