

# Black History Month 2012

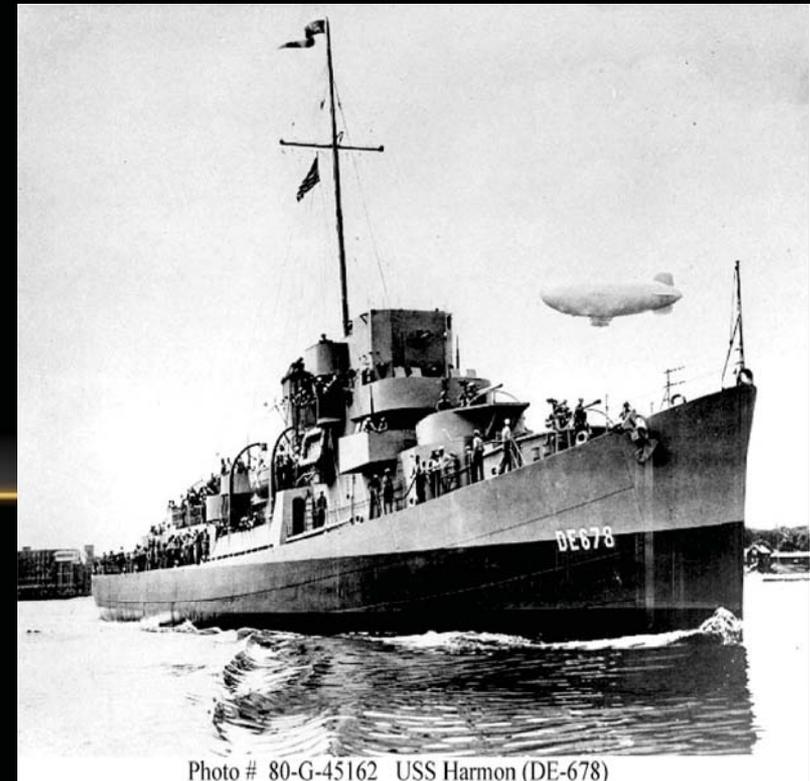
## **U.S. NAVY SHIPS NAMED IN HONOR OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS**

YN1(SW) Maribeth A. Bradshaw

In honor of Black History Month 2012, the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command Headquarters Command Assessment Team chose to focus this month's celebration on historical African-Americans and their contributions to our country. For their devotion to our service the Command Assessment Team emphasized Naval ships named in their honor.



# USS HARMON (DE 678) 1943-1967



## Leonard Roy Harmon, Mess Attendant First Class, USN

Leonard Harmon was killed in action on board USS SAN FRANCISCO (CA 38) during the Battle of Guadalcanal, 13 November 1942. For his heroism in that action, Mess Attendant Harmon was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

# USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER (SSBN 656) 1966 - 1993



Photo # USN 1129315 USS George Washington Carver underway, 13 July 1967

## George Washington Carver (January 1864 – 5 January 1943)

George Washington Carver was an African-American scientist, botanist, educator, and inventor. The exact day and year of his birth are unknown; he is believed to have been born into slavery in Missouri in January 1864. Carver's reputation is based on his research into and promotion of alternative crops to cotton, such as peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes, which also aided nutrition for farm families. He wanted poor farmers to grow alternative crops both as a source of their own food and as a source of other products to improve their quality of life. The most popular of his 44 practical bulletins for farmers contained 105 food recipes using peanuts. He received numerous honors for his work, including the Spingarn Medal of the NAACP. In 1941, Time Magazine dubbed Carver a "Black Leonardo", a reference to the renaissance Leonardo da Vinci.

## USS JESSE L. BROWN (DE-1089; LATER FF-1089 AND FFT-1089) 1973-1994



Photo # 80-G-706531 Jesse L. Brown as a Naval Aviation Cadet



Photo # NH 96767 USS Jesse L. Brown (DE-1089) off the Maine coast

### Ensign Jesse LeRoy Brown, USN (1926-1950)

Jesse LeRoy Brown was born in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on 13 October 1926. He enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 1946 and was appointed a Midshipman, USN, the following year. Brown became the first African-American to be trained by the Navy as an aviator. After attending pre-flight school and flight training, he was designated a Naval Aviator in October 1948. Midshipman Brown was then assigned to Fighter Squadron 32. He received his commission as Ensign in April 1949.

During the Korean War, Brown also became the first African-American Naval Aviator to see combat when his squadron operated from USS LEYTE (CV 32), flying F4U-4 Corsair fighters in support of United Nations forces. On 4 December 1950, while on a close air support mission near the Chosin Reservoir, Ensign Brown's plane was hit by enemy fire and crashed. Despite heroic efforts by other aviators, he could not be rescued and died in his aircraft. Ensign Jesse L. Brown was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his Korean War combat service.

# USS MILLER (DE-1091; LATER FF-1091) 1973-1991



Photo # 80-G-408456 Doris Miller wearing Navy Cross



Photo # K-103414 USS Miller (DE-1091) at sea, 20 May 1974

## **Cook Third Class Doris Miller, USN (1919-1943)**

Doris ("Dorie") Miller was born in Waco, Texas, on 12 October 1919. He enlisted in the Navy in September 1939 as a Mess Attendant Third Class. On 7 December 1941, while serving aboard USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48), he distinguished himself by courageous conduct and devotion to duty during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on this occasion.

Doris Miller served aboard USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) from December 1941 to May 1943. He was then assigned to the escort carrier LISCOME BAY (CVE 56). Cook Third Class Miller was lost with that ship when she was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine on 24 November 1943, during the invasion of the Gilbert Islands.

# USNS PFC JAMES ANDERSON, JR. (T-AK-3002) 1985 TO PRESENT



Photo # NH 96771-KN USNS PFC James Anderson, Jr. (T-AK-3002)

**Private First Class James Anderson, Jr (22 January 1947 – 28 February 1967)**

Private First Class Anderson was a United States Marine who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for heroism while serving in Vietnam in February 1967. When his Medal of Honor was awarded on 21 August 21 1968, he became the first African-American U.S. Marine recipient of the Medal of Honor.

# USS RODNEY M. DAVIS (FFG 60) 1987 TO PRESENT



Photo # NH 96766-KN USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG-60)

## **Sergeant Rodney Maxwell Davis (7 April 1942 – 6 September 1967)**

Sergeant Davis enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in his hometown, 31 August 1961. Ordered to the Republic of Vietnam on 6 September 1967, he was operating with his unit in the Quang Nam Province on a search and clear mission during Operation Swift, when they were attacked by a large North Vietnamese force. Elements of the platoon were pinned down in a trench line by mortars, heavy automatic and small arms fire. He went from man to man encouraging them on and also returning fire at the same time. An enemy hand grenade fell in the trenches his men were fighting from and without hesitation he threw himself upon the grenade. He saved his fellow Marines in this selfless act and thus earned the nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

# USNS HENSON (T-AGS-63), 1998 TO PRESENT

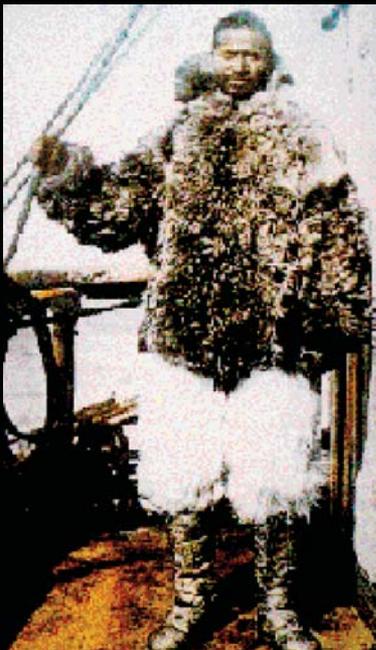


Photo # NH 96772-KN USNS Henson (T-AGS-63)

## Matthew Henson (1866-1955)

Matthew Henson was vital to the success of Robert Perry's polar expeditions. By mastering the Inuit's language he gained their trust and aid. He also maintained expedition equipment, trained sled dogs, and built sledges that were used for arctic exploration. Henson was the only African-American on the expeditions and was with Perry on 7 April 1909, the day Perry claimed to have reached the North Pole.

Recognition came to Henson principally after his retirement in 1936; explorer's club membership, 1937; the congressional Perry Polar Expedition Medal, 1944; The U.S. Navy Medal of Merit, 1945; a presidential citation in 1954 and honorary degrees from Morgan State College and Howard University, historically black colleges.

# USNS WATSON (T-AKR-310) 1998 TO PRESENT



**George Watson (1915 – 8 March 1943)**

George Watson was a Private in the United States Army who was killed in action during World War II. He was one of seven African American soldiers to receive the Medal of Honor for their actions during World War II, and the only one of the seven to earn his medal while serving in the Pacific Theater.

# USS OSCAR AUSTIN (DDG 79) 2000 TO PRESENT



**Private First Class Oscar Palmer Austin (15 January 1949 – 23 February 1969)**

Private First Class Austin joined the United States Marine Corps in Phoenix, Arizona on 22 April 1968. On 1 October 1968, he was transferred to the Republic of Vietnam. While participating in combat 6 ½ miles west of Da Nang on 23 February 1969, he was killed in action. During the early morning hours on 23 February 1969, PFC Austin's observation post came under a fierce ground attack by a large North Vietnamese Army force using a heavy volume of hand grenades, satchel charges and small arms fire. Observing that one of his wounded companions had fallen unconscious in a position dangerously exposed to hostile fire, Austin unhesitatingly left the relative security of his fighting hole and, with complete disregard for his own safety, raced across the fire swept terrain to drag the Marine to safety. As he neared his companion, he observed an enemy grenade land nearby. Leaping between the grenade and the injured Marine, Austin took the full force of the explosion himself. Although he was badly injured, Austin turned to help his fallen companion and saw a North Vietnamese soldier aiming a weapon at the unconscious man. With full knowledge of the probable consequences, Austin threw himself between the injured Marine and the hostile soldier. In doing so, he was mortally wounded.

# USS PINCKNEY (DDG 91) 2004 - PRESENT



## **Navy Cook First Class William Pinckey (1915-1975)**

Navy Cook First Class William Pinckney received the Navy Cross for his courageous rescue of a fellow crewmember onboard the USS Enterprise (CV 6) during the Battle of Santa Cruz. When an explosion killed four of the six men at his battle station in an ammunition handling room, Pinckney and the other surviving Sailor attempted to exit through a hatch to the hangar deck above. When the other man grasped the scorching hatch, he fell back unconscious. Despite the suffocating smoke, flames, and gasoline fumes surrounding him, Pinckney carried the Sailor to safety. For his selfless heroism, Pinckney was awarded the Navy Cross.

# USNS CARL BRASHEAR (T-AKE 7) 2009 TO PRESENT



## **Master Chief Carl Maxie Brashear (19 January 1931 – 25 July 2006)**

Master Chief Boatswain's Mate (Master Diver) Carl M. Brashear joined the U.S. Navy in 1948. He was a pioneer in the Navy as one of the first African-Americans to graduate from the Navy Diving School and was designated a Navy salvage diver. He was the first African-American to qualify and serve as a master diver while on active duty and the first U.S. Navy diver to be restored to full active duty as an amputee, the result of a leg injury he sustained during a salvage operation. After 31 years of service, Brashear officially retired from the U.S. Navy on 1 April 1979. Brashear was the subject of the 2000 movie "Men of Honor" starring Cuba Gooding Jr.

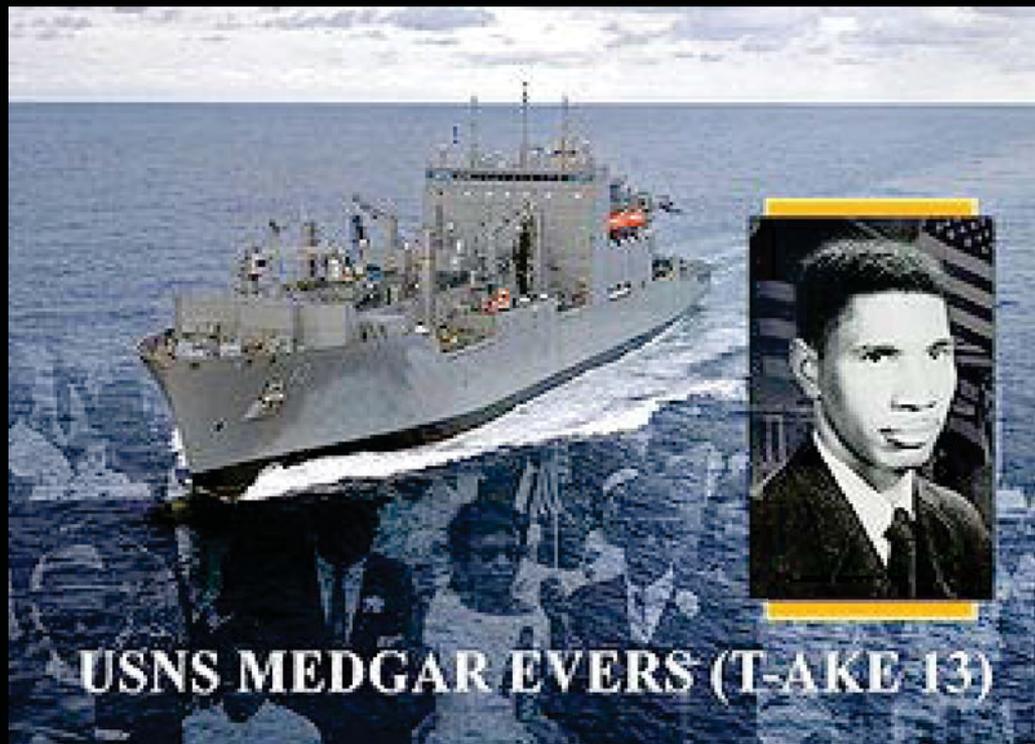
# USS GRAVELY (DDG 107) 2010 TO PRESENT



**Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravely Jr. (1922-2004)**

Vice Admiral Gravely was the first African American in the U.S. Navy to be commissioned an officer, the first African American to command a warship (USS THEODORE E. CHANDLER); to command a major warship (USS JOUETT); to achieve flag rank and eventually vice admiral; and to command a numbered fleet (THIRD FLEET).

# USNS MEDGAR EVERS (T-AKE 13) (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)



## Medgar Evers (1925-1963)

Medgar Evers who forever changed race relations in America. At a time when our country was wrestling to end segregation and racial injustice, Evers led efforts to secure the right to vote for all African Americans and to integrate public facilities, schools, and restaurants.

On 12 June 1963, the Mississippi native was assassinated in the driveway of his home.

## USNS CHARLES DREW (T-AKE 10) (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)



**Charles Richard Drew (3 June 1904 – 1 April 1950)**

Charles Drew was an American physician, surgeon and medical researcher. He researched in the field of blood transfusions, developing improved techniques for blood storage, and applied his expert knowledge to developing large-scale blood banks early in World War II. This allowed medics to save thousands of lives of the Allied forces. Drew protested against the practice of racial segregation in the donation of blood, as it lacked scientific foundation, an action which cost him his job. In 1943, Drew's distinction in his profession was recognized when he became the first African-American surgeon selected to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery.