

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 324

AN ACT

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The First Special Service Force (the
4 “Force”), a military unit composed of volunteers
5 from the United States and Canada, was activated
6 in July 1942 at Fort Harrison near Helena, Mon-
7 tana.

8 (2) The Force was initially intended to target
9 military and industrial installations that were sup-
10 porting the German war effort, including important
11 hydroelectric plants, which would severely limit the
12 production of strategic materials used by the Axis
13 powers.

14 (3) From July 1942 through June 1943, volun-
15 teers of the Force trained in hazardous, arctic condi-
16 tions in the mountains of western Montana, and in
17 the waterways of Camp Bradford, Virginia.

18 (4) The combat echelon of the Force totaled
19 1,800 soldiers, half from the United States and half
20 from Canada.

21 (5) The Force also contained a service bat-
22 talion, composed of 800 members from the United
23 States, that provided important support for the com-
24 bat troops.

25 (6) A special bond developed between the Cana-
26 dian and United States soldiers, who were not seg-

1 regated by country, although the commander of the
2 Force was a United States colonel.

3 (7) The Force was the only unit formed during
4 World War II that consisted of troops from Canada
5 and the United States.

6 (8) In October 1943, the Force went to Italy,
7 where it fought in battles south of Cassino, including
8 Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo, two mountain
9 peaks that were a critical anchor of the German de-
10 fense line.

11 (9) During the night of December 3, 1943, the
12 Force ascended to the top of the precipitous face of
13 Monte La Difensa, where the Force suffered heavy
14 casualties and overcame fierce resistance to overtake
15 the German line.

16 (10) After the battle for La Difensa, the Force
17 continued to fight tough battles at high altitudes, in
18 rugged terrain, and in severe weather.

19 (11) After battles on the strongly defended
20 Italian peaks of Sammucro, Vischiataro, and
21 Remetanea, the size of the Force had been reduced
22 from 1,800 soldiers to fewer than 500.

23 (12) For 4 months in 1944, the Force engaged
24 in raids and aggressive patrols at the Anzio Beach-
25 head.

1 (13) On June 4, 1944, members of the Force
2 were among the first Allied troops to liberate Rome.

3 (14) After liberating Rome, the Force moved to
4 southern Italy and prepared to assist in the libera-
5 tion of France.

6 (15) During the early morning of August 15,
7 1944, members of the Force made silent landings on
8 Les Iles D’Hyerres, small islands in the Mediterra-
9 nean Sea along the southern coast of France.

10 (16) The Force faced a sustained and withering
11 assault from the German garrisons as the Force pro-
12 gressed from the islands to the Franco-Italian bor-
13 der.

14 (17) After the Allied forces secured the Franco-
15 Italian border, the United States Army ordered the
16 disbandment of the Force on December 5, 1944, in
17 Nice, France.

18 (18) During 251 days of combat, the Force suf-
19 fered 2,314 casualties, or 134 percent of its author-
20 ized strength, captured thousands of prisoners, won
21 5 United States campaign stars and 8 Canadian
22 battle honors, and never failed a mission.

23 (19) The United States is forever indebted to
24 the acts of bravery and selflessness of the troops of

1 the Force, who risked their lives for the cause of
2 freedom.

3 (20) The efforts of the Force along the seas
4 and skies of Europe were critical in repelling the ad-
5 vance of Nazi Germany and liberating numerous
6 communities in France and Italy.

7 (21) The bond between the members of the
8 Force from the United States and those from Can-
9 ada has endured over the decades, as the members
10 meet every year for a reunion, alternating between
11 the United States and Canada.

12 (22) The traditions and honors exhibited by the
13 Force are carried on by 2 outstanding active units
14 of 2 great democracies, the Special Forces of the
15 United States and the Canadian Special Operations
16 Regiment.

17 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

18 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
19 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
20 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
21 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of ap-
22 propriate design to the First Special Service Force, collec-
23 tively, in recognition of their dedicated service during
24 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) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the
7 gold medal in honor of the First Special Service Force
8 under subsection (a), the medal shall be given to the First
9 Special Service Force Association in Helena, Montana,
10 where it shall be available for display or temporary loan
11 to be displayed elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate
12 locations associated with the First Special Service Force,
13 including Fort William Henry Harrison in Helena, Mon-
14 tana.

15 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

16 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
17 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2, at a price
18 sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including labor,
19 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
20 and amounts received from the sale of such duplicates
21 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enter-
22 prise Fund.

1 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

2 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
3 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
4 Code.

Passed the House of Representatives May 21, 2013.

Attest:

Clerk.

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