

SECNAV Names Future T-AO USNS Thurgood Marshall, Sponsors for USS Doris Miller



Aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) performs a replenishment-at-sea with the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos (T-AO 197). A future John Lewis-class replenishment oiler will be named USNS Thurgood Marshall, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced Feb. 25. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Negron*

WASHINGTON – During Black History Month, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced on Feb. 25 the sponsors for the USS Doris Miller and that a future John Lewis-class replenishment oiler (T-AO) ship will be named USNS Thurgood Marshall to honor the former Supreme Court justice and civil rights activist.

The future USNS Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211) will be the first naval vessel to bear this name. However, it is not the first U.S. Navy ship to be named after a Supreme Court justice.

“It is my pleasure to recognize the tremendous lifelong contributions of the Honorable Thurgood Marshall by naming T-AO 211 after him. This naming selection enables a legacy of continued conversations and visibility, essentially a living memorial to be seen around the world, of a historic figure in the continued fight for civil and human rights, and I am pleased to share this decision during Black History Month,” said Del Toro. “Continued diversity and inclusion efforts are critical to the mission success of the Navy and Marine Corps team. Selecting Thurgood Marshall as the namesake aligns with the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that I have implemented in my strategic guidance since serving as secretary.”

The name selection follows the naval tradition of honoring people who have fought for civil and human rights. Born in 1908, Thurgood Marshall was a civil rights leader turned Supreme Court justice. Marshall made history as the first Black justice to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court when he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1967. Of his 25-year tenure on the Supreme Court, he is most noted for his work toward affirmative action, stopping Jim Crow segregation and the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The future T-AO 211 is the seventh of the TAOs awarded to the Navy, with the first delivered in 2021. The class and lead ship is named in honor of Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia).

T-AOs are fleet oilers designed to transfer fuel to the Navy's operating carrier strike groups. The oilers have the ability to carry a load of 162,000 barrels of oil, maintain significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and a speed of 20 knots. NASSCO designed the vessels with double hulls that protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks. The John Lewis-class T-AO measures 742-feet in length with a full load displacement of 49,850 tons.

Ship Sponsors

Along with announcing the ship's name, Del Toro also announced the sponsors for the future USS Doris Miller (CVN 81) as Charlene Austin and Taya Miller, who in their role as the ship's sponsors will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

Charlene Austin is not only the spouse of Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, but possesses an extensive history of professional and volunteer work supporting initiatives for military families. Taya Miller is the great-niece of Doris "Dorie" Miller, and was selected by the Doris Miller family to represent the family on behalf of the late Doris Miller and her late mother, Vickie Miller. Matrons of Honor for the USS

Doris Miller are represented by members of the Dorie Miller family: Lakisha Bledsoe-Stansberry, Carra Miller Boykins, Tina Shedd and Selena James.