

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 743

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 12, 2019

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. DAINES, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. ERNST, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JONES, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. WARREN) 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 soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma 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 “Merrill’s Marauders
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) in August 1943, President Franklin D.
4 Roosevelt and other Allied leaders proposed the cre-
5 ation of a ground unit of the Armed Forces that
6 would engage in a “long-range penetration mission”
7 in Japanese-occupied Burma to—

8 (A) cut off Japanese communications and
9 supply lines; and

10 (B) capture the town of Myitkyina and the
11 Myitkyina airstrip, both of which were held by
12 the Japanese;

13 (2) President Roosevelt issued a call for volun-
14 teers for “a dangerous and hazardous mission” and
15 the call was answered by approximately 3,000 sol-
16 diers from the United States;

17 (3) the Army unit composed of the soldiers de-
18 scribed in paragraph (2)—

19 (A) was officially designated as the
20 “5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)” with
21 the code name “Galahad”; and

22 (B) later became known as “Merrill’s Ma-
23 rauders” (referred to in this section as the
24 “Marauders”) in reference to its leader, Briga-
25 dier General Frank Merrill;

1 (4) in February 1944, the Marauders began
2 their approximately 1,000-mile trek through the
3 dense Burmese jungle with no artillery support, car-
4 rying their supplies on their backs or the pack sad-
5 dles of mules;

6 (5) over the course of their 5-month trek to
7 Myitkyina, the Marauders fought victoriously
8 against larger Japanese forces through 5 major and
9 30 minor engagements;

10 (6) during their march to Myitkyina, the Ma-
11 rauders faced hunger and disease that were exacer-
12 bated by inadequate aerial resupply drops;

13 (7) malaria, typhus, and dysentery inflicted
14 more casualties on the Marauders than the Japa-
15 nese;

16 (8) by August 1944, the Marauders had accom-
17 plished their mission, successfully disrupting Japa-
18 nese supply and communication lines and taking the
19 town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, the
20 only all-weather airstrip in Northern Burma;

21 (9) after taking Myitkyina, only 130 Marauders
22 out of the original 2,750 were fit for duty and all
23 remaining Marauders still in action were evacuated
24 to hospitals due to tropical diseases, exhaustion, and
25 malnutrition;

1 (10) for their bravery and accomplishments, the
2 Marauders were awarded the “Distinguished Unit
3 Citation”, later redesignated as the “Presidential
4 Unit Citation”, and a Bronze Star; and

5 (11) though the Marauders were operational for
6 only a few months, the legacy of their bravery is
7 honored by the Army through the modern day 75th
8 Ranger Regiment, which traces its lineage directly to
9 the 5307th Composite Unit.

10 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

11 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
12 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
13 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
14 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
15 appropriate design to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite
16 Unit (Provisional) (referred to in this section as “Merrill’s
17 Marauders”), in recognition of their bravery and out-
18 standing service in the jungles of Burma during World
19 War II.

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

25 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
2 gold medal referred to in subsection (a) in honor of
3 Merrill’s Marauders, the gold medal shall be given to
4 the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be dis-
5 played as appropriate and made available for re-
6 search.

7 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
8 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
9 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
10 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
11 locations and events associated with Merrill’s Ma-
12 rauders.

13 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

19 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

20 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
21 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
22 Code.

○