

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2192

To grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the troops from the United States and the Philippines who defended Bataan and Corregidor, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 9, 2019

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico (for herself, Mr. LUJÁN, and Ms. HAALAND) 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 from the United States and the Philippines who defended Bataan and Corregidor, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Defenders of Bataan
5 and Corregidor Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Hours after the attacks on Pearl Harbor,
4 Hawaii, Imperial Japanese forces launched an at-
5 tack on the Philippines, cutting off vital lines of
6 communication to members of the Armed Forces of
7 the United States (referred to in this Act as the
8 “Armed Forces”) and Filipino troops in the Far
9 East under the command of General Douglas Mac-
10 Arthur.

11 (2) On December 8, 1941, the 200th and 515th
12 Coast Artillery Regiments, successors to the New
13 Mexico National Guardsmen who made up part of
14 the famed “Rough Riders” of the Spanish-American
15 War, were the “first to fire”.

16 (3) Despite being cut off from supply lines and
17 reinforcements, members of the Armed Forces and
18 Philippine troops quickly executed a plan to delay
19 the Japanese invasion and defend the Philippines
20 against that invasion.

21 (4) Combined U.S.-Filipino ground forces fight
22 a prolonged six-month resistance to Imperial Ja-
23 pan’s invasion of the Philippines. With the U.S. un-
24 able to deliver reinforcements, the U.S.-Filipino
25 forces slowly deteriorate in combat effectiveness

1 through lack of food, supplies, ammunition, and dis-
2 ease as well as from no air and naval support.

3 (5) By December 10, 1941, the U.S. Army Air
4 Corps airfields at Del Carmen, Clark, Nichols, and
5 Nielson on Luzon in the Philippines, as well as the
6 nearby U.S. Naval facilities at Cavite and Olongapo
7 had been destroyed. The surviving sailors, Marines,
8 and airmen were organized into provisional infantry
9 units and sent to fight on the Bataan Peninsula.

10 (6) By April 1942, troops from the United
11 States and the Philippines had bravely and staunch-
12 ly fought off enemy attacks in Bataan for more than
13 4 months under strenuous conditions that resulted
14 in widespread starvation and disease.

15 (7) Securing the withdrawal of United States
16 forces on Luzon to the Bataan Peninsula were—

17 (A) 1,809 New Mexico National Guards-
18 men from 200th and 515th Coast Artillery
19 (Antiaircraft) regiments. First stationed at
20 Fort Stotsenberg north of Manila, they are
21 credited as being the “First to Fire” in the de-
22 fense of the Philippines on December 8, 1941;

23 (B) 1,006 National Guardsmen of the
24 192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion (596) com-
25 posed of Company A from Janesville, Wis-

1 consin; Company B from Maywood, Illinois;
2 Company C from Port Clinton, Ohio; and Com-
3 pany D from Harrodsburg, Kentucky; and the
4 194th Light Tank Battalion (410) composed of
5 Company A from Brainerd, Minnesota; Com-
6 pany B from Saint Joseph, Missouri; and Com-
7 pany C from Salinas, California. The 192nd
8 and 194th Tank Battalions had arrived in the
9 Philippines on or before Thanksgiving Day
10 1941; and

11 (C) barely half of the men from these Na-
12 tional Guard units returned home at the end of
13 the war, with the majority dying as POWs of
14 the Imperial Japanese Army.

15 (8) By maintaining their position and engaging
16 the enemy for as long as they did, the troops at Ba-
17 taan were able to change the momentum of the war,
18 delaying the Japanese timetable to take control of
19 the Southeast Pacific for needed war materials. Be-
20 cause of the heroic actions of the defenders of Ba-
21 taan, members of the Armed Forces and other Allied
22 forces throughout the Pacific had time to regroup
23 and prepare for the successful liberation of the Pa-
24 cific and the Philippines.

1 (9) On April 9, 1942, approximately 12,000
2 United States military personnel and 66,000 Fili-
3 pino soldiers became POWs with the surrender of
4 the American-Filipino forces on the Bataan Penin-
5 sula in the Philippines by Major General Edward P.
6 King.

7 (10) Beginning on April 9 and lasting for al-
8 most two weeks, troops from the Armed Forces and
9 the Philippines were taken prisoner and forced to
10 march 65 miles without any food, water, or medical
11 care in what came to be known as the “Bataan
12 Death March”. They marched from Marviveles north
13 to the San Fernando train station. At San Fer-
14 nando, the men were packed standing in
15 unventilated boxcars for 24-mile journey by rail to
16 Capas. Survivors then marched an additional three
17 miles to the make-shift POW camp at Camp
18 O’Donnell, an unfinished Philippine Army training
19 facility.

20 (11) During this forced march, an estimated
21 700 American and possibly 10,000 thousand Filipino
22 soldiers died from starvation, lack of medical care,
23 sheer exhaustion, or abuse by their captors. Hun-
24 dreds of men on the Death March remain unac-

1 counted for from the march and its immediate after-
2 math.

3 (12) Conditions at the prisoner of war camps
4 were appalling, leading to increased disease and mal-
5 nutrition, which precipitated extraordinary death
6 rates of as high as 300 per day.

7 (13) Thousands of troops fought under siege
8 conditions on Corregidor (Fort Mills), a fortress is-
9 land in Manila Bay, the headquarters of the wartime
10 U.S. Army Forces in the Far East, and the nearby
11 fortified islands of Fort Hughes, Fort Drum, and
12 Fort Frank until May 6, 1942.

13 (14) On May 6, 1942, Corregidor, which had
14 become the military command center for all the Phil-
15ippines, United States Forces in the Philippines
16 (USFIP), was surrendered by Lt. General Jonathan
17 M. Wainwright. Nearly 10,000 American soldiers,
18 sailors, airmen, and Marines as well as over 3,000
19 Filipino soldiers and nurses become POWs of Impe-
20 rial Japan.

21 (15) On June 6, 1942, the prisoners at Camp
22 O'Donnell were transferred to Camp Cabanatuan,
23 north of Camp O'Donnell.

24 (16) Nearly 26,000 of the 50,000 Filipino pris-
25 oners of war died at Camp O'Donnell and survivors

1 were gradually paroled from September through De-
2 cember 1942.

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

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

18 (19) The veterans of Bataan and Corregidor
19 represented the best of the United States and the
20 Philippines, hailed from various locales across both
21 countries, and represented true diversity.

22 (20) Over the subsequent decades, the veterans
23 of Bataan and Corregidor formed support groups,
24 were honored in local and State memorials, and told
25 their stories to all people of the United States.

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

7 (22) Many of the survivors of Bataan and Cor-
8 regidor have died and those who remain continue to
9 tell their stories.

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

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

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

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

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

1 in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service during
2 World War II.

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

8 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
10 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
11 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where
12 it shall be displayed as appropriate and made avail-
13 able for research.

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

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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