

107TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3439

To authorize the President to present a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Choctaw Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 6, 2001

Mr. WATKINS of Oklahoma introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

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## A BILL

To authorize the President to present a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the Choctaw Code Talkers in recognition of their contributions to the Nation, and for other purposes.

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 “Choctaw Code Talkers  
5       Recognition Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

1           (1) On April 6, 1917, the United States, after  
2           extraordinary provocations, declared war on Ger-  
3           many, thus the United States entered World War I,  
4           the War to End All Wars.

5           (2) At the time of this declaration of war, In-  
6           dian people in the United States, including members  
7           of the Choctaw Nation, were not accorded the status  
8           of citizens of the United States.

9           (3) Without regard to this lack of citizenship,  
10          many members of the Choctaw Nation joined many  
11          members of other Indian tribes and nations in enlist-  
12          ing in the Armed Forces to fight on behalf of their  
13          native land.

14          (4) Members of the Choctaw Nation were en-  
15          listed in the force known as the American Expedi-  
16          tionary Force, which began hostile actions in France  
17          in the fall of 1917, and specifically, members of the  
18          Choctaw Nation were incorporated in a company of  
19          Indian enlistees serving in the 142d Infantry Com-  
20          pany of the 36th Division.

21          (5) A major impediment to Allied operations in  
22          general, and American operations in particular, was  
23          the fact that the German forces had deciphered all  
24          codes used for transmitting information between Al-  
25          lied commands, leading to substantial loss of men

1 and materiel during the first year of American ac-  
2 tion.

3 (6) Because of the proximity and static nature  
4 of the battle lines, a method to communicate without  
5 the knowledge of the enemy was needed.

6 (7) An American commander realized the fact  
7 that he had under his command a number of men  
8 who spoke a native language. While the use of such  
9 native languages was discouraged by the American  
10 Government, the commander sought out and re-  
11 cruited 18 Choctaw Indians to use for transmission  
12 of field telephone communications during an upcom-  
13 ing campaign.

14 (8) Because the language used by the Choctaw  
15 soldiers in the transmission of information was not  
16 based on a European language or on a mathematical  
17 progression, the Germans were unable to understand  
18 any of the transmissions.

19 (9) The Choctaw soldiers were placed in dif-  
20 ferent command positions, to achieve the widest pos-  
21 sible area for communications.

22 (10) The use of the Choctaw Code Talkers was  
23 particularly important in the movement of American  
24 soldiers in October of 1918 (including securing for-  
25 ward and exposed positions), in the protection of

1 supplies during American action (including pro-  
2 tecting gun emplacements from enemy shelling), and  
3 in the preparation for the assault on German posi-  
4 tions in the final stages of combat operations in the  
5 fall of 1918.

6 (11) In the opinion of the officers involved, the  
7 use of Choctaw Indians to transmit information in  
8 their native language saved men and munitions, and  
9 was highly successful. Based on this successful expe-  
10 rience, Choctaw Indians were being withdrawn from  
11 frontline units for training in transmission of codes  
12 so as to be more widely used when the war came to  
13 a halt.

14 (12) The Germans never succeeded in breaking  
15 the Choctaw code.

16 (13) This was the first time in modern warfare  
17 that such transmission of messages in a native  
18 American language was used for the purpose of con-  
19 fusing the enemy.

20 (14) This action by members of the Choctaw  
21 Nation is another example of the commitment of  
22 American Indians to the defense of our great Nation  
23 and adds to the proud legacy of such service.

24 (15) The Choctaw Nation has honored the ac-  
25 tions of these 18 Choctaw Code Talkers through a

1 memorial bearing their names located at the en-  
2 trance of the tribal complex in Durant, Oklahoma.

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

4 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—To express rec-  
5 ognition by the United States of America and its citizens  
6 in honoring the Choctaw Code Talkers who distinguished  
7 themselves in performing a unique, highly successful com-  
8 munications operation that greatly assisted in saving  
9 countless lives and in hastening the end of World War I,  
10 the President is authorized to present to each Choctaw  
11 Code Talker, or a surviving family member of that Code  
12 Talker, on behalf of the Congress, a gold medal of appro-  
13 priate design honoring the Choctaw Code Talkers.

14 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the  
15 presentations referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary  
16 of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the  
17 “Secretary”) shall strike gold medals with suitable em-  
18 blems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the  
19 Secretary.

20 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

21 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
22 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3  
23 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe,  
24 and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, includ-

1 ing labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead  
2 expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

3 **SEC. 5. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.**

4 The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national  
5 medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United  
6 States Code.

7 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

8 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is  
9 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
10 Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000  
11 to pay for the costs of the medals authorized by this Act.

12 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the  
13 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be  
14 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise  
15 Fund.

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