

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2279

To award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, in recognition of the ceaseless efforts of American aircrew members to escape captivity and evade capture by the enemy forces in occupied countries during our foreign wars, and the brave resistance organizations and patriotic nationals of those foreign countries who assisted them.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 1, 2017

Ms. TSONGAS (for herself, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. FARENTHOLD) 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 gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, in recognition of the ceaseless efforts of American aircrew members to escape captivity and evade capture by the enemy forces in occupied countries during our foreign wars, and the brave resistance organizations and patriotic nationals of those foreign countries who assisted them.

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 “U.S. Air Forces Es-
3 cape and Evasion Society Recognition Act of 2017”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) During nearly all foreign wars, members of
7 our Air Force have been forced to eject, crash land,
8 or abandon their aircraft in an occupied country or
9 territory (referred to in this Act as “downed aircrew
10 members”).

11 (2) Those downed aircrew members had to
12 evade capture by enemy forces, often times while
13 suffering from critical injuries.

14 (3) Of the downed aircrew members that were
15 captured, many escaped from the enemy force that
16 was holding them.

17 (4) Many times, downed aircrew members were
18 aided in evasion and escape by resistance organiza-
19 tions and patriotic nationals in those occupied coun-
20 tries.

21 (5) Thousands of brave, ordinary people in the
22 occupied countries took extraordinary risks at huge
23 costs to help these aircrew members.

24 (6) Each downed aircrew member’s story is dif-
25 ferent; however, the narrative for each member has
26 one common thread: American aircrew members

1 evading capture or escaping captivity with the assist-
2 ance of brave people living in an occupied country.

3 (7) In 1964, the U.S. Air Forces Escape and
4 Evasion Society (AFEES) was created by the
5 downed aircrew members who evaded capture by
6 enemy forces during foreign wars with the assistance
7 of resistance organizations and patriotic nationals in
8 occupied countries.

9 (8) AFEES includes downed aircrew members
10 and people who directly aided them in escape and
11 evasion, and has more than 600 members, including
12 members from World War II, the Korean War, and
13 the Vietnam War.

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

15 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
16 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
17 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
18 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
19 medal of appropriate design in commemoration to the U.S.
20 Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, in recognition of
21 the ceaseless efforts of American aircrew members to es-
22 cape captivity and evade capture by the enemy forces in
23 occupied countries during our foreign wars, and the brave
24 resistance organizations and patriotic nationals of those
25 foreign countries who assisted them.

1 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
2 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
3 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
4 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
5 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
6 retary.

7 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
9 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
10 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
11 it shall be available for display as appropriate and
12 available for research.

13 (2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense
14 of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
15 should make the gold medal awarded pursuant to
16 this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly
17 at appropriate locations associated with the U.S. Air
18 Forces Escape and Evasion Society, and that pref-
19 erence should be given to locations affiliated with
20 the Smithsonian Institution.

21 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

22 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
23 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
24 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
25 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,

1 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
2 and the cost of the gold medal.

3 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
5 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
6 51 of title 31, United States Code.

7 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
8 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
9 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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