

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1872

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Army Rangers Veterans of World War II in recognition of their extraordinary service during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 27, 2021

Ms. ERNST (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Army Rangers Veterans of World War II in recognition of their extraordinary 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “United States Army
5 Rangers Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold
6 Medal Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act—

1 (1) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
2 of the Treasury; and

3 (2) the term “United States Army Rangers
4 Veteran of World War II” means any individual
5 who—

6 (A) served in the Armed Forces—

7 (i) honorably;

8 (ii) in an active duty status; and

9 (iii) at any time during the period be-
10 ginning on June 19, 1942, and ending on
11 September 2, 1945; and

12 (B) was assigned to a Ranger Battalion of
13 the Army at any time during the period de-
14 scribed in subparagraph (A)(iii).

15 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

16 Congress finds the following:

17 (1) In World War II, the Army formed 6 Rang-
18 er Battalions and 1 provisional battalion. All mem-
19 bers of the Ranger Battalions were volunteers. The
20 initial concept of Ranger units drew from the British
21 method of using highly trained “commando” units
22 and the military tradition of the United States of
23 utilizing light infantry for scouting and raiding oper-
24 ations.

1 (2) The Ranger Battalions of World War II
2 consisted of—

3 (A) the 1st Ranger Infantry Battalion,
4 which was activated on June 19, 1942, in
5 Northern Ireland;

6 (B) the 2d Ranger Infantry Battalion,
7 which was activated on April 1, 1943, at Camp
8 Forrest, Tennessee;

9 (C) the 3d Ranger Infantry Battalion,
10 which was—

11 (i) activated as provisional on May 21,
12 1943, in North Africa; and

13 (ii) constituted on July 21, 1943, and
14 concurrently consolidated with the provi-
15 sional unit described in clause (i);

16 (D) the 4th Ranger Infantry Battalion,
17 which was—

18 (i) activated as provisional on May 29,
19 1943, in North Africa; and

20 (ii) constituted on July 21, 1943, and
21 concurrently consolidated with the provi-
22 sional unit described in clause (i);

23 (E) the 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion,
24 which was activated on September 1, 1943, at
25 Camp Forrest, Tennessee;

1 (F) the 6th Ranger Infantry Battalion,
2 which was—

3 (i) originally activated on January 20,
4 1941, at Fort Lewis, Washington, as the
5 98th Field Artillery Battalion; and

6 (ii) converted and redesignated on
7 September 26, 1944, as the 6th Ranger
8 Infantry Battalion; and

9 (G) the 29th Ranger Infantry Battalion, a
10 provisional Army National Guard unit that
11 was—

12 (i) activated on December 20, 1942,
13 at Tidworth Barracks, England; and

14 (ii) disbanded on October 18, 1943.

15 (3) The first combat operations of Army Rang-
16 ers occurred on August 19, 1942, when 50 Rangers
17 took part in the British-Canadian raid on the
18 French coastal town of Dieppe.

19 (4) The 1st Ranger Battalion, under the leader-
20 ship of Major William O. Darby, was used in full
21 strength during the landings at Arsew, Algeria, dur-
22 ing the North African campaign. Due to the success
23 of the Rangers in several difficult battles, particu-
24 larly at El Guettar in March and April of 1943, 2

1 additional Ranger Battalions were organized in
2 North Africa.

3 (5) During the North African campaign, the 1st
4 Ranger Battalion was awarded battle honors for its
5 actions in Tunisia. On March 18, 1943, the Bat-
6 talion penetrated enemy lines and captured the posi-
7 tion Djebel el Auk in a nighttime attack, taking
8 more than 200 prisoners. Two days later, the bat-
9 talion was attacked by the 10th Panzer division of
10 the German Afrika Korps and, despite heavy losses,
11 continued to defend its position. The following day,
12 the 1st Battalion counterattacked to clear high
13 ground overlooking the positions held by the Armed
14 Forces. These actions demonstrated the ability of
15 the Rangers to fight in difficult terrain and the
16 courage to endure despite being outnumbered and
17 exposed to heavy enemy fire.

18 (6) The 29th provisional Ranger Battalion was
19 formed from volunteers drawn from the 29th Infan-
20 try Division stationed in England in the fall of 1942.
21 The Battalion was activated on December 20, 1942,
22 and accompanied British commandos on 2 small-
23 scale raids in Norway. Nineteen members of the
24 29th Ranger Battalion conducted a raid on a Ger-
25 man radar site in France on the night of September

1 3, 1943. After that raid, the 29th Ranger Battalion
2 was disbanded because new Ranger units, the 2d
3 and 5th Battalions, were being formed.

4 (7) During the summer and fall of 1943, the
5 1st, 3d, and 4th Ranger Battalions were heavily in-
6 volved in the campaign in Sicily and the landings in
7 Italy. The 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions conducted
8 a night amphibious landing in Sicily and secured the
9 landing beaches for the main force. The 3d Bat-
10 talion landed separately at Licata, Sicily, and was
11 able to silence gun positions on an 82-foot cliff over-
12 looking the invasion beaches.

13 (8) During the invasion of Italy, the 1st and
14 4th Ranger Battalions landed at Maiori with the
15 mission of seizing the high ground and protecting
16 the flank of the remainder of the main landing by
17 the United States. Enemy forces in the area were es-
18 timated to outnumber the Rangers by approximately
19 8 to 1. Despite these odds, the Rangers took the po-
20 sition and held off 7 enemy counterattacks.

21 (9) After the invasion of Italy, Rangers contin-
22 ued to be used, often in night attacks, to seize key
23 terrain ahead of the advancing Allied forces. At the
24 Anzio beachhead, the majority of the 1st, 3d, and
25 4th Ranger Battalions sustained heavy casualties

1 after being cut off behind German lines. The Rang-
2 ers had planned to infiltrate German positions under
3 the cover of darkness and make a dawn attack on
4 a critical road junction but were pinned down by
5 enemy tanks and an elite German paratrooper unit.
6 After 12 hours of desperate fighting and a failed re-
7 lief attempt, the majority of the Ranger force was
8 killed, wounded, or captured. Only 6 Rangers from
9 the 1st and 3d Battalions, out of more than 767
10 men, returned to friendly lines. The 4th Battalion,
11 which had been in reserve, also suffered 60 killed
12 and 120 wounded out of 550 men. These 3 battal-
13 ions were inactivated and the survivors were trans-
14 ferred to other units.

15 (10) In the United States, and later in Scot-
16 land, the 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions were formed
17 to undertake operations in Western Europe. Those
18 Battalions were engaged on D-Day, assaulting Ger-
19 man positions at the Pointe du Hoc coastal battery,
20 and remained in combat through September of
21 1944. Specifically, Rangers in the 2d Battalion,
22 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James E.
23 Rudder—

1 (A) overcame underwater mines, machine
2 gun fire, and enemy artillery while scaling the
3 100-foot high cliffs at Pointe du Hoc;

4 (B) held against intense German efforts to
5 retake the position; and

6 (C) after reaching the top of the cliffs,
7 moved inland roughly 1 mile and sustained
8 heavy casualties while searching for, and ulti-
9 mately destroying, a German heavy artillery
10 battery.

11 (11) During June, July, and August of 1944,
12 the 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions were engaged in
13 the campaign in Brest, which included close-range
14 fighting in hedgerows and numerous villages. Later,
15 in operations in Western Germany, the Battalions
16 were frequently used to attack in darkness and gain
17 vital positions to pave the way for the main Army
18 attacks.

19 (12) During the final drive into Germany in
20 late February and early March 1945, the 5th Rang-
21 er Battalion was cited for battle honors for out-
22 standing performance. Under the cover of darkness,
23 the unit drove into German lines and seized high
24 ground blocking the main German supply route in
25 the sector. The Germans attacked the position of the

1 Rangers from both sides, resulting in heavy Ranger
 2 casualties during 5 days of fighting. As a result of
 3 the actions of the Rangers, the main Army attack
 4 was able to overcome German defenses more easily,
 5 occupy the vital city of Trier, and reach the Rhine
 6 River.

7 (13) The 6th Ranger Battalion operated in the
 8 Pacific. In the most notable exploit of the 6th Rang-
 9 er Battalion, in January and February of 1945, the
 10 Battalion formed the nucleus of a rescue force that
 11 liberated more than 500 Allied prisoners, including
 12 prisoners from the United States, from the Caba-
 13 natuan prisoner of war camp in the Philippines.
 14 With the help of local Filipino guerillas, the Rang-
 15 ers, led by Lieutenant Colonel Henry A. Mucci, dem-
 16 onstrated extraordinary heroism by infiltrating Jap-
 17 anese-held territory to reach the prisoners of war
 18 and prevent them from being killed by the Japanese.
 19 After a 25-mile march at night through the jungle,
 20 the unit killed all Japanese sentries with no loss of
 21 life of the prisoners of war. The unit successfully re-
 22 turned to American lines having lost only 2 soldiers
 23 killed and having another 2 wounded.

24 (14) The 1st Ranger Infantry Battalion—

25 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

1 (i) Algeria-French Morocco (with ar-
2 rowhead);

3 (ii) Tunisia;

4 (iii) Sicily (with arrowhead);

5 (iv) Naples-Foggia (with arrowhead);

6 (v) Anzio (with arrowhead); and

7 (vi) Rome-Arno; and

8 (B) for its contributions, received—

9 (i) the Presidential Unit Citation
10 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
11 “EL GUETTAR”; and

12 (ii) the Presidential Unit Citation
13 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
14 “SALERNO”.

15 (15) The 2d Ranger Infantry Battalion—

16 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

17 (i) Normandy (with arrowhead);

18 (ii) Northern France;

19 (iii) Rhineland;

20 (iv) Ardennes-Alsace; and

21 (v) Central Europe; and

22 (B) for its contributions, received—

23 (i) the Presidential Unit Citation
24 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
25 “POINTE DU HOE”; and

1 (ii) the French Croix de Guerre with
 2 Silver-Gilt Star, World War II, and
 3 streamer embroidered with “POINTE DU
 4 HOE”.

5 (16) The 3d Ranger Infantry Battalion—

6 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

7 (i) Sicily (with arrowhead);

8 (ii) Naples-Foggia (with arrowhead);

9 (iii) Anzio (with arrowhead); and

10 (iv) Rome-Arno; and

11 (B) for its contributions, received the Pres-
 12 idential Unit Citation (Army) and streamer em-
 13 broidered with “SALERNO”.

14 (17) The 4th Ranger Infantry Battalion—

15 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

16 (i) Sicily (with arrowhead);

17 (ii) Naples-Foggia (with arrowhead);

18 (iii) Anzio (with arrowhead); and

19 (iv) Rome-Arno; and

20 (B) for its contributions, received the Pres-
 21 idential Unit Citation (Army) and streamer em-
 22 broidered with “SALERNO”.

23 (18) The 5th Ranger Infantry Battalion—

24 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

25 (i) Normandy (with arrowhead);

1 (ii) Northern France;

2 (iii) Rhineland;

3 (iv) Ardennes-Alsace; and

4 (v) Central Europe; and

5 (B) for its contributions, received—

6 (i) the Presidential Unit Citation
7 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
8 “NORMANDY BEACHHEAD”;

9 (ii) the Presidential Unit Citation
10 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
11 “SAAR RIVER AREA”; and

12 (iii) the French Croix de Guerre with
13 Silver-Gilt Star, World War II, and
14 streamer embroidered with “NOR-
15 MANDY”.

16 (19) The 6th Ranger Infantry Battalion—

17 (A) participated in the campaigns of—

18 (i) New Guinea;

19 (ii) Leyte (with arrowhead); and

20 (iii) Luzon; and

21 (B) for its contributions, received—

22 (i) the Presidential Unit Citation
23 (Army) and streamer embroidered with
24 “CEBU, LUZON”; and

1 (ii) the Philippine Presidential Unit
 2 Citation and streamer embroidered with
 3 “17 OCTOBER 1944 TO 4 JULY 1945”.

4 (20) The United States will be forever indebted
 5 to the United States Army Rangers Veterans of
 6 World War II, whose bravery and sacrifice in com-
 7 bat contributed greatly to the military success of the
 8 United States and the allies of the United States.

9 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

10 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tem-
 11 pore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
 12 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the
 13 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
 14 appropriate design to the United States Army Rangers
 15 Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedi-
 16 cated service during World War II.

17 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
 18 award described in subsection (a), the Secretary shall
 19 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
 20 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

21 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
 23 gold medal in honor of the United States Army
 24 Rangers Veterans of World War II, the gold medal

1 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
 2 the medal shall be—

3 (A) available for display, as appropriate;

4 and

5 (B) made available for research.

6 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
 7 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
 8 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
 9 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
 10 locations associated with—

11 (A) the United States Army Rangers Vet-
 12 erans of World War II; or

13 (B) World War II.

14 (d) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under regulations that
 15 the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and
 16 sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under
 17 this section, at a price sufficient to cover the cost of the
 18 medals, including the cost of labor, materials, dies, use
 19 of machinery, and overhead expenses.

20 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDAL.**

21 (a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The gold medal struck
 22 under section 4 shall be a national medal for the purposes
 23 of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

24 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For the purposes of sec-
 25 tion 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals

1 struck under section 4 shall be considered to be numis-
2 matic items.

