

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# **S. 1404**

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## **AN ACT**

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, popularly known as the “Ghost Army”, in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service in conducting deception operations in Europe 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 “Ghost Army Congres-

5       sional Gold Medal Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds that—

8               (1) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops (com-

9               prised of the 23d Headquarters and Headquarters

10              Company, Special Troops, the 603d Engineer Cam-

11              ouflage Battalion, the 406th Combat Engineer Com-

12              pany, the 3132d Signal Service Company, and the

13              Signal Company, Special, 23d Headquarters, Special

14              Troops) and the 3133d Signal Service Company

15              were units of the United States Army that served in

16              Europe during World War II;

17              (2) the 23d Headquarters Special Troops was

18              actively engaged in battlefield operations from June

19              of 1944 through March of 1945;

20              (3) the 3133d Signal Service Company was en-

21              gaged in operations in Italy in 1945;

22              (4) the deceptive activities of these units were

23              integral to several Allied victories across Europe and

24              reduced casualties;

1           (5) in evaluating the performance of these units  
2       after World War II, an Army analysis found that  
3       “Rarely, if ever, has there been a group of such a  
4       few men which had so great an influence on the out-  
5       come of a major military campaign.”;

6           (6) many Ghost Army soldiers were citizen-sol-  
7       diers recruited from art schools, advertising agen-  
8       cies, communications companies, and other creative  
9       and technical professions;

10          (7) the first 4 members of the 23d Head-  
11       quarters Special Troops landed on D-Day and 2 be-  
12       came casualties while creating false beach landing  
13       sites;

14          (8) a detachment of Army radio operators  
15       under the command of Lieutenant Fred Fox joined  
16       the invasion fleet for a planned deception, Operation  
17       Troutfly, which was cancelled;

18          (9) Lieutenant Fox’s men and their radios were  
19       instead attached to the 82d Airborne, which had lost  
20       95 percent of its radio equipment, providing critical  
21       communications as the 82d Airborne fought its way  
22       inland;

23          (10) the secret deception operations of the 23d  
24       Headquarters Special Troops commenced in France  
25       on June 14, 1944, when Task Force Mason, a 16-

1 man detachment of the 23d led by First Lieutenant  
2 Bernard Mason, arrived in Normandy;

3 (11) Lieutenant Mason and his men set up  
4 dummy artillery to draw enemy fire and protect the  
5 980th Field Artillery Battalion (VIII Corps) as part  
6 of the Normandy Campaign;

7 (12) the rest of the soldiers of the 23d Head-  
8 quarters Special Troops arrived in France in July  
9 and August of 1944;

10 (13) full-scale deception efforts began with Op-  
11 eration Elephant from July 1 to 4, 1944, in which  
12 the 23d Headquarters Special Troops covered the  
13 movement of the 2d Armored Division when it left  
14 a reserve position to go into the line between the  
15 First United States and Second British Armies;

16 (14) Operation Elephant was the first of the 21  
17 full-scale tactical deceptions completed by the 23d  
18 Headquarters Special Troops;

19 (15) often operating on or near the front lines,  
20 the 23d Headquarters Special Troops used inflatable  
21 tanks, artillery, airplanes and other vehicles, ad-  
22 vanced engineered soundtracks, and skillfully crafted  
23 radio trickery to create the illusion of sizable Amer-  
24 ican forces where there were none and to draw the  
25 enemy away from Allied troops;

1           (16) the 3132d and the 3133d Signal Service  
2       Companies, activated in Pine Camp (now Fort  
3       Drum), New York, at the Army Experimental Sta-  
4       tion in March and June of 1944, respectively, were  
5       the only “sonic deception” ground combat units of  
6       the United States in World War II;

7           (17) soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special  
8       Troops impersonated other, larger Army units by  
9       sewing counterfeit patches onto their uniforms,  
10      painting false markings on their vehicles, and cre-  
11      ating phony headquarters staffed by fake generals,  
12      all in an effort to feed false information to Axis  
13      spies;

14          (18) during the Battle of the Bulge, the 23d  
15      Headquarters Special Troops created counterfeit  
16      radio traffic in an effort to deceive the enemy of the  
17      movement of elements of General George S. Patton’s  
18      Third Army as it shifted to break through to the  
19      101st Airborne Division and elements of 10th Ar-  
20      mored Division in the besieged Belgian town of Bas-  
21      togne;

22          (19) in its final mission, Operation Viersen, in  
23      March 1945, the 23d Headquarters Special Troops  
24      conducted a tactical deception operation intended to  
25      draw German units down the Rhine River and away

1 from the Ninth Army, allowing the Ninth Army to  
2 cross the Rhine into Germany;

3 (20) during Operation Viersen, the 23d Head-  
4 quarters Special Troops, with the assistance of other  
5 units, impersonated 2 complete divisions of Amer-  
6 ican forces by using fabricated radio networks,  
7 soundtracks of construction work and artillery fire,  
8 and hundreds of inflatable and real vehicles;

9 (21) according to a military intelligence officer  
10 of the 79th Infantry, “There is no doubt that Oper-  
11 ation Viersen materially assisted in deceiving the  
12 enemy with regard to the real dispositions and inten-  
13 tions of this Army.”;

14 (22) 3 soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special  
15 Troops gave their lives and dozens were injured in  
16 carrying out their mission;

17 (23) in April 1945, the 3133d Signal Service  
18 Company conducted Operation Craftsman in support  
19 of Operation Second Wind, the successful Allied ef-  
20 fort to break through the German defensive position  
21 to the north of Florence, Italy, known as the Gothic  
22 Line;

23 (24) along with an attached platoon of British  
24 engineers, who were inflatable decoy specialists, the  
25 3133d Signal Service Company used sonic deception

1 to misrepresent troop locations along this defensive  
2 line;

3 (25) the activities of the 23d Headquarters  
4 Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Com-  
5 pany remained highly classified for more than 40  
6 years after the war and received minimal recogni-  
7 tion;

8 (26) the extraordinary accomplishments of this  
9 unit are deserving of belated official recognition; and

10 (27) the United States is eternally grateful to  
11 the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters Special Troops  
12 and the 3133d Signal Service Company for their  
13 proficient use of innovative tactics during World  
14 War II, which saved lives and made significant con-  
15 tributions to the defeat of the Axis powers.

16 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

17 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President Pro Tem-  
18 pore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-  
19 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
20 award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appro-  
21 priate design to the 23d Headquarters Special Troops and  
22 the 3133d Signal Services Company, known collectively as  
23 the “Ghost Army”, in recognition of unique and highly  
24 distinguished service during World War II.

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

6       (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

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

12          (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of  
13 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should  
14 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)  
15 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other  
16 locations associated with the 23d Headquarters Spe-  
17 cial Troops and the 3133d Signal Services Company.

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



1 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDAL.**

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

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

8 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**  
9 **SALE.**

10 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is  
11 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
12 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-  
13 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under  
14 this Act.

15 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
16 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section  
17 3(d) shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public  
18 Enterprise Fund.

19 **SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.**

20 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purposes  
21 of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of  
22 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest state-  
23 ment titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation”  
24 for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional  
25 Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee,

- 1 provided that such statement has been submitted prior to
- 2 the vote on passage.

Passed the Senate December 15, 2021.

Attest:

*Secretary.*



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