

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9336

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the individuals who fought for or with the United States against the armed forces of Imperial Japan in the Pacific theater and the impacted Sashinax people on Attu, whose lives, culture, and community were irrevocably changed from December 8, 1941, to August 15, 1945.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 9, 2024

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself, Ms. STANSBURY, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. BROWNLEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the individuals who fought for or with the United States against the armed forces of Imperial Japan in the Pacific theater and the impacted Sashinax people on Attu, whose lives, culture, and community were irrevocably changed from December 8, 1941, to August 15, 1945.

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 “Defenders of Bataan,
3 Corregidor, and Attu Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Hours after the attacks on Pearl Harbor,
7 Hawaii Territory, on December 7, 1941, Imperial
8 Japanese forces launched coordinated attacks
9 throughout Asia, striking Malaya, Thailand, Singa-
10 pore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and
11 the United States territories of Guam, Midway Is-
12 land, Wake Island, and Howland Island.

13 (2) For the next 7 months, undermanned
14 United States forces in the Pacific fought with out-
15 dated weapons, expired ammunition, and without re-
16 inforcement or resupply to their besieged island
17 posts.

18 (3) On the first day of United States participa-
19 tion in World War II, December 8, 1941, the “first
20 to fire” in the Philippines at the Imperial Japanese
21 were the New Mexico National Guardsmen from the
22 200th and 515th Coast Artillery (AA) regiments, the
23 successors to the famed “Rough Riders” of the
24 Spanish-American War, who had only recently ar-
25 rived in the Philippines where they were stationed at

1 Fort Stotsenburg north of Manila with the mission
2 of defending Clark Field.

3 (4) Filipino soldiers and civilians valiantly
4 fought alongside and as part of the United States
5 Armed Forces and were integral to their war efforts.

6 (5) By the end of December 1941, all United
7 States forces on Luzon Island in the Philippines
8 withdrew to the Bataan Peninsula of the island,
9 where, for the next 4 months, with neither air nor
10 sea defenses, an estimated 12,000 United States and
11 at least 63,000 Filipino troops and 20,000 Filipino
12 civilians endured siege conditions.

13 (6) On April 9, 1942, Major General Edward
14 P. King, Jr. surrendered the United States and Fili-
15 pino forces on the Bataan Peninsula. The Imperial
16 Japanese Army forced thousands of troops and civil-
17 ians to assemble at the port of Mariveles at the tip
18 of Bataan and other locations along the peninsula
19 for a 65-mile forced march. This forced trek came
20 to be known as the “Bataan Death March”.

21 (7) During the Bataan Death March, approxi-
22 mately 700 people of the United States and 6,000
23 to 10,000 Filipinos were killed. Survivors were sent
24 to Camp O’Donnell where 26,000 more Filipino pris-
25 oners died.

1 (8) On May 6, 1942, Lieutenant General Jona-
2 than Wainwright surrendered the fortress islands of
3 Corregidor (Fort Mills), Fort Drum, Fort Frank,
4 and Fort Hughes in Manila Bay. The complete sur-
5 render of the remaining United States and Filipino
6 forces in the Philippines occurred on June 9, 1942.

7 (9) Included in the surrenders in the Phil-
8 ippines were female nurses of the United States
9 Army and Navy and the Philippine Army and civil-
10 ian volunteers who became the first large group of
11 United States women in combat and, counted with
12 the Army and Navy nurses surrendered on Guam in
13 December 1941, comprised the first group of United
14 States military women taken captive and imprisoned
15 by an enemy.

16 (10) On June 7, 1942, the Imperial Japanese
17 invaded Attu, homeland of the impacted Siskinaâ
18 people, who were all subsequently taken prisoner by
19 the Japanese troops on Attu for 3 months and held
20 as imprisoned slaves for 3 years and 3 months in
21 Otaru, Japan. After the war, the impacted Siskinaâ
22 people were not allowed to return to Attu.

23 (11) On May 11, 1943, 12,500 United States
24 Armed Forces personnel entered Attu, which was oc-
25 cupied by about 2,500 Japanese military personnel.

1 Between this date and May 29, 1943, those brave
2 members of the United States Armed Forces fought
3 to reclaim Attu. This victory cost the United States
4 about 550 of its very finest, who laid down their
5 lives in the service of their nation.

6 (12) Between January 1942 and August 1945,
7 thousands of prisoners of war from the United
8 States who had survived the surrenders throughout
9 the Pacific were shipped in unmarked freighters and
10 vessels.

11 (13) It is time to recognize the defenders of Ba-
12 taan, Corregidor, Attu and other places throughout
13 the Pacific who were ordinary men and women who
14 found uncommon courage in extraordinary cir-
15 cumstances.

16 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) IMPACTED SASKINAË PEOPLE.—The term
19 “impacted Saskinaë people” refers to the indigenous
20 peoples of the Near Islands, which includes Attu and
21 the westernmost Alaskan islands, who were on the
22 islands during the period beginning on December 8,
23 1941, and ending on August 15, 1945.

1 (2) INDIVIDUALS WHO FOUGHT FOR OR WITH
2 THE UNITED STATES.—The term “individuals who
3 fought for or with the United States”—

4 (A) includes any individual who—

5 (i) was in the Pacific theater at any
6 time during the period beginning on De-
7 cember 8, 1941, and ending on August 15,
8 1945; and

9 (ii)(I) served honorably as a member
10 of the United States Armed Forces or at
11 the command of the United States Armed
12 Forces in the defensive battles in the Pa-
13 cific from December 8, 1941 to June 9,
14 1942; or

15 (II) became a prisoner of war of Im-
16 perial Japan during World War II until
17 August 15, 1945, including civilians who
18 the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces con-
19 sidered military prisoners of war and re-
20 ceived veterans status after the war; and

21 (B) does not include a member of the Pa-
22 cific Fleet or the Hawaiian Department.

23 (3) PACIFIC THEATER.—The term “Pacific the-
24 ater” means Shanghai, the Central Pacific Area, the
25 Southwest Pacific Area, and the Aleutian Islands.

1 (4) RESISTANCE OR BATTLE.—The term “re-
2 sistance or battle” includes an action in and around
3 Shanghai, Tientsin, Guam, Wake Island, the Dutch
4 East Indies, Borneo, the Philippines, Midway Island,
5 or the Aleutian Islands.

6 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
7 the Secretary of the Treasury.

8 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

9 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
10 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
11 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
12 collective award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal
13 of appropriate design to the individuals who fought for
14 or with the United States to defend Bataan, Corregidor,
15 Attu, and other places in the Pacific theater, and to the
16 impacted Saskaîna people, in recognition of their personal
17 sacrifice and service during World War II.

18 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
19 award under subsection (a), the Secretary shall strike the
20 gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscrip-
21 tions, to be determined by the Secretary.

22 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
24 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
25 shall be given to the National Museum of American

1 History of the Smithsonian Institution, where it
2 shall be displayed as appropriate and made available
3 for research.

4 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
5 Congress that the National Museum of American
6 History of the Smithsonian Institution should make
7 the gold medal received under paragraph (1) avail-
8 able for display at other locations, particularly at lo-
9 cations that are associated with—

10 (A) the defensive battles of World War II
11 in the Pacific theater from December 8, 1941,
12 to August 15, 1945;

13 (B) the prisoners of war of Imperial
14 Japan;

15 (C) the impacted Saskina̓ people; and

16 (D) the defense of the Philippines, Guam,
17 Wake Island, Midway Island, Java, and the
18 Aleutian Islands.

19 **SEC. 5. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

20 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
21 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 4, at a price
22 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
23 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

1 **SEC. 6. 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.

9 **SEC. 7. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
10 **SALE.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
12 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
13 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-
14 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under
15 this Act.

16 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
17 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
18 5 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
19 Enterprise Fund.

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