

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2101

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 3, 2018

Referred to the Committee on Financial Services

AN ACT

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the crew of the USS Indianapolis, in recognition of their perseverance, bravery, and service to the United States.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “USS Indianapolis Con-
3 gressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The Portland-class heavy cruiser USS Indi-
7 anapolis received 10 battle stars between February
8 1942 and April 1945 while participating in major
9 battles of World War II from the Aleutian Islands
10 to Okinawa.

11 (2) The USS Indianapolis, commanded by Cap-
12 tain Charles Butler McVay III, carried 1,195 per-
13 sonnel when it set sail for the island of Tinian on
14 July 16, 1945, to deliver components of the atomic
15 bomb “Little Boy”. The USS Indianapolis set a
16 speed record during the portion of the trip from
17 California to Pearl Harbor and successfully delivered
18 the cargo on July 26, 1945. The USS Indianapolis
19 then traveled to Guam and received further orders
20 to join Task Group 95.7 in the Leyte Gulf in the
21 Philippines for training. During the length of the
22 trip, the USS Indianapolis went unescorted.

23 (3) On July 30, 1945, minutes after midnight,
24 the USS Indianapolis was hit by 2 torpedoes fired
25 by the I-58, a Japanese submarine. The resulting
26 explosions severed the bow of the ship, sinking the

1 ship in about 12 minutes. Of 1,195 personnel, about
2 900 made it into the water. While a few life rafts
3 were deployed, most men were stranded in the water
4 with only a kapok life jacket.

5 (4) At 10:25 a.m. on August 2, 1945, 4 days
6 after the sinking of the USS Indianapolis, Lieuten-
7 ant Wilbur Gwinn was piloting a PV-1 Ventura
8 bomber and accidentally noticed men in the water
9 who were later determined to be survivors of the
10 sinking of the USS Indianapolis. Lieutenant Gwinn
11 alerted a PBY aircraft, under the command of Lieu-
12 tenant Adrian Marks, about the disaster. Lieutenant
13 Marks made a dangerous open-sea landing to begin
14 rescuing the men before any surface vessels arrived.
15 The USS Cecil J. Doyle was the first surface ship
16 to arrive on the scene and took considerable risk in
17 using a searchlight as a beacon, which gave hope to
18 survivors in the water and encouraged them to make
19 it through another night. The rescue mission contin-
20 ued well into August 3, 1945, and was well-coordi-
21 nated and responsive once launched. The individuals
22 who participated in the rescue mission conducted a
23 thorough search, saved lives, and undertook the dif-
24 ficult job of identifying the remains of, and pro-

1 viding a proper burial for, those individuals who had
2 died.

3 (5) Only 316 men survived the ordeal and the
4 survivors had to deal with severe burns, exposure to
5 the elements, extreme dehydration, and shark at-
6 tacks.

7 (6) During World War II, the USS Indianapolis
8 frequently served as the flagship for the commander
9 of the Fifth Fleet, Admiral Raymond Spruance, sur-
10 vived a bomb released during a kamikaze attack
11 (which badly damaged the ship and killed 9 mem-
12 bers of the crew), earned a total of 10 battle stars,
13 and accomplished a top secret mission that was crit-
14 ical to ending the war. The sacrifice, perseverance,
15 and bravery of the crew of the USS Indianapolis
16 should never be forgotten.

17 **SEC. 3. 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 Congress, of a single gold medal of
22 appropriate design to the crew of the USS Indianapolis,
23 in recognition of their perseverance, bravery, and service
24 to the United States.

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

6 (c) INDIANA WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
8 gold medal referred to in subsection (a), the gold
9 medal shall be given to the Indiana War Memorial
10 Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana, where it will be
11 displayed as appropriate and made available for re-
12 search.

13 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
14 Congress that the Indiana War Memorial Museum
15 should make the gold medal received under this Act
16 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
17 locations and events associated with the USS Indi-
18 anapolis.

19 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

20 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
21 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
22 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
23 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
24 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
6 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
7 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
8 items.

Passed the Senate August 1, 2018.

Attest:

JULIE E. ADAMS,

Secretary.