

PUBLIC LAW 118–161—DEC. 23, 2024

EVERETT ALVAREZ, JR. CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL ACT OF 2023

Public Law 118–161
118th Congress

An Act

Dec. 23, 2024
[H.R. 1097]

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Everett Alvarez, Jr., in recognition of his service to the Nation.

Everett Alvarez,
Jr. Congressional
Gold Medal Act
of 2023.
31 USC 5111
note.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Everett Alvarez, Jr. Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Commander (CDR) Everett Alvarez, Jr., served with distinction in the Vietnam war and made historic sacrifices for the United States as the first United States pilot to be shot down and captured during the Vietnam war and the second-longest prisoner of war in United States history, surviving over eight and half years in captivity.

(2) CDR Alvarez was born in Salinas, California, in 1937, and was the grandchild of Mexican immigrants.

(3) CDR Alvarez attended Salinas Union High School and Hartnell College and received a bachelor of science degree from Santa Clara University.

(4) In 1960, CDR Alvarez joined the United States Navy and was commissioned as Ensign.

(5) After receiving his commission, CDR Alvarez attended flight training at the Naval Air Basic Training Command in Pensacola, Florida.

(6) In June 1961, CDR Alvarez was transferred to the Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Kingsville, Texas, where he trained until December 1961.

(7) CDR Alvarez was promoted to Lieutenant (junior grade) in April 1962.

(8) In June 1962, CDR Alvarez joined Attack Squadron 144, nicknamed the “Roadrunners”, which was deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin prior to the United States entrance in the Vietnam war in August 1964.

(9) On August 5, 1964, while flying Operation Pierce Arrow from the USS Constellation near the Vietnam-China border, CDR Alvarez’s A–4 Skyhawk was shot down and he was captured by a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

(10) Upon capture, CDR Alvarez was taken to the Hòa Lò Prison in Hanoi, known to many former prisoners as the “Hanoi Hilton”.

(11) CDR Alvarez spent his first thirteen months, eight days, and five hours in isolation.

(12) While at Hòa Lò, CDR Alvarez was repeatedly beaten and tortured and was fed inedible meals and suffered malnourishment.

(13) In September 1965, CDR Alvarez was moved to the “Briarpatch”, a prison camp west of Hanoi, with no electricity or running water.

(14) Despite torture and interrogation, CDR Alvarez remained loyal to the United States and assisted other American prisoners of war.

(15) CDR Alvarez, with his own actions, encouraged and inspired fellow prisoners of war to “Return with Honor”, which meant keeping their integrity in the face of torture and not cooperating with or divulging information to the enemy, so they could return home having remained loyal to the United States.

(16) At great risk, CDR Alvarez helped spread the means of communication, including the tap code and the mute hand code, to keep up spirits and stay organized.

(17) On July 6, 1966, CDR Alvarez and 51 other American prisoners of war were forced to march in the “Hanoi Parade” where he was abused and attacked by mobs.

(18) CDR Alvarez was released February 12, 1973, after spending 3,113 days in captivity, or eight years and six months.

(19) Following his release and hospitalization, CDR Alvarez resumed his Naval service, returning to Naval Air Station Kingsville for refresher flight training.

(20) CDR Alvarez attended the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and received a master’s degree in Operations Research and Systems Analysis in 1976.

(21) CDR Alvarez was inducted into the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School’s Alumni Hall of Fame on March 27, 2015.

(22) CDR Alvarez served in Program Management at the Naval Air Systems command in Washington, DC, from October 1976 until his retirement.

(23) CDR Alvarez retired from the Navy on June 30, 1980, completing a 20-year Naval career.

(24) In 1983, CDR Alvarez earned his juris doctor from the George Washington School of Law and has been admitted to the District of Columbia bar.

(25) In April 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed CDR Alvarez as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, where he served until 1982.

(26) In July 1982, President Reagan nominated CDR Alvarez to be Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration, now known as the Department of Veterans Affairs, serving until 1986.

(27) In February 1987, President Reagan appointed CDR Alvarez to the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, where he served for nearly 21 years.

(28) For his service, CDR Alvarez was awarded the Silver Star Medal, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Star Medals, two Purple Hearts, and the Prisoner of War Medal.

(29) On September 18, 2012, the United States Navy Memorial awarded CDR Alvarez the “Lone Sailor Award”.

(30) The people of the United States honor the sacrifices of CDR Alvarez and his service to our Nation.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to Everett Alvarez, Jr., in recognition of his service to the Nation.

Determination.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary. The design shall bear an image of, and inscription of the name of, Everett Alvarez, Jr.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

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

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

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

(b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

Approved December 23, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1097:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 170 (2024):

May 21, considered and passed House.

Dec. 10, considered and passed Senate.

