

One Hundred Eighth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the twentieth day of January, two thousand and four*

Joint Resolution

Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Peleliu and the end of Imperial Japanese control of Palau during World War II and urging the Secretary of the Interior to work to protect the historic sites of the Peleliu Battlefield National Historic Landmark and to establish commemorative programs honoring the Americans who fought there.

Whereas on December 7, 1941, Imperial Japan bombed the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, forcing the United States to declare war on Japan;

Whereas by 1944, United States victories in the Southwest and Central Pacific were bringing the war ever closer to Japan;

Whereas on September 15, 1944, after three days of naval gunfire, United States forces landed on the beaches of Peleliu, in the Palau islands chain, with the objective of capturing a vital air field;

Whereas the battle for Peleliu lasted more than two months, during which the United States suffered over 10,000 casualties, including an estimated 1,250 Marines and 540 soldiers killed in action;

Whereas George H.W. Bush, the 41st President of the United States, served as a torpedo-bomber pilot in the Navy and sank an armed Japanese trawler during Operation Snapshot, an operation to weaken Japanese defenses on Peleliu before United States Marines invaded the island in September 1944;

Whereas former Secretary of State George P. Shultz served as an officer in the Marine Corps detached to the 81st Infantry Division of the Army during the Battle of Peleliu and participated in the seizure, occupation, and defense of Angaur Island in the Palau islands chain;

Whereas on February 4, 1985, the Secretary of the Interior officially designated the Peleliu battlefield as the "Peleliu Battlefield National Historic Landmark";

Whereas the landmark plaque has been mounted and is now displayed in a prominent place in the village of Kloulkubed;

Whereas that designation as a national historic landmark attests not only to the significance of the battlefield site, but also to the integrity of the site;

Whereas the Peleliu battlefield today has considerable physical evidence of the battle, including about 100 identified individual cave sites occupied by the defending Japanese troops, as well as pill boxes, casemates, and large military equipment, both American and Japanese, which played a direct role in the battle for Peleliu; and

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Whereas thanks to the sacrifices of members of the United States Armed Forces who participated in the Battle of Peleliu, the Republic of Palau today is an independent, democratic nation and a strong ally of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress recognizes the bravery and courage of the members of the United States Armed Forces who participated in the Battle of Peleliu and of all veterans who fought in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

SEC. 2. The Congress urges the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) to recognize the year 2004 as the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Peleliu and the end of Imperial Japanese control of Palau during World War II;

(2) to work to protect the historic sites of the Peleliu Battlefield National Historic Landmark; and

(3) to establish commemorative programs honoring the Americans who fought at those sites.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*