

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3603

To award a 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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 28, 2021

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ (for herself, Mr. MELJER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. BACON, Mr. CUELLAR, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. COHEN) 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

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## A BILL

To award a 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 Armed Forces and Filipino  
22 ground forces fought a prolonged 6-month resistance  
23 to Imperial Japan’s invasion of the Philippines.  
24 With the Armed Forces unable to deliver reinforce-  
25 ments, the Armed Forces and Filipino forces slowly  
26 deteriorated in combat effectiveness from—

1 (A) lack of food, supplies, and ammunition;

2 (B) disease; and

3 (C) no air and naval support.

4 (5) By December 10, 1941, the United States  
5 Army Air Corps airfields at Del Carmen, Clark,  
6 Nichols, and Nielson on Luzon in the Philippines, as  
7 well as the nearby United States naval facilities at  
8 Cavite and Olongapo, had been destroyed. The sur-  
9 viving sailors, marines, and airmen were organized  
10 into provisional infantry units and sent to fight on  
11 the Bataan Peninsula.

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

17 (7) Securing the withdrawal of Armed Forces  
18 on Luzon to the Bataan Peninsula were the fol-  
19 lowing:

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

1           (B) 1,006 National Guardsmen of the  
2           192nd GHQ Light Tank Battalion (596) com-  
3           posed of Company A from Janesville, Wis-  
4           consin, Company B from Maywood, Illinois,  
5           Company C from Port Clinton, Ohio, and Com-  
6           pany D from Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and the  
7           194th Light Tank Battalion (410) composed of  
8           Company A from Brainerd, Minnesota, Com-  
9           pany B from Saint Joseph, Missouri, and Com-  
10          pany C from Salinas, California. The 192nd  
11          and 194th Tank Battalions had arrived in the  
12          Philippines on or before Thanksgiving Day,  
13          1941.

14          (8) Barely  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the men from the National  
15          Guard units described in paragraph (7) returned  
16          home at the end of the war, with the majority dying  
17          as prisoners of war of the Imperial Japanese Army.

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

1 and prepare for the successful liberation of the Pa-  
2 cific and the Philippines.

3 (10) On April 9, 1942, approximately 12,000  
4 members of the Armed Forces and 66,000 Filipino  
5 soldiers became prisoners of war with the surrender  
6 of the Armed Forces and Filipino forces on the Ba-  
7 taan Peninsula in the Philippines by Major General  
8 Edward P. King.

9 (11) Beginning on April 9, 1942, and lasting  
10 for almost 2 weeks, troops from the Armed Forces  
11 and the Philippines were taken prisoner and forced  
12 to march 65 miles without any food, water, or med-  
13 ical care in what came to be known as the “Bataan  
14 Death March”. They marched from Marviveles north  
15 to the San Fernando train station. At San Fer-  
16 nando, the men were packed standing in  
17 unventilated boxcars for the 24-mile journey by rail  
18 to Capas. Survivors then marched an additional 3  
19 miles to the makeshift prisoner-of-war camp at  
20 Camp O’Donnell, an unfinished Philippine Army  
21 training facility.

22 (12) During this forced march, an estimated  
23 700 members of the Armed Forces and possibly  
24 10,000 Filipino soldiers died from starvation, lack of  
25 medical care, sheer exhaustion, or abuse by their

1 captors. Hundreds of men on the Death March re-  
2 main unaccounted for from the march and its imme-  
3 diate aftermath.

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

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

14 (15) On May 6, 1942, Corregidor, which had  
15 become the military command center for all the Phil-  
16ippines, United States Forces in the Philippines  
17 (USFIP), was surrendered by Lt. General Jonathan  
18 M. Wainwright. Nearly 10,000 members of the  
19 Armed Forces as well as more than 3,000 Filipino  
20 soldiers and nurses became prisoners of war of Im-  
21perial Japan.

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

1           (17) 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           (18) 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          (19) 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          (20) The veterans of Bataan and Corregidor  
21          represented the best of the United States and the  
22          Philippines, hailed from various locales across both  
23          countries, and represented true diversity.

24          (21) Over the subsequent decades, the veterans  
25          of Bataan and Corregidor formed support groups,

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

3 (22) 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 (23) Many of the survivors of Bataan and Cor-  
10 regidor have died and those who remain continue to  
11 tell their stories.

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

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

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

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

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



1 of appropriate design to the troops from the United States  
2 and the Philippines who defended Bataan and Corregidor,  
3 in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service during  
4 World War II.

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

10 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

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

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

1 **SEC. 4. 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 3.

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. 5. 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.

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