

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2114

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DAINES, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. ROUNDS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma 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 “Merrill’s Marauders
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) in August 1943 President Franklin D. Roo-
4 sevelt and other Allied leaders proposed the creation
5 of an American ground unit that would engage in a
6 “long-range penetration mission” in Japanese-occu-
7 pied Burma to cut off Japanese communications and
8 supply lines and capture Japanese-held airfield and
9 town of Myitkyina;

10 (2) President Roosevelt issued a call for volun-
11 teers for “a dangerous and hazardous mission”, and
12 the call was answered by approximately 3,000 Amer-
13 ican soldiers;

14 (3) the unit composed of the soldiers was offi-
15 cially designated as the “5307th Composite Unit
16 (Provisional)” Code Name: “Galahad” and later be-
17 coming known as “Merrill’s Marauders” named after
18 its leader, Brigadier General Frank Merrill;

19 (4) in February 1944, the Marauders began
20 their approximately 1,000-mile trek through the
21 dense Burmese jungle with no artillery support and
22 carried their supplies on their backs or the pack sad-
23 dles of mules;

24 (5) over the course of their 5-month trek to
25 Myitkyina, the Marauders fought victoriously

1 against larger Japanese forces through 5 major and
2 30 minor engagements;

3 (6) during their march to Myitkyina the Ma-
4 rauders faced hunger and disease that were exacer-
5 bated by inadequate aerial resupply drops;

6 (7) malaria, typhus, and dysentery inflicted
7 more casualties on the Marauders than the Japa-
8 nese;

9 (8) by August 1944 the Marauders accom-
10 plished their mission, successfully disrupting Japa-
11 nese supply and communication lines, taking the
12 town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, the
13 only all-weather airstrip in Northern Burma;

14 (9) after taking Myitkyina, only 130 Marauders
15 out of the original 2,750 were fit for duty and all
16 remaining Marauders still in action were evacuated
17 to hospitals due to tropical diseases, exhaustion, and
18 malnutrition;

19 (10) for their bravery and accomplishments the
20 Marauders were awarded the “Distinguished Unit
21 Citation”, later redesignated as the “Presidential
22 Unit Citation”, and a Bronze Star for their service;
23 and

24 (11) though Merrill’s Marauders were oper-
25 ational for only a few months, the legacy of their

1 bravery is honored by the United States Army
2 through the modern day 75th Ranger Regiment,
3 which traces its lineage directly to the 5307th Com-
4 posite Unit.

5 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

6 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
7 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
8 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
9 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
10 of appropriate design to the 5307th Composite Unit (Pro-
11 visional), commonly known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, in
12 recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the
13 jungles of Burma during World War II.

14 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
15 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
16 Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall
17 strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
18 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

19 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
21 gold medal referred to in subsection (a) in honor of
22 the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), who be-
23 came known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, the gold
24 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,

1 where it will be displayed as appropriate and made
2 available for research.

3 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
4 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
5 make the gold medal received under this Act avail-
6 able for display elsewhere, particularly at other loca-
7 tions and events associated with Merrill’s Maraud-
8 ers.

9 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

10 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
11 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
12 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
13 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
14 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

15 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

16 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
17 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
18 Code.

○