

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 1827

AN ACT

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare.

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 “American Fighter Aces
3 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) An American Fighter Ace is a fighter pilot
7 who has served honorably in a United States mili-
8 tary service and who has destroyed 5 or more con-
9 firmed enemy aircraft in aerial combat during a war
10 or conflict in which American armed forces have
11 participated.

12 (2) Beginning with World War I, and the first
13 use of airplanes in warfare, military services have
14 maintained official records of individual aerial vic-
15 tory credits during every major conflict. Of more
16 than 60,000 United States military fighter pilots
17 that have taken to the air, less than 1,500 have be-
18 come Fighter Aces.

19 (3) Americans became Fighter Aces in the
20 Spanish Civil War, Sino-Japanese War, Russian
21 Civil War, Arab-Israeli War, and others. Addition-
22 ally, American military groups’ recruited United
23 States military pilots to form the American Volun-
24 teer Group, Eagle Squadron, and others that pro-
25 duced American-born Fighter Aces fighting against
26 axis powers prior to Pearl Harbor.

1 (4) The concept of a Fighter Ace is that they
2 fought for freedom and democracy across the globe,
3 flying in the face of the enemy to defend freedom
4 throughout the history of aerial combat. American-
5 born citizens became Fighter Aces flying under the
6 flag of United States allied countries and became
7 some of the highest scoring Fighter Aces of their re-
8 spective wars.

9 (5) American Fighter Aces hail from every
10 State in the Union, representing numerous ethnic,
11 religious, and cultural backgrounds.

12 (6) Fighter Aces possess unique skills that have
13 made them successful in aerial combat. These in-
14 clude courage, judgment, keen marksmanship, con-
15 centration, drive, persistence, and split-second think-
16 ing that makes an Ace a war fighter with unique
17 and valuable flight driven skills.

18 (7) The Aces' training, bravery, skills, sacrifice,
19 attention to duty, and innovative spirit illustrate the
20 most celebrated traits of the United States military,
21 including service to country and the protection of
22 freedom and democracy.

23 (8) American Fighter Aces have led distin-
24 guished careers in the military, education, private
25 enterprise, and politics. Many have held the rank of

1 General or Admiral and played leadership roles in
2 multiple war efforts from WWI to Vietnam through
3 many decades. In some cases they became the high-
4 est ranking officers for following wars.

5 (9) The extraordinary heroism of the American
6 Fighter Ace boosted American morale at home and
7 encouraged many men and women to enlist to fight
8 for America and democracy across the globe.

9 (10) Fighter Aces were among America's most-
10 prized military fighters during wars. When they ro-
11 tated back to the United States after combat tours,
12 they trained cadets in fighter pilot tactics that they
13 had learned over enemy skies. The teaching of com-
14 bat dogfighting to young aviators strengthened our
15 fighter pilots to become more successful in the skies.
16 The net effect of this was to shorten wars and save
17 the lives of young Americans.

18 (11) Following military service, many Fighter
19 Aces became test pilots due to their superior flying
20 skills and quick thinking abilities.

21 (12) The American Fighter Aces are one of the
22 most decorated military groups in American history.
23 Twenty-two Fighter Aces have achieved the rank of
24 Admiral in the Navy. Seventy-nine Fighter Aces
25 have achieved the rank of General in the Army, Ma-

1 rines, and Air Force. Nineteen Medals of Honor
2 have been awarded to individual Fighter Aces.

3 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

4 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
5 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
6 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
7 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
8 medal of appropriate design to the American Fighter Aces,
9 collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service
10 and defense of our country’s freedom, which has spanned
11 the history of aviation warfare.

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

17 (c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the
18 gold medal in honor of the American Fighter Aces under
19 subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smith-
20 sonian Institution, where it shall be available for display
21 or temporary loan to be displayed elsewhere, particularly
22 at appropriate locations associated with the American
23 Fighter Aces, and that preference should be given to loca-
24 tions affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

1 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
3 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at
4 a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including
5 labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead ex-
6 penses, and amounts received from the sale of such dupli-
7 cates shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public
8 Enterprise Fund.

9 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

10 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under
11 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
12 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
14 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
15 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
16 items.

Passed the Senate March 26, 2014.

Attest:

Secretary.

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