

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 5671

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## AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Merchant Mariners  
3 of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5       Congress finds the following:

6           (1) 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of Allied  
7 victory in World War II.

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

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

19           (4) President, and former Supreme Commander  
20 of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, Dwight D. Ei-  
21 senhower acknowledged that “through the prompt  
22 delivery of supplies and equipment to our armed  
23 forces overseas, and of cargoes representing eco-  
24 nomic and military aid to friendly nations, the  
25 American Merchant Marine has effectively helped to

1       strengthen the forces of freedom throughout the  
2       world”.

3           (5) Military missions and war planning were  
4       contingent upon the availability of resources and the  
5       Merchant Marine played a vital role in this regard,  
6       ensuring the efficient and reliable transoceanic  
7       transport of military equipment and both military  
8       and civilian personnel.

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

15          (7) The efforts of the Merchant Marine were  
16      not without sacrifices as the Merchant Marine likely  
17      bore a higher per-capita casualty rate than any of  
18      the military branches during the war.

19          (8) The Merchant Marine proved to be an in-  
20      strumental asset on an untold number of occasions,  
21      participating in every landing operation by the  
22      United States Marine Corps, from Guadalcanal to  
23      Okinawa.

24          (9) The Merchant Marine provided the bulk  
25      tonnage of material necessary for the invasion of

1 Normandy, an invasion which, according to a 1944  
2 New York Times article, “would not have been pos-  
3 sible without the Merchant Marine”.

4 (10) In assessing the performance of the Mer-  
5 chant Marine, General Eisenhower stated, “every  
6 man in this Allied command is quick to express his  
7 admiration for the loyalty, courage, and fortitude of  
8 the officers and men of the Merchant Marine. We  
9 count upon their efficiency and their utter devotion  
10 to duty as we do our own; they have never failed  
11 us”.

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

21 (12) The feats and accomplishments of the  
22 Merchant Marine are deserving of broader public  
23 recognition.

24 (13) The United States will be forever grateful  
25 and indebted to these merchant mariners for their

1 effective, reliable, and courageous transport of goods  
2 and resources in enemy territory throughout thea-  
3 ters of every variety in World War II.

4 (14) The goods and resources transported by  
5 the Merchant Marine saved thousands of lives and  
6 enabled the Allied Powers to claim victory in World  
7 War II.

8 (15) The Congressional Gold Medal would be  
9 an appropriate way to shed further light on the serv-  
10 ice of the merchant mariners in World War II and  
11 the instrumental role they played in winning that  
12 war.

13 (16) Many students of the Merchant Marine  
14 Academy lost their lives as they sailed through  
15 enemy-controlled waters or unloaded cargo in over-  
16 seas combat areas, and, as a result, the United  
17 States Merchant Marine Academy is the only insti-  
18 tution among the five Federal academies to be au-  
19 thorized to carry a battle standard as part of its  
20 color guard.

21 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

22 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the  
23 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore  
24 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
25 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of

1 appropriate design to the United States merchant mari-  
2 ners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated  
3 and vital service during World War II.

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

9 (c) AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the  
11 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal  
12 shall be given to the American Merchant Marine  
13 Museum, where it will be available for display as ap-  
14 propriate and available for research.

15 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of  
16 Congress that the American Merchant Marine Mu-  
17 seum should make the gold medal given to the Mu-  
18 seum under paragraph (1) available for display else-  
19 where, particularly at appropriate locations associ-  
20 ated with the United States Merchant Marine and  
21 that preference should be given to locations affiliated  
22 with the United States Merchant Marine.

23 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

24 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-  
25 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in

1 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price  
2 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,  
3 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

4 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

5 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this  
6 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title  
7 31, United States Code.

8 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
9 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
10 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

Passed the House of Representatives January 27,  
2020.

Attest:

*Clerk.*

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