

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 309

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of
the Civil Air Patrol.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War
II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) The unpaid volunteer members of the Civil
6 Air Patrol (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
7 “CAP”) during World War II provided extraor-
8 dinary humanitarian, combat, and national services
9 during a critical time of need for the Nation.

1 (2) During the war, CAP members used their
2 own aircraft to perform a myriad of essential tasks
3 for the military and the Nation within the United
4 States, including attacks on enemy submarines off
5 the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United
6 States.

7 (3) This extraordinary national service set the
8 stage for the post-war CAP to become a valuable
9 nonprofit, public service organization chartered by
10 Congress and designated the Auxiliary of the United
11 States Air Force that provides essential emergency,
12 operational, and public services to communities,
13 States, the Federal Government, and the military.

14 (4) The CAP was established on December 1,
15 1941, initially as a part of the Office of Civil De-
16 fense, by air-minded citizens one week before the
17 surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, out of the
18 desire of civil airmen of the country to be mobilized
19 with their equipment in the common defense of the
20 Nation.

21 (5) Within days of the start of the war, the
22 German Navy started a massive submarine offensive,
23 known as Operation Drumbeat, off the east coast of
24 the United States against oil tankers and other crit-
25 ical shipping that threatened the overall war effort.

1 (6) Neither the Navy nor the Army had enough
2 aircraft, ships, or other resources to adequately pa-
3 trol and protect the shipping along the Atlantic and
4 Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United States, and
5 many ships were torpedoed and sunk, often within
6 sight of civilians on shore, including 52 tankers sunk
7 between January and March 1942.

8 (7) At that time General George Marshall re-
9 marked that “[t]he losses by submarines off our At-
10 lantic seaboard and in the Caribbean now threaten
11 our entire war effort”.

12 (8) From the beginning CAP leaders urged the
13 military to use its services to patrol coastal waters
14 but met with great resistance because of the non-
15 military status of CAP civilian pilots.

16 (9) Finally, in response to the ever-increasing
17 submarine attacks, the Tanker Committee of the Pe-
18 troleum Industry War Council urged the Navy De-
19 partment and the War Department to consider the
20 use of the CAP to help patrol the sea lanes off the
21 coasts of the United States.

22 (10) While the Navy initially rejected this sug-
23 gestion, the Army decided it had merit, and the Civil
24 Air Patrol Coastal Patrol began in March 1942.

1 (11) Oil companies and other organizations pro-
2 vided funds to help pay for some CAP operations,
3 including vitally needed shore radios that were used
4 to monitor patrol missions.

5 (12) By late March 1942, the Navy also began
6 to use the services of the CAP.

7 (13) Starting with 3 bases located in Delaware,
8 Florida, and New Jersey, CAP aircrews (ranging in
9 age from 18 to over 80) immediately started to spot
10 enemy submarines as well as lifeboats, bodies, and
11 wreckage.

12 (14) Within 15 minutes of starting his patrol
13 on the first Coastal Patrol flight, a pilot had sighted
14 a torpedoed tanker and was coordinating rescue op-
15 erations.

16 (15) Eventually 21 bases, ranging from Bar
17 Harbor, Maine, to Brownsville, Texas, were set up
18 for the CAP to patrol the Atlantic and Gulf of Mex-
19 ico coasts of the United States, with 40,000 volun-
20 teers eventually participating.

21 (16) The CAP used a wide range of civilian-
22 owned aircraft, mainly light-weight, single-engine
23 aircraft manufactured by Cessna, Beech, Waco,
24 Fairchild, Stinson, Piper, Taylorcraft, and Sikorsky,

1 among others, as well as some twin engine aircraft,
2 such as the Grumman Widgeon.

3 (17) Most of these aircraft were painted in
4 their civilian prewar colors (red, yellow, or blue, for
5 example) and carried special markings (a blue circle
6 with a white triangle) to identify them as CAP air-
7 craft.

8 (18) Patrols were conducted up to 100 miles off
9 shore, generally with 2 aircraft flying together, in
10 aircraft often equipped with only a compass for navi-
11 gation and a single radio for communication.

12 (19) Due to the critical nature of the situation,
13 CAP operations were conducted in bad weather as
14 well as good, often when the military was unable to
15 fly, and in all seasons, including the winter, when
16 ditching an aircraft in cold water would likely mean
17 certain death to the aircrew.

18 (20) Personal emergency equipment was often
19 lacking, particularly during early patrols where inner
20 tubes and kapok duck hunter vests were carried as
21 flotation devices, since ocean worthy wet suits, life
22 vests, and life rafts were unavailable.

23 (21) The initial purpose of the Coastal Patrol
24 was to spot submarines, report their position to the
25 military, and force them to dive below the surface,

1 which limited their operating speed and maneuver-
2 ability and reduced their ability to detect and attack
3 shipping, because attacks against shipping were con-
4 ducted while the submarines were surfaced.

5 (22) It immediately became apparent that there
6 were opportunities for CAP pilots to attack sub-
7 marines, such as when a Florida CAP aircrew came
8 across a surfaced submarine that quickly stranded
9 itself on a sand bar. However, the aircrew could not
10 get any assistance from armed military aircraft be-
11 fore the submarine freed itself.

12 (23) Finally, after several instances when the
13 military could not respond in a timely manner, a de-
14 cision was made by the military to arm CAP aircraft
15 with 50- and 100-pound bombs, and to arm some
16 larger twin-engine aircraft with 325-pound depth
17 charges.

18 (24) The arming of CAP aircraft dramatically
19 changed the mission for these civilian aircrews and
20 resulted in more than 57 attacks on enemy sub-
21 marines.

22 (25) While CAP volunteers received \$8 a day
23 flight reimbursement for costs incurred, their patrols
24 were accomplished at a great economic cost to many
25 CAP members who—

1 (A) used their own aircraft and other
2 equipment in defense of the Nation;

3 (B) paid for much of their own aircraft
4 maintenance and hangar use; and

5 (C) often lived in the beginning in primi-
6 tive conditions along the coast, including old
7 barns and chicken coops converted for sleeping.

8 (26) More importantly, the CAP Coastal Patrol
9 service came at the high cost of 26 fatalities, 7 seri-
10 ous injuries, and 90 aircraft lost.

11 (27) At the conclusion of the 18-month Coastal
12 Patrol, the heroic CAP aircrews would be credited
13 with—

14 (A) 2 submarines possibly damaged or de-
15 stroyed;

16 (B) 57 submarines attacked;

17 (C) 82 bombs dropped against submarines;

18 (D) 173 radio reports of submarine posi-
19 tions (with a number of credited assists for kills
20 made by military units);

21 (E) 17 floating mines reported;

22 (F) 36 dead bodies reported;

23 (G) 91 vessels in distress reported;

24 (H) 363 survivors in distress reported;

25 (I) 836 irregularities noted;

1 (J) 1,036 special investigations at sea or
2 along the coast;

3 (K) 5,684 convoy missions as aerial escorts
4 for Navy ships;

5 (L) 86,685 total missions flown;

6 (M) 244,600 total flight hours logged; and

7 (N) more than 24,000,000 total miles
8 flown.

9 (28) It is believed that at least one high-level
10 German Navy Officer credited CAP as one reason
11 that submarine attacks moved away from the United
12 States when he concluded that “[i]t was because of
13 those damned little red and yellow planes!”.

14 (29) The CAP was dismissed from coastal mis-
15 sions with little thanks in August 1943 when the
16 Navy took over the mission completely and ordered
17 CAP to stand down.

18 (30) While the Coastal Patrol was ongoing,
19 CAP was also establishing itself as a vital wartime
20 service to the military, States, and communities na-
21 tionwide by performing a wide range of missions in-
22 cluding, among others—

23 (A) border patrol;

24 (B) forest and fire patrols;

1 (C) military courier flights for mail, repair
2 and replacement parts, and urgent military de-
3 liveries;

4 (D) emergency transportation of military
5 personnel;

6 (E) target towing (with live ammunition
7 being fired at the targets and seven lives being
8 lost) and searchlight tracking training missions;

9 (F) missing aircraft and personnel
10 searches;

11 (G) air and ground search and rescue for
12 missing aircraft and personnel;

13 (H) radar and aircraft warning system
14 training flights;

15 (I) aerial inspections of camouflaged mili-
16 tary and civilian facilities;

17 (J) aerial inspections of city and town
18 blackout conditions;

19 (K) simulated bombing attacks on cities
20 and facilities to test air defenses and early
21 warning;

22 (L) aerial searches for scrap metal mate-
23 rials;

24 (M) river and lake patrols, including aerial
25 surveys for ice in the Great Lakes;

1 (N) support of war bond drives;

2 (O) management and guard duties at hun-
3 dreds of airports;

4 (P) support for State and local emer-
5 gencies such as natural and manmade disasters;

6 (Q) predator control;

7 (R) rescue of livestock during floods and
8 blizzards;

9 (S) recruiting for the Army Air Force;

10 (T) initial flight screening and orientation
11 flights for potential military recruits;

12 (U) mercy missions, including the airlift of
13 plasma to central blood banks;

14 (V) nationwide emergency communications
15 services; and

16 (W) a cadet youth program which provided
17 aviation and military training for tens of thou-
18 sands.

19 (31) The CAP flew more than 500,000 hours
20 on these additional missions, including—

21 (A) 20,500 missions involving target tow-
22 ing (with live ammunition) and gun/searchlight
23 tracking which resulted in 7 deaths, 5 serious
24 injuries, and the loss of 25 aircraft;

1 (B) a courier service involving 3 major Air
2 Force Commands over a 2-year period carrying
3 more than 3,500,000 pounds of vital cargo and
4 543 passengers;

5 (C) southern border patrol flying more
6 than 30,000 hours and reporting 7,000 unusual
7 sightings including a vehicle (that was appre-
8 hended) with 2 enemy agents attempting to
9 enter the country;

10 (D) a week in February 1945 during which
11 CAP units rescued seven missing Army and
12 Navy pilots; and

13 (E) a State in which the CAP flew 790
14 hours on forest fire patrol missions and re-
15 ported 576 fires to authorities during a single
16 year.

17 (32) On April 29, 1943, the CAP was trans-
18 ferred to the Army Air Forces, thus beginning its
19 long association with the United States Air Force.

20 (33) Hundreds of CAP-trained women pilots
21 joined military women's units including the Women's
22 Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) program.

23 (34) Many members of the WASP program
24 joined or rejoined the CAP during the post-war pe-
25 riod because it provided women opportunities to fly

1 and continue to serve the Nation that were severely
2 lacking elsewhere.

3 (35) Due to the exceptional emphasis on safety,
4 unit and pilot training and discipline, and the orga-
5 nization of the CAP, by the end of the war a total
6 of only 64 CAP members had died in service and
7 only 150 aircraft had been lost (including its Coastal
8 Patrol losses from early in the war).

9 (36) It is estimated that up to 100,000 civilians
10 (including youth in its cadet program) participated
11 in the CAP in a wide range of staff and operational
12 positions, and that CAP aircrews flew a total of ap-
13 proximately 750,000 hours during the war, most of
14 which were in their personal aircraft and often at
15 risk to their lives.

16 (37) After the war, at a CAP dinner for Con-
17 gress, a quorum of both Houses attended with the
18 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
19 President thanking CAP for its service.

20 (38) While air medals were issued for some of
21 those participating in the Coastal Patrol, little other
22 recognition was forthcoming for the myriad of serv-
23 ices CAP volunteers provided during the war.

24 (39) Despite some misguided efforts to end the
25 CAP at the end of the war, the organization had

1 proved its capabilities to the Nation and strength-
 2 ened its ties with the Air Force and Congress.

3 (40) In 1946, Congress chartered the CAP as
 4 a nonprofit, public service organization and in 1948
 5 made the CAP an Auxiliary of the United States Air
 6 Force.

7 (41) Today, the CAP conducts many of the
 8 same missions it performed during World War II,
 9 including a vital role in homeland security.

10 (42) The CAP's wartime service was highly un-
 11 usual and extraordinary, due to the unpaid civilian
 12 status of its members, the use of privately owned
 13 aircraft and personal funds by many of its members,
 14 the myriad of humanitarian and national missions
 15 flown for the Nation, and the fact that for 18
 16 months, during a time of great need for the United
 17 States, the CAP flew combat-related missions in
 18 support of military operations off the Atlantic and
 19 Gulf of Mexico coasts.

20 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

21 (a) AWARD.—

22 (1) AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore
 23 of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
 24 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements
 25 for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single

1 gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the
2 World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol collec-
3 tively, in recognition of the military service and ex-
4 emplary record of the Civil Air Patrol during World
5 War II.

6 (2) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes
7 of the award referred to in paragraph (1), the Sec-
8 retary of the Treasury shall strike the gold medal
9 with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to
10 be determined by the Secretary.

11 (3) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of
13 the gold medal referred to in paragraph (1) in
14 honor of all of its World War II members of the
15 Civil Air Patrol, the gold medal shall be given
16 to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be
17 displayed as appropriate and made available for
18 research.

19 (B) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense
20 of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
21 should make the gold medal received under this
22 paragraph available for display elsewhere, par-
23 ticularly at other locations associated with the
24 Civil Air Patrol.

1 (b) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under such regulations
 2 as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike
 3 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck
 4 under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of
 5 the medals, including labor, materials, dyes, use of ma-
 6 chinery, and overhead expenses.

7 (c) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to
 8 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
 9 of title 31, United States Code.

10 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
 11 **OF SALE.**

12 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 13 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
 14 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000
 15 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section
 16 2.

17 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
 18 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 2(b) shall
 19 be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
 20 Fund.

