

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 890

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the troops who defended Bataan during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 7, 2017

Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the troops who defended Bataan 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Hours after the attacks on Pearl Harbor,
6 Hawaii, Imperial Japanese forces launched an at-
7 tack on the Philippines, cutting off vital lines of
8 communication to members of the Armed Forces of
9 the United States (referred to in this Act as the
10 “Armed Forces”) and Filipino troops in the Far

1 East under the command of General Douglas Mac-
2 Arthur.

3 (2) On December 8, 1941, the 200th Coast Ar-
4 tillery Regiment, successors to the New Mexico Na-
5 tional Guardsmen who made up part of the famed
6 “Rough Riders” of the Spanish-American War, were
7 the “first to fire”.

8 (3) Despite being cut off from supply lines and
9 reinforcements, members of the Armed Forces and
10 Philippine troops quickly executed a plan to delay
11 the Japanese invasion and defend the Philippines
12 against that invasion.

13 (4) By April 1942, troops from the United
14 States and the Philippines had bravely and staunch-
15 ly fought off enemy attacks in Bataan for more than
16 4 months under strenuous conditions that resulted
17 in widespread starvation and disease.

18 (5) By maintaining their position and engaging
19 the enemy for as long as they did, the troops at Ba-
20 taan were able to change the momentum of the war,
21 delaying the Japanese timetable to take control of
22 the Southeast Pacific for needed war materials. Be-
23 cause of the heroic actions of the defenders of Ba-
24 taan, members of the Armed Forces and other Allied
25 forces throughout the Pacific had time to regroup

1 and prepare for the successful liberation of the Pa-
2 cific and the Philippines.

3 (6) On April 9, 1942, Major General Edward
4 King, whose troops suffered from starvation and a
5 lack of supplies, surrendered the soldiers from the
6 United States and the Philippines into enemy hands.

7 (7) Over the next week, troops from the Armed
8 Forces and the Philippines were taken prisoner and
9 forced to march 65 miles without any food, water,
10 or medical care in what came to be known as the
11 “Bataan Death March”.

12 (8) During this forced march, thousands of sol-
13 diers died, either from starvation, lack of medical
14 care, sheer exhaustion, or abuse by their captors.

15 (9) Conditions at the prisoner of war camps
16 were appalling, leading to increased disease and mal-
17 nutrition among the prisoners.

18 (10) The prisoners at Camp O’Donnell died at
19 a rate of nearly 400 per day because of the poor
20 conditions of the camp.

21 (11) On June 6, 1942, the prisoners at Camp
22 O’Donnell were transferred to Camp Cabanatuan,
23 north of Camp O’Donnell.

24 (12) Nearly 26,000 of the 50,000 Filipino pris-
25 oners of war died at Camp O’Donnell and survivors

1 were gradually paroled from September through De-
2 cember 1942.

3 (13) Between September of 1942 and December
4 of 1944, prisoners of war from the Armed Forces
5 who had survived the horrific death march were
6 shipped north for forced labor aboard “hell ships”
7 and succumbed in great numbers because of the
8 abysmal conditions. Many of those ships were mis-
9 takenly targeted by Allied naval forces because the
10 Japanese military convoys were not properly labeled
11 as carrying prisoners of war. The sinking of the
12 Arisan Maru alone claimed nearly 1,800 lives of
13 members of the Armed Forces.

14 (14) The prisoners who remained in the camps
15 suffered from continued mistreatment, malnutrition,
16 lack of medical care, and horrific conditions until
17 they were liberated in 1945.

18 (15) The veterans of Bataan represented the
19 best of the United States and the Philippines, hailed
20 from various locales across both countries, and rep-
21 resented true diversity.

22 (16) Over the subsequent decades, the veterans
23 of Bataan formed support groups, were honored in
24 local and State memorials, and told their stories to
25 all people of the United States.

1 (17) The United States Navy has continued to
2 honor the history and stories of the veterans of Ba-
3 taan by naming 2 ships after the battle, including 1
4 ship that is still in service, the USS Bataan (LHD-
5 5), in memory of their valor and honorable resist-
6 ance against Imperial Japanese forces.

7 (18) Many of the survivors of Bataan have died
8 and those who remain continue to tell their stories.

9 (19) The people of the United States and the
10 Philippines are forever indebted to these men for—

11 (A) the courage and tenacity they dem-
12 onstrated during the first 4 months of World
13 War II fighting against enemy soldiers; and

14 (B) the perseverance they demonstrated
15 during 3 years of capture, imprisonment, and
16 atrocious conditions, while maintaining dignity,
17 honor, patriotism, and loyalty.

18 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

19 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
20 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
21 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
22 collective award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal
23 of appropriate design to the troops from the United States
24 and the Philippines who defended Bataan and were subse-

1 quently prisoners of war, in recognition of their personal
 2 sacrifice and service during World War II.

3 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
 4 award under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury
 5 (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall strike
 6 the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and in-
 7 scriptions, 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) in honor of the pris-
 11 oners of war at Bataan and the troops from the
 12 United States and the Philippines who defended Ba-
 13 taan, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithso-
 14 nian Institution, where it shall be displayed as ap-
 15 propriate and made available for research.

16 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
 17 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
 18 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
 19 available for display at other locations, particularly
 20 at locations that are associated with the prisoners of
 21 war at Bataan and the troops from the United
 22 States and the Philippines who defended Bataan.

23 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

24 (a) STRIKING OF DUPLICATES.—Under such regula-
 25 tions as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may

1 strike duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under
2 section 2.

3 (b) SELLING OF DUPLICATES.—The Secretary may
4 sell such duplicates under subsection (a) at a price suffi-
5 cient to cover the costs of such duplicates, including labor,
6 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

7 (c) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
8 sale of duplicate bronze medals under subsection (b) shall
9 be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
10 Fund.

11 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
13 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
14 31, United States Code.

15 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
16 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
17 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

18 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

19 There is authorized to be charged against the United
20 States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to
21 exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized
22 under section 2.

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