

# NEWS

## St. Paul Firefighter, Sarah Reasoner, Named Fifth Strongest in the Nation

BY JAID PERRY

**F**irefighters are known for saving lives. They put their own lives on the line to help others. They definitely have earned the title of “heroes.” Not many people are willing to spend countless hours away from their friends and families in firehouses, trucks, and in training. These sacrifices add up along the way. Firefighters are blessings to the world and true heroes in our society.

When firefighters aren’t rushing around putting out fires, helping out on car accident scenes, investigating burnt microwaves at 1:00 am, or rescuing cats from trees, they usually spend their time relaxing before bouncing back to those exhausting activities. However, one firefighter in St. Paul chooses instead to improve her physical strength for strength competitions.

Sarah Reasoner, a new firefighter in the St. Paul area, competed at the 2020 World’s Strongest Firefighter competition in California this past January. This event, hosted by Arnold Schwarzenegger, tests firefighters from across the nation in many different strength categories. However, these categories aren’t just regular lifts - they are specific to firefighters. The trying events include a log press, dead lift, farmer’s carry, and a sandbagging event. Starting with the log press, Reasoner lifted a 170-pound log over her head and pressed it several times. Then, heading into the next competition, Reasoner was expected to dead lift an impressive 450 pounds. To put that into perspective, that is four forty-pound plates on each side of the bar. The farmer’s carry was 200 pounds. During this event, the competitors carried the weights for distance. Lastly, in the sandbag challenge, the firefighters hoisted a 200-pound sandbag over their bodies and carried it around for as long as they could.

To most people, these events are physically impossible; however, Reasoner withheld her Instagram moniker of Wonderwoman. She placed fifth in the competition out of the nine finalists, and as the only female to make it into the finals, her achievement is even more impressive. She now holds the title of the fifth strongest firefighter in the nation by the standards of body-builder Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Now that the competition is done, Reasoner is back in St. Paul doing what she does best. Since graduating from the St. Paul Fire Academy in July, she has been working diligently around the cities by protecting citizens and helping to keep order in St. Paul. It is safe to say that the city of St. Paul rests in good, very strong hands.

## US Navy Aircraft Carrier Named After African American Pearl Harbor Hero

BY ETHAN LANGEMO

**U**S Navy aircraft carriers usually receive names from American icons such as battles of the past, military officers, and presidents of the US. But after an announcement on Martin Luther King Jr. Day by the Navy, that tradition is about to change. Plans are made to dedicate and name a Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier after Doris “Dorie” Miller, an African American sailor who made history as one who helped to break the boundaries of race in the military.

Miller was born and raised in Waco, Texas, on October 12th, 1919. He ended up dropping out of high school to look for work, but the Jim Crow Laws of the time made both school and work difficult obstacles for a person of his race to overcome. This turned him towards joining the military in 1939. He served as a Mess Attendant, Third Class on the USS West Virginia, where he cooked and served his assigned officer by taking care of his uniform and living quarters. According to Naval History and Heritage Command historian Regina Akers, colored men in the Navy were usually

assigned this role, due to officers thinking it “not requiring much intellect.” Miller’s chance to prove himself as equal to his white peers came during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941.

On that morning, Miller was doing his officer’s laundry when a Japanese torpedo hit the ship, the first of several pieces of heavy artillery that would damage it. As a Mess Attendant, his battle station was in the magazine, which was below deck and stored ammunition. His job in battle was to hand up ammo to the deck so they could be loaded into weapons. The compartment had already been damaged enough that it had flooded, so he searched for other areas on the ship that needed assistance. Hearing a command from an officer to retrieve the wounded ship captain from the signals deck, he brought him to a place of safety before taking orders to load one of the deck’s guns.

His next course of action is what earned him recognition while watching an officer fire a deck gun at incoming Japanese planes; he chose to take a position at an unmanned gun and join the officer in firing on the planes, without any command or training. Miller said of the matter, “It wasn’t hard. I just pulled the trigger, and she worked fine.” He continued firing on Japanese aircraft until the gun ran out of ammo, but he didn’t jump ship yet. The small group of men still on board did not leave until the mortally injured Captain Bennion had passed away.

After Pearl Harbor, Miller was awarded the Navy Cross, despite opposition. He became a symbol of equal opportunity for men of all races in the military. He later went into active service again aboard the USS Liscome Bay, still as a mess attendant. Unfortunately, on November 24th, 1943, the ship’s magazine was hit by a torpedo in the Gilbert Islands, causing massive destruction on the ship, death of most of the crew, and the sinking of the ship in just over 20 minutes. His body was never found.

Despite his death, Miller’s effort opened opportunities for men of color in the Navy. They could be placed in jobs besides Mess Attendant, and an officer training facility for men of color opened in Illinois. It became clear that they were as capable as their white counterparts. His legacy is equality, and the Navy’s acknowledgment of this will help support that vision.

## Virginia Gun Control Confusion

BY RICHARD T. MAHLE

**C**haos erupted in Virginia after thousands of activists came to the capitol to protest the new gun laws up for a vote in the state senate. Seven gun measures were passed through the Virginia House of Delegation, which has made this ground zero for gun control reform in Virginia. Some of the measures up for vote included limiting handgun purchases to one a month universal background checks for gun purchases, and a red flag bill for authorities to take guns from anyone they deem dangerous. This makes it a felony to leave a loaded, unsecured firearm in the presence of a child, and gun owners are required to report any lost or stolen firearms.

Despite how much gun reform the Democrats want, several Senate Democrats state they would not support a ban on “so-called” assault weapons. Governor Ralph Northam has been campaigning for gun control since he was first elected, and now, two years later, he may get his wish. However, he still cannot convince every democratic Senator to ban assault weapons like the AR15. Most of this is due to people believing that Governor Northam wants to take away these weapons when he wishes no such thing. A quote by Virginia House Majority Leader Charniele Herring sums up why they’ve pushed these bills so hard: “Our goal is to save lives and promote responsible gun ownership in the Commonwealth. Public safety is our number one concern.”

Now is certainly the best time for the Democrats to push these bills due to their majority control of the Virginia House and Senate, as well