

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 550

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Merchant Mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 15, 2019

Mr. GARAMENDI (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Merchant Mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Merchant Mariners
5 of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the
2 Allied victory in World War II and the restoration
3 of peacetime across the European and Pacific thea-
4 ters.

5 (2) The United States Merchant Marine (in
6 this section referred to as the “Merchant Marine”)
7 was integral in providing the link between domestic
8 production and the fighting forces overseas, pro-
9 viding combat equipment, fuel, food, commodities,
10 and raw materials to troops stationed abroad.

11 (3) Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King acknowledged
12 the indispensability of the Merchant Marine to the
13 victory in a 1945 letter stating that, without the
14 support of the Merchant Marine, “the Navy could
15 not have accomplished its mission”.

16 (4) President, and former Supreme Commander
17 of the Allied Forces, Dwight D. Eisenhower ac-
18 knowledged that “through the prompt delivery of
19 supplies and equipment to our armed forces over-
20 seas, and of cargoes representing economic and mili-
21 tary aid to friendly nations, the American Merchant
22 Marine has effectively helped to strengthen the
23 forces of freedom throughout the world”.

24 (5) Military missions and war planning were
25 contingent upon the availability of resources and the

1 Merchant Marine played a vital role in this regard,
2 ensuring the efficient and reliable transoceanic
3 transport of military equipment and both military
4 and civilian personnel.

5 (6) The Merchant Marine provided for the suc-
6 cessful transport of resources and personnel despite
7 consistent and ongoing exposure to enemy combat-
8 ants from both the air and the sea, including from
9 enemy bomber squadrons, submarines, and mines.

10 (7) The efforts of the Merchant Marine were
11 not without sacrifices as the Merchant Marine bore
12 a higher per-capita casualty rate than any other
13 branch of the military during the war.

14 (8) The Merchant Marine proved to be an in-
15 strumental asset on an untold number of occasions,
16 participating in every landing operation by the
17 United States Marine Corps, from Guadalcanal to
18 Iwo Jima.

19 (9) The Merchant Marine provided the bulk
20 tonnage of material necessary for the invasion of
21 Normandy, an invasion which, according to a 1944
22 New York Times article, “would not have been pos-
23 sible without the Merchant Marine”.

24 (10) In assessing the performance of the Mer-
25 chant Marine, General Eisenhower stated, “every

1 man in this Allied command is quick to express his
2 admiration for the loyalty, courage, and fortitude of
3 the officers and men of the Merchant Marine. We
4 count upon their efficiency and their utter devotion
5 to duty as we do our own; they have never failed
6 us”.

7 (11) During a September 1944 speech, Presi-
8 dent Franklin D. Roosevelt stated that the Merchant
9 Marine had “delivered the goods when and where
10 needed in every theater of operations and across
11 every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult, and
12 dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As
13 time goes on, there will be greater public under-
14 standing of our merchant fleet’s record during this
15 war.”.

16 (12) The feats and accomplishments of the
17 Merchant Marine are deserving of broader public
18 recognition.

19 (13) The United States will be forever grateful
20 and indebted to these merchant mariners for their
21 effective, reliable, and courageous transport of goods
22 and resources in enemy territory throughout thea-
23 ters of every variety in World War II.

24 (14) The goods and resources transported by
25 the Merchant Marine saved thousands of lives and

1 enabled the Allied Powers to claim victory in World
2 War II.

3 (15) The Congressional Gold Medal would be
4 an appropriate way to shed further light on the serv-
5 ice of the merchant mariners in World War II and
6 the instrumental role they played in winning that
7 war.

8 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

9 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
10 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
11 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
12 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
13 appropriate design to the United States Merchant Mari-
14 ners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated
15 and vital service during World War II.

16 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
17 award described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
18 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall
19 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
20 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

21 (c) AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
23 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
24 shall be given to the American Merchant Marine

1 Museum, where it will be available for display as ap-
 2 propriate and available for research.

3 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
 4 Congress that the American Merchant Marine Mu-
 5 seum should make the gold medal given to the Mu-
 6 seum under paragraph (1) available for display else-
 7 where, particularly at appropriate locations associ-
 8 ated with the United States Merchant Marine and
 9 that preference should be given to locations affiliated
 10 with the United States Merchant Marine.

11 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

12 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
 13 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
 14 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
 15 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
 16 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

17 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

18 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
 19 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
 20 31, United States Code.

21 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
 22 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
 23 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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