

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1709

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to all United States nationals who voluntarily joined the Canadian and British armed forces and their supporting entities during World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 9, 2021

Mr. RYAN (for himself and Mr. COHEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to all United States nationals who voluntarily joined the Canadian and British armed forces and their supporting entities during World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service.

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 “American Patriots of
5 WWII through Service with the Canadian and British
6 Armed Forces Gold Medal Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Americans from across the country served
4 in defense of democracy and freedom during World
5 War II (WWII) by volunteering for service with the
6 Canadian and British militaries and other associated
7 organizations that were fighting Nazi and Fascist
8 aggression. Many United States citizens perceived
9 the importance of this war and the severe impact
10 Nazism and Fascism could have on the American
11 way of life. Therefore, prior to the United States
12 entry into the conflict and indeed throughout WWII
13 these patriots independently crossed the border into
14 Canada and entered Canadian and British armed
15 forces recruiting offices or sought out representa-
16 tives based in major United States municipalities
17 and elsewhere.

18 (2) When the “United Kingdom of Great Brit-
19 ain and Northern Ireland” and the “British Com-
20 monwealth of Nations” were drawn into WWII after
21 Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the Canadian and
22 British air forces made a concerted effort to recruit
23 Americans.

24 (3) It is documented that thousands of Ameri-
25 cans joined the Canadian and British armed forces,
26 a large percentage joining the Royal Canadian Air

1 Force (RCAF) alone. In a 1942 film Air Marshal
2 William Avery “Billy” Bishop, an organizer and pro-
3 moter of the British Commonwealth Air Training
4 Plan (BCATP) and Director of the Royal Canadian
5 Air Force, recognized the “gallant lads from the
6 United States who have come up here to help and
7 serve with us”. Notably, many Americans were also
8 recruited and processed through Canada before
9 being assigned to or detached for the purpose of
10 Royal Air Force (RAF) service.

11 (4) General of the Army, Army of the United
12 States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, the former Supreme
13 Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary
14 Force, referenced, in a speech on January 10, 1946,
15 the “some twelve thousand American citizens” who
16 crossed into Canada with the goal of entering the
17 Canadian armed forces. Although the precise num-
18 bers of Americans who were in Canadian and British
19 service are unknown, media accounts published by
20 Allied journalists during the conflict nonetheless de-
21 tail their legacies of volunteerism, personal sacrifice,
22 and bravery.

23 (5) Americans also joined the Canadian Avia-
24 tion Bureau, and the Home Guard, Air Transport
25 Auxiliary (ATA), and Royal Air Force Ferry Com-

1 mand/Transport Command in Britain. The existence
2 of these ancillaries enabled patriotic citizens, who
3 were, at least initially, unable to join a branch of the
4 United States military due to gender, age, race,
5 health, the lack of sufficient college education, or
6 other reasons, to support the war effort. Those who
7 contributed via these alternative concerns were no
8 less essential to attaining victory.

9 (6) The infusion of Americans into Canada
10 helped to reduce shortages of civilian and military
11 pilots in the BCATP, and President Franklin Roo-
12 sevelt paid tribute to both Canada and the program
13 in a wartime letter to Canadian Prime Minister Wil-
14 liam Lyon Mackenzie King. Within the correspond-
15 ence President Roosevelt used the phrase “the Aero-
16 drome of Democracy”.

17 (7) As members of the Canadian and British
18 militaries, the American volunteers served in many
19 capacities. Extant military rolls and individual serv-
20 ice records document, and thereby testify to, their
21 contributions.

22 (8) A sizable number of Americans lost their
23 lives or were wounded while serving in the RCAF
24 and RAF. The Canadian Army, British Army, Royal
25 Canadian Navy, and Royal Navy also incurred

1 American personnel casualties. Those who perished
2 and the survivors demonstrated the exceptional cour-
3 age that has been repeatedly displayed in the de-
4 fense of freedom throughout American history.

5 (9) A unique and highly publicized group of
6 Americans, who were members of the RCAF and
7 RAF, were posted to the famous RAF Eagle Squad-
8 rons and thereby showcased the important roles
9 American volunteers were undertaking. British
10 Prime Minister Winston Churchill, whose mother
11 was American, played an important role in originally
12 promoting the concept of the Eagle Squadrons to
13 the Air Ministry.

14 (10) The early successes of female ferry air-
15 crews paved the way for the formation in the United
16 States of the Women Airforce Service Pilots
17 (WASP) in 1943. The exceptional legacy of the
18 Women Airforce Service Pilots, ATA, etc., provided
19 essential support and paved the way for future gen-
20 erations of military women.

21 (11) A substantial portion of the Americans
22 serving in Canadian and British aerial forces trans-
23 ferred to the United States Army Air Forces be-
24 tween 1942 and 1944, while others elected to enter
25 other branches of the United States Military.

1 (12) The practical experience these veterans of
2 Canadian and British service possessed provided the
3 inexperienced American Forces with an immediate
4 degree of competence and effectiveness. More than a
5 few became accomplished combat pilots, the Amer-
6 ican Fighter Aces Association possessing many of
7 them within the organization's core membership.

8 (13) The bravery and foresight displayed by the
9 Americans who enlisted in the Canadian and British
10 armed forces represent a largely unrecognized story
11 of valor, and their initiatives are worthy of official
12 recognition.

13 (14) The United States Nationals who volun-
14 teered for service with military-associated Canadian
15 and British ancillary entities are to be equally recog-
16 nized for their volunteerism, contributions, and sac-
17 rifices.

18 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

19 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tem-
20 pore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
21 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the
22 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
23 appropriate design to all United States nationals who vol-
24 untarily joined the Canadian and British armed forces and

1 their supporting entities during World War II, in recogni-
2 tion of their dedicated service.

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

8 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
10 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
11 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
12 it will be available for display as appropriate and
13 made available for research.

14 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
15 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
16 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
17 available for display elsewhere.

18 (d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under regulations that
19 the Secretary may promulgate, the Secretary may strike
20 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck
21 under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of
22 the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machin-
23 ery, and overhead expenses.

1 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
3 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
4 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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