

Merrill's Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act

[Public Law 116–170]

[This law has not been amended]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 116–170. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as "Merrill's Marauders", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. [31 U.S.C. 5111 note] SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Merrill's Marauders Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) in August 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other Allied leaders proposed the creation of a ground unit of the Armed Forces that would engage in a "long-range penetration mission" in Japanese-occupied Burma to—

(A) cut off Japanese communications and supply lines; and

(B) capture the town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, both of which were held by the Japanese;

(2) President Roosevelt issued a call for volunteers for "a dangerous and hazardous mission" and the call was answered by approximately 3,000 soldiers from the United States;

(3) the Army unit composed of the soldiers described in paragraph (2)—

(A) was officially designated as the "5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)" with the code name "Galahad"; and

(B) later became known as "Merrill's Marauders" (referred to in this section as the "Marauders") in reference to its leader, Brigadier General Frank Merrill;

(4) in February 1944, the Marauders began their approximately 1,000-mile trek through the dense Burmese jungle with

no artillery support, carrying their supplies on their backs or the pack saddles of mules;

(5) over the course of their 5-month trek to Myitkyina, the Marauders fought victoriously against larger Japanese forces through 5 major and 30 minor engagements;

(6) during their march to Myitkyina, the Marauders faced hunger and disease that were exacerbated by inadequate aerial resupply drops;

(7) malaria, typhus, and dysentery inflicted more casualties on the Marauders than the Japanese;

(8) by August 1944, the Marauders had accomplished their mission, successfully disrupting Japanese supply and communication lines and taking the town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, the only all-weather airstrip in Northern Burma;

(9) after taking Myitkyina, only 130 Marauders out of the original 2,750 were fit for duty and all remaining Marauders still in action were evacuated to hospitals due to tropical diseases, exhaustion, and malnutrition;

(10) for their bravery and accomplishments, the Marauders were awarded the "Distinguished Unit Citation", later redesignated as the "Presidential Unit Citation", and a Bronze Star; and

(11) though the Marauders were operational for only a few months, the legacy of their bravery is honored by the Army through the modern day 75th Ranger Regiment, which traces its lineage directly to the 5307th Composite Unit.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) (referred to in this section as "Merrill's Marauders"), in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

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

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal referred to in subsection (a) in honor of Merrill's Marauders, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations and events associated with Merrill's Marauders.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

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

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.