

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3712

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 16, 2011

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, 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 makes the following findings:

5 (1) Within hours after the attacks on Pearl
6 Harbor, Hawaii, the Imperial Japanese forces
7 launched an attack on the Philippines, cutting off
8 vital lines of communication to United States and

1 Filipino troops assigned to the United States Army
2 Forces in the Far East under the command of Gen-
3 eral Douglas MacArthur.

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

9 (3) Despite being cut off from supply lines and
10 reinforcements, the United States and Philippine
11 Forces quickly executed a plan to delay the Japa-
12 nese invasion and defend the Philippines against the
13 Japanese invasion.

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

19 (5) By maintaining their position and engaging
20 the enemy for as long as they did, the troops at Ba-
21 taan were able to redefine the momentum of the
22 war, delaying the Japanese timetable to take control
23 of the southeast Pacific for needed war materials.
24 Because of the heroic actions of the Bataan defend-
25 ers, United States and Allied forces throughout the

1 Pacific had time to regroup and prepare for the suc-
2 cessful liberation of the Pacific and the Philippines.

3 (6) On April 9, 1942, Major General Edward
4 King, his troops suffering from starvation and a lack
5 of supplies, surrendered the soldiers from the United
6 States and the Philippines into enemy hands.

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

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

15 (9) Conditions at the camp were appalling,
16 leading to increased disease and malnutrition among
17 the prisoners.

18 (10) The prisoners at Camp O’Donnell would
19 die at a rate of nearly four hundred per day because
20 of its poor conditions.

21 (11) On June 6, 1942, the prisoners from the
22 United States were transferred to Camp Caba-
23 natuan, north of Camp O’Donnell.

24 (12) 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 of 1942.

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

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

17 (15) The veterans of Bataan represented the
18 best of America and the Philippines. They hailed
19 from diverse locales across both countries and rep-
20 resented a true diversity of Americans.

21 (16) Over the subsequent decades, these pris-
22 oners formed support groups, were honored in local
23 and State memorials, and told their story to all peo-
24 ple of the United States.

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

7 (18) Many of the survivors of Bataan have now
8 passed away, and those who remain continue to tell
9 their story.

10 (19) 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 that they dem-
16 onstrated during 3 years of capture, imprison-
17 ment, and atrocious conditions, while maintain-
18 ing dignity, honor, patriotism, and loyalty.

19 **SEC. 2. 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 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
24 of appropriate design in honor of the troops from the
25 United States and the Philippines who defended Bataan

1 and were subsequently prisoners of war, collectively, in
2 recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to their
3 country during World War II.

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

9 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
11 gold medal in honor of the defenders and prisoners
12 of war at Bataan under subsection (a), the gold
13 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,
14 where it shall be displayed as appropriate and made
15 available for research.

16 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
17 the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
18 should make the gold medal received under para-
19 graph (1) available for display at other locations,
20 particularly such locations as are associated with the
21 prisoners of war at Bataan.

22 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

23 (a) STRIKING OF DUPLICATES.—Under such regula-
24 tions as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may

1 strike duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under
2 section 2.

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

7 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

8 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are National med-
9 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
10 Code.

11 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
12 **OF SALE.**

13 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
14 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
15 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000
16 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section
17 2.

18 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
19 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
20 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
21 Fund.

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