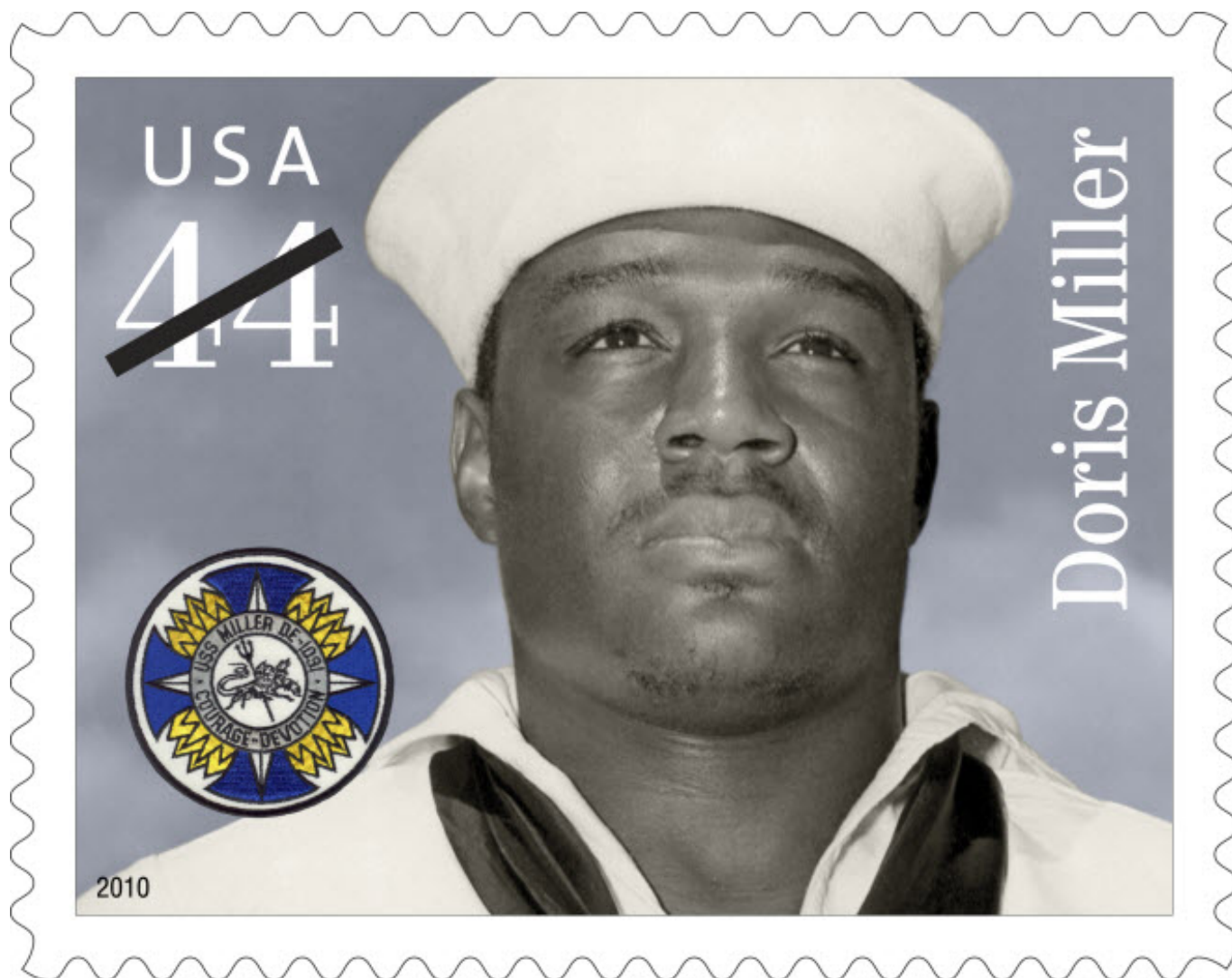


Dorie Miller Hero of Pearl Harbor WWII

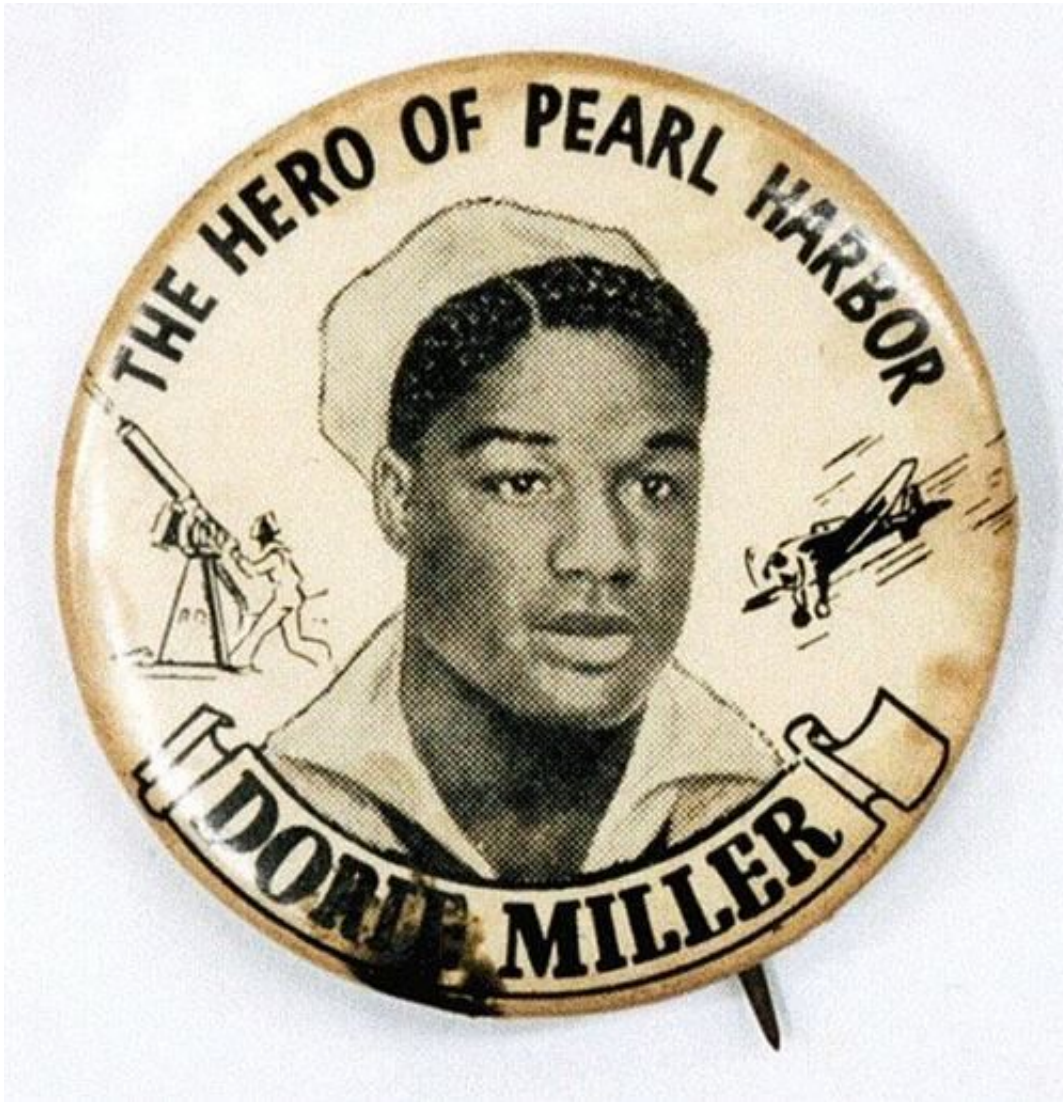
Author : Darlene Dancy

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Petty Officer Doris Miller, USN



Doris Miller, known as "Dorie" to shipmates and friends, was born in Waco, Texas, on 12 October 1919, to Henrietta and Conery Miller. He had three brothers, one of which served in the Army during World War II. While attending Moore High School in Waco, he was a fullback on the football team. He worked on his father's farm before enlisting in the U.S. Navy as Mess Attendant, Third Class, at Dallas, Texas, on 16 September 1939, to travel, and earn money for his family. He later was commended by the Secretary of the Navy, was advanced to Mess Attendant, Second Class and First Class, and subsequently was promoted to Cook, Third Class.

Following training at the Naval Training Station, Norfolk, Virginia, Miller was assigned to the ammunition ship *USS Pyro* (AE-1) where he served as a Mess Attendant, and on 2 January 1940 was transferred to *USS West Virginia* (BB-48), where he became the ship's heavyweight boxing champion.

In July of that year he had temporary duty aboard *USS Nevada* (BB-36) at Secondary Battery Gunnery School. He returned to *West Virginia* and on 3 August, and was serving in that battleship when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Miller had arisen at

6 a.m., and was collecting laundry when the alarm for general quarters sounded. He headed for his battle station, the antiaircraft battery magazine amidships, only to discover that torpedo damage had wrecked it, so he went on deck.

Because of his physical prowess, he was assigned to carry wounded fellow Sailors to places of greater safety. Then an officer ordered him to the bridge to aid the mortally wounded Captain of the ship. He subsequently manned a 50 caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship.



Ship's Cook Third Class Doris Miller, USN

Famous for firing a 50 caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun for 15 minutes during the attack until he ran out of ammo. (Ordinarily this is not unusual - except that Dorie was the Ships Cook!) He was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions

beyond the call of duty.

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Miller described firing the machine gun during the battle, a weapon which he had not been trained to operate: "It wasn't hard. I just pulled the trigger and she worked fine. I had watched

the others with these guns. I guess I fired her for about fifteen minutes. I think I got one of those 'Jap' planes. They were diving pretty close to us."

During the attack, Japanese aircraft dropped two armored piercing bombs through the deck of the battleship and launched five 18-inch aircraft torpedoes into her port side. Heavily damaged by the ensuing explosions, and suffering from severe flooding below decks, the crew abandoned ship while *West Virginia* slowly settled to the harbor bottom.

Of the 1,541 men on *West Virginia* during the attack, 130 were killed and 52 wounded. Subsequently re-floated, repaired, and modernized, the battleship served in the Pacific theater through to the end of the war in August 1945.

Miller was commended by the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox on 1 April 1942, and on 27 May 1942 he received the Navy Cross, which Fleet Admiral (then Admiral) Chester W. Nimitz, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet personally presented to Miller on board aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) for his extraordinary courage in battle. Speaking of Miller, Nimitz remarked:

"This marks the first time in this conflict that such high tribute has been made in the Pacific Fleet to a member of his race and I'm sure that the future will see others similarly honored for brave acts."



On 13 December 1941, Miller reported to USS *Indianapolis* (CA-35), and subsequently returned to the west coast of the United States in November 1942. Assigned to the newly constructed USS *Liscome Bay* (CVE-56) in the spring of 1943, Miller was on board that escort carrier during Operation Galvanic, the seizure of Makin and Tarawa Atolls in the Gilbert Islands.

Liscome Bay's aircraft supported operations ashore between 20-23 November 1943. At 5:10 a.m. on 24 November, while cruising near Butaritari Island, a single torpedo from Japanese submarine *I-175* struck the escort carrier near the stern. The aircraft bomb magazine detonated a few moments later, sinking the warship within minutes. Listed as missing following the loss of that escort carrier, Miller was officially presumed dead 25 November 1944, a year and a day after the loss of *Liscome Bay*.

Only 272 Sailors survived the sinking of *Liscome Bay*, while 646 died.

In addition to the Navy Cross, [Dorie Miller](#) was entitled to the Purple Heart Medal; the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.