

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5990

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the troops who defended Bataan during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. PEARCE) 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 grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the troops who defended Bataan 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Hours after the attacks on Pearl Harbor,
6 Hawaii, Imperial Japanese forces launched an at-
7 tack on the Philippines, cutting off vital lines of
8 communication to members of the Armed Forces of

1 the United States (referred to in this Act as the
2 “Armed Forces”) and Filipino troops in the Far
3 East under the command of General Douglas Mac-
4 Arthur.

5 (2) On December 8, 1941, the 200th Coast Ar-
6 tillery Regiment, successors to the New Mexico Na-
7 tional Guardsmen who made up part of the famed
8 “Rough Riders” of the Spanish-American War, were
9 the “first to fire”.

10 (3) Despite being cut off from supply lines and
11 reinforcements, members of the Armed Forces and
12 Philippine troops quickly executed a plan to delay
13 the Japanese invasion and defend the Philippines
14 against that invasion.

15 (4) By April 1942, troops from the United
16 States and the Philippines had bravely and staunch-
17 ly fought off enemy attacks in Bataan for more than
18 4 months under strenuous conditions that resulted
19 in widespread starvation and disease.

20 (5) By maintaining their position and engaging
21 the enemy for as long as they did, the troops at Ba-
22 taan were able to change the momentum of the war,
23 delaying the Japanese timetable to take control of
24 the Southeast Pacific for needed war materials. Be-
25 cause of the heroic actions of the defenders of Ba-

1 taan, members of the Armed Forces and other Allied
2 forces throughout the Pacific had time to regroup
3 and prepare for the successful liberation of the Pa-
4 cific and the Philippines.

5 (6) On April 9, 1942, Major General Edward
6 King, whose troops suffered from starvation and a
7 lack of supplies, surrendered the soldiers from the
8 United States and the Philippines into enemy hands.

9 (7) Over the next week, troops from the Armed
10 Forces and the Philippines were taken prisoner and
11 forced to march 65 miles without any food, water,
12 or medical care in what came to be known as the
13 “Bataan Death March”.

14 (8) During this forced march, thousands of sol-
15 diers died, either from starvation, lack of medical
16 care, sheer exhaustion, or abuse by their captors.

17 (9) Conditions at the prisoner of war camps
18 were appalling, leading to increased disease and mal-
19 nutrition among the prisoners.

20 (10) The prisoners at Camp O’Donnell died at
21 a rate of nearly 400 per day because of the poor
22 conditions of the camp.

23 (11) On June 6, 1942, the prisoners at Camp
24 O’Donnell were transferred to Camp Cabanatuan,
25 north of Camp O’Donnell.

1 (12) Nearly 26,000 of the 50,000 Filipino pris-
2 oners of war died at Camp O'Donnell and survivors
3 were gradually paroled from September through De-
4 cember 1942.

5 (13) Between September of 1942 and December
6 of 1944, prisoners of war from the Armed Forces
7 who had survived the horrific death march were
8 shipped north for forced labor aboard "hell ships"
9 and succumbed in great numbers because of the
10 abysmal conditions. Many of those ships were mis-
11 takenly targeted by Allied naval forces because the
12 Japanese military convoys were not properly labeled
13 as carrying prisoners of war. The sinking of the
14 Arisan Maru alone claimed nearly 1,800 lives of
15 members of the Armed Forces.

16 (14) The prisoners who remained in the camps
17 suffered from continued mistreatment, malnutrition,
18 lack of medical care, and horrific conditions until
19 they were liberated in 1945.

20 (15) The veterans of Bataan represented the
21 best of the United States and the Philippines, hailed
22 from various locales across both countries, and rep-
23 resented true diversity.

24 (16) Over the subsequent decades, the veterans
25 of Bataan formed support groups, were honored in

1 local and State memorials, and told their stories to
2 all people of the United States.

3 (17) The United States Navy has continued to
4 honor the history and stories of the veterans of Ba-
5 taan by naming 2 ships after the battle, including 1
6 ship that is still in service, the USS Bataan (LHD-
7 5), in memory of their valor and honorable resist-
8 ance against Imperial Japanese forces.

9 (18) Many of the survivors of Bataan have died
10 and those who remain continue to tell their stories.

11 (19) The people of the United States and the
12 Philippines are forever indebted to these men for—

13 (A) the courage and tenacity they dem-
14 onstrated during the first 4 months of World
15 War II fighting against enemy soldiers; and

16 (B) the perseverance they demonstrated
17 during 3 years of capture, imprisonment, and
18 atrocious conditions, while maintaining dignity,
19 honor, patriotism, and loyalty.

20 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

21 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
22 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
23 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
24 collective award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal
25 of appropriate design to the troops from the United States

1 and the Philippines who defended Bataan and were subse-
2 quently prisoners of war, in recognition of their personal
3 sacrifice and service during World War II.

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

9 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
11 gold medal under subsection (a) in honor of the pris-
12 oners of war at Bataan and the troops from the
13 United States and the Philippines who defended Ba-
14 taan, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithso-
15 nian Institution, where it shall be displayed as ap-
16 propriate and made available for research.

17 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
18 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
19 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
20 available for display at other locations, particularly
21 at locations that are associated with the prisoners of
22 war at Bataan and the troops from the United
23 States and the Philippines who defended Bataan.

1 SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

2 (a) STRIKING OF DUPLICATES.—Under such regula-
3 tions as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may
4 strike duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under
5 section 2.

6 (b) SELLING OF DUPLICATES.—The Secretary may
7 sell such duplicates under subsection (a) at a price suffi-
8 cient to cover the costs of such duplicates, including labor,
9 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

10 (c) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
11 sale of duplicate bronze medals under subsection (b) shall
12 be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
13 Fund.

14 SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.

15 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
16 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
17 31, United States Code.

18 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
19 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
20 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

21 SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

22 There is authorized to be charged against the United
23 States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to
24 exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized
25 under section 2.

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