

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 309

AN ACT

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War
II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

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 makes the following findings:

3 (1) The unpaid volunteer members of the Civil
4 Air Patrol (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
5 “CAP”) during World War II provided extraor-
6 dinary humanitarian, combat, and national services
7 during a critical time of need for the Nation.

8 (2) During the war, CAP members used their
9 own aircraft to perform a myriad of essential tasks
10 for the military and the Nation within the United
11 States, including attacks on enemy submarines off
12 the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United
13 States.

14 (3) This extraordinary national service set the
15 stage for the post-war CAP to become a valuable
16 nonprofit, public service organization chartered by
17 Congress and designated the Auxiliary of the United
18 States Air Force that provides essential emergency,
19 operational, and public services to communities,
20 States, the Federal Government, and the military.

21 (4) The CAP was established on December 1,
22 1941, initially as a part of the Office of Civil De-
23 fense, by air-minded citizens one week before the
24 surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, out of the
25 desire of civil airmen of the country to be mobilized

1 with their equipment in the common defense of the
2 Nation.

3 (5) Within days of the start of the war, the
4 German Navy started a massive submarine offensive,
5 known as Operation Drumbeat, off the east coast of
6 the United States against oil tankers and other crit-
7 ical shipping that threatened the overall war effort.

8 (6) Neither the Navy nor the Army had enough
9 aircraft, ships, or other resources to adequately pa-
10 trol and protect the shipping along the Atlantic and
11 Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United States, and
12 many ships were torpedoed and sunk, often within
13 sight of civilians on shore, including 52 tankers sunk
14 between January and March 1942.

15 (7) At that time General George Marshall re-
16 marked that “[t]he losses by submarines off our At-
17 lantic seaboard and in the Caribbean now threaten
18 our entire war effort”.

19 (8) From the beginning CAP leaders urged the
20 military to use its services to patrol coastal waters
21 but met with great resistance because of the non-
22 military status of CAP civilian pilots.

23 (9) Finally, in response to the ever-increasing
24 submarine attacks, the Tanker Committee of the Pe-
25 troleum Industry War Council urged the Navy De-

1 partment and the War Department to consider the
2 use of the CAP to help patrol the sea lanes off the
3 coasts of the United States.

4 (10) While the Navy initially rejected this sug-
5 gestion, the Army decided it had merit, and the Civil
6 Air Patrol Coastal Patrol began in March 1942.

7 (11) Oil companies and other organizations pro-
8 vided funds to help pay for some CAP operations,
9 including vitally needed shore radios that were used
10 to monitor patrol missions.

11 (12) By late March 1942, the Navy also began
12 to use the services of the CAP.

13 (13) Starting with 3 bases located in Delaware,
14 Florida, and New Jersey, CAP aircrews (ranging in
15 age from 18 to over 80) immediately started to spot
16 enemy submarines as well as lifeboats, bodies, and
17 wreckage.

18 (14) Within 15 minutes of starting his patrol
19 on the first Coastal Patrol flight, a pilot had sighted
20 a torpedoed tanker and was coordinating rescue op-
21 erations.

22 (15) Eventually 21 bases, ranging from Bar
23 Harbor, Maine, to Brownsville, Texas, were set up
24 for the CAP to patrol the Atlantic and Gulf of Mex-

1 ico coasts of the United States, with 40,000 volun-
2 teers eventually participating.

3 (16) The CAP used a wide range of civilian-
4 owned aircraft, mainly light-weight, single-engine
5 aircraft manufactured by Cessna, Beech, Waco,
6 Fairchild, Stinson, Piper, Taylorcraft, and Sikorsky,
7 among others, as well as some twin engine aircraft,
8 such as the Grumman Widgeon.

9 (17) Most of these aircraft were painted in
10 their civilian prewar colors (red, yellow, or blue, for
11 example) and carried special markings (a blue circle
12 with a white triangle) to identify them as CAP air-
13 craft.

14 (18) Patrols were conducted up to 100 miles off
15 shore, generally with 2 aircraft flying together, in
16 aircraft often equipped with only a compass for navi-
17 gation and a single radio for communication.

18 (19) Due to the critical nature of the situation,
19 CAP operations were conducted in bad weather as
20 well as good, often when the military was unable to
21 fly, and in all seasons, including the winter, when
22 ditching an aircraft in cold water would likely mean
23 certain death to the aircrew.

24 (20) Personal emergency equipment was often
25 lacking, particularly during early patrols where inner

1 tubes and kapok duck hunter vests were carried as
2 flotation devices, since ocean worthy wet suits, life
3 vests, and life rafts were unavailable.

4 (21) The initial purpose of the Coastal Patrol
5 was to spot submarines, report their position to the
6 military, and force them to dive below the surface,
7 which limited their operating speed and maneuver-
8 ability and reduced their ability to detect and attack
9 shipping, because attacks against shipping were con-
10 ducted while the submarines were surfaced.

11 (22) It immediately became apparent that there
12 were opportunities for CAP pilots to attack sub-
13 marines, such as when a Florida CAP aircrew came
14 across a surfaced submarine that quickly stranded
15 itself on a sand bar. However, the aircrew could not
16 get any assistance from armed military aircraft be-
17 fore the submarine freed itself.

18 (23) Finally, after several instances when the
19 military could not respond in a timely manner, a de-
20 cision was made by the military to arm CAP aircraft
21 with 50- and 100-pound bombs, and to arm some
22 larger twin-engine aircraft with 325-pound depth
23 charges.

24 (24) The arming of CAP aircraft dramatically
25 changed the mission for these civilian aircrews and

1 resulted in more than 57 attacks on enemy sub-
2 marines.

3 (25) While CAP volunteers received \$8 a day
4 flight reimbursement for costs incurred, their patrols
5 were accomplished at a great economic cost to many
6 CAP members who—

7 (A) used their own aircraft and other
8 equipment in defense of the Nation;

9 (B) paid for much of their own aircraft
10 maintenance and hangar use; and

11 (C) often lived in the beginning in primi-
12 tive conditions along the coast, including old
13 barns and chicken coops converted for sleeping.

14 (26) More importantly, the CAP Coastal Patrol
15 service came at the high cost of 26 fatalities, 7 seri-
16 ous injuries, and 90 aircraft lost.

17 (27) At the conclusion of the 18-month Coastal
18 Patrol, the heroic CAP aircrews would be credited
19 with—

20 (A) 2 submarines possibly damaged or de-
21 stroyed;

22 (B) 57 submarines attacked;

23 (C) 82 bombs dropped against submarines;

1 (D) 173 radio reports of submarine posi-
2 tions (with a number of credited assists for kills
3 made by military units);

4 (E) 17 floating mines reported;

5 (F) 36 dead bodies reported;

6 (G) 91 vessels in distress reported;

7 (H) 363 survivors in distress reported;

8 (I) 836 irregularities noted;

9 (J) 1,036 special investigations at sea or
10 along the coast;

11 (K) 5,684 convoy missions as aerial escorts
12 for Navy ships;

13 (L) 86,685 total missions flown;

14 (M) 244,600 total flight hours logged; and

15 (N) more than 24,000,000 total miles
16 flown.

17 (28) It is believed that at least one high-level
18 German Navy Officer credited CAP as one reason
19 that submarine attacks moved away from the United
20 States when he concluded that “[i]t was because of
21 those damned little red and yellow planes!”.

22 (29) The CAP was dismissed from coastal mis-
23 sions with little thanks in August 1943 when the
24 Navy took over the mission completely and ordered
25 CAP to stand down.

1 (30) While the Coastal Patrol was ongoing,
2 CAP was also establishing itself as a vital wartime
3 service to the military, States, and communities na-
4 tionwide by performing a wide range of missions in-
5 cluding, among others—

6 (A) border patrol;

7 (B) forest and fire patrols;

8 (C) military courier flights for mail, repair
9 and replacement parts, and urgent military de-
10 liveries;

11 (D) emergency transportation of military
12 personnel;

13 (E) target towing (with live ammunition
14 being fired at the targets and seven lives being
15 lost) and searchlight tracking training missions;

16 (F) missing aircraft and personnel
17 searches;

18 (G) air and ground search and rescue for
19 missing aircraft and personnel;

20 (H) radar and aircraft warning system
21 training flights;

22 (I) aerial inspections of camouflaged mili-
23 tary and civilian facilities;

24 (J) aerial inspections of city and town
25 blackout conditions;

- 1 (K) simulated bombing attacks on cities
2 and facilities to test air defenses and early
3 warning;
- 4 (L) aerial searches for scrap metal mate-
5 rials;
- 6 (M) river and lake patrols, including aerial
7 surveys for ice in the Great Lakes;
- 8 (N) support of war bond drives;
- 9 (O) management and guard duties at hun-
10 dreds of airports;
- 11 (P) support for State and local emer-
12 gencies such as natural and manmade disasters;
- 13 (Q) predator control;
- 14 (R) rescue of livestock during floods and
15 blizzards;
- 16 (S) recruiting for the Army Air Force;
- 17 (T) initial flight screening and orientation
18 flights for potential military recruits;
- 19 (U) mercy missions, including the airlift of
20 plasma to central blood banks;
- 21 (V) nationwide emergency communications
22 services; and
- 23 (W) a cadet youth program which provided
24 aviation and military training for tens of thou-
25 sands.

1 (31) The CAP flew more than 500,000 hours
2 on these additional missions, including—

3 (A) 20,500 missions involving target tow-
4 ing (with live ammunition) and gun/searchlight
5 tracking which resulted in 7 deaths, 5 serious
6 injuries, and the loss of 25 aircraft;

7 (B) a courier service involving 3 major Air
8 Force Commands over a 2-year period carrying
9 more than 3,500,000 pounds of vital cargo and
10 543 passengers;

11 (C) southern border patrol flying more
12 than 30,000 hours and reporting 7,000 unusual
13 sightings including a vehicle (that was appre-
14 hended) with 2 enemy agents attempting to
15 enter the country;

16 (D) a week in February 1945 during which
17 CAP units rescued seven missing Army and
18 Navy pilots; and

19 (E) a State in which the CAP flew 790
20 hours on forest fire patrol missions and re-
21 ported 576 fires to authorities during a single
22 year.

23 (32) On April 29, 1943, the CAP was trans-
24 ferred to the Army Air Forces, thus beginning its
25 long association with the United States Air Force.

1 (33) Hundreds of CAP-trained women pilots
2 joined military women's units including the Women's
3 Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) program.

4 (34) Many members of the WASP program
5 joined or rejoined the CAP during the post-war pe-
6 riod because it provided women opportunities to fly
7 and continue to serve the Nation that were severely
8 lacking elsewhere.

9 (35) Due to the exceptional emphasis on safety,
10 unit and pilot training and discipline, and the orga-
11 nization of the CAP, by the end of the war a total
12 of only 64 CAP members had died in service and
13 only 150 aircraft had been lost (including its Coastal
14 Patrol losses from early in the war).

15 (36) It is estimated that up to 100,000 civilians
16 (including youth in its cadet program) participated
17 in the CAP in a wide range of staff and operational
18 positions, and that CAP aircrews flew a total of ap-
19 proximately 750,000 hours during the war, most of
20 which were in their personal aircraft and often at
21 risk to their lives.

22 (37) After the war, at a CAP dinner for Con-
23 gress, a quorum of both Houses attended with the
24 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
25 President thanking CAP for its service.

1 (38) While air medals were issued for some of
2 those participating in the Coastal Patrol, little other
3 recognition was forthcoming for the myriad of serv-
4 ices CAP volunteers provided during the war.

5 (39) Despite some misguided efforts to end the
6 CAP at the end of the war, the organization had
7 proved its capabilities to the Nation and strength-
8 ened its ties with the Air Force and Congress.

9 (40) In 1946, Congress chartered the CAP as
10 a nonprofit, public service organization and in 1948
11 made the CAP an Auxiliary of the United States Air
12 Force.

13 (41) Today, the CAP conducts many of the
14 same missions it performed during World War II,
15 including a vital role in homeland security.

16 (42) The CAP's wartime service was highly un-
17 usual and extraordinary, due to the unpaid civilian
18 status of its members, the use of privately owned
19 aircraft and personal funds by many of its members,
20 the myriad of humanitarian and national missions
21 flown for the Nation, and the fact that for 18
22 months, during a time of great need for the United
23 States, the CAP flew combat-related missions in
24 support of military operations off the Atlantic and
25 Gulf of Mexico coasts.

1 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) AWARD.—

3 (1) AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore
4 of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
5 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements
6 for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single
7 gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the
8 World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol collec-
9 tively, in recognition of the military service and ex-
10 emplary record of the Civil Air Patrol during World
11 War II.

12 (2) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes
13 of the award referred to in paragraph (1), the Sec-
14 retary of the Treasury shall strike the gold medal
15 with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to
16 be determined by the Secretary.

17 (3) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of
19 the gold medal referred to in paragraph (1) in
20 honor of all of its World War II members of the
21 Civil Air Patrol, the gold medal shall be given
22 to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be
23 displayed as appropriate and made available for
24 research.

25 (B) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense
26 of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution

1 should make the gold medal received under this
2 paragraph available for display elsewhere, par-
3 ticularly at other locations associated with the
4 Civil Air Patrol.

5 (b) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under such regulations
6 as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike
7 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck
8 under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of
9 the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machin-
10 ery, and overhead expenses, and amounts received from
11 the sale of such duplicates shall be deposited in the United
12 States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

13 (c) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to
14 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
15 of title 31, United States Code.

Passed the Senate May 20, 2013.

Attest:

Secretary.

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