

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5671

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Merchant Mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 24, 2020

Mr. GARAMENDI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States Merchant Mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital 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 “Merchant Mariners
5 of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of Allied
2 victory in World War II.

3 (2) The United States Merchant Marine (in
4 this section referred to as the “Merchant Marine”)
5 was integral in providing the link between domestic
6 production and the fighting forces overseas, pro-
7 viding combat equipment, fuel, food, commodities,
8 and raw materials to troops stationed abroad.

9 (3) Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King acknowledged
10 the indispensability of the Merchant Marine to the
11 victory in a 1945 letter stating that, without the
12 support of the Merchant Marine, “the Navy could
13 not have accomplished its mission”.

14 (4) President, and former Supreme Commander
15 of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, Dwight D. Ei-
16 senhower acknowledged that “through the prompt
17 delivery of supplies and equipment to our armed
18 forces overseas, and of cargoes representing eco-
19 nomic and military aid to friendly nations, the
20 American Merchant Marine has effectively helped to
21 strengthen the forces of freedom throughout the
22 world”.

23 (5) Military missions and war planning were
24 contingent upon the availability of resources and the
25 Merchant Marine played a vital role in this regard,

1 ensuring the efficient and reliable transoceanic
2 transport of military equipment and both military
3 and civilian personnel.

4 (6) The Merchant Marine provided for the suc-
5 cessful transport of resources and personnel despite
6 consistent and ongoing exposure to enemy combat-
7 ants from both the air and the sea, including from
8 enemy bomber squadrons, submarines, and naval
9 mines.

10 (7) The efforts of the Merchant Marine were
11 not without sacrifices as the Merchant Marine likely
12 bore a higher per-capita casualty rate than any of
13 the military branches during the war.

14 (8) The Merchant Marine proved to be an in-
15 strumental asset on an untold number of occasions,
16 participating in every landing operation by the
17 United States Marine Corps, from Guadalcanal to
18 Okinawa.

19 (9) The Merchant Marine provided the bulk
20 tonnage of material necessary for the invasion of
21 Normandy, an invasion which, according to a 1944
22 New York Times article, “would not have been pos-
23 sible without the Merchant Marine”.

24 (10) In assessing the performance of the Mer-
25 chant Marine, General Eisenhower stated, “every

1 man in this Allied command is quick to express his
2 admiration for the loyalty, courage, and fortitude of
3 the officers and men of the Merchant Marine. We
4 count upon their efficiency and their utter devotion
5 to duty as we do our own; they have never failed
6 us”.

7 (11) During a September 1944 speech, Presi-
8 dent Franklin D. Roosevelt stated that the Merchant
9 Marine had “delivered the goods when and where
10 needed in every theater of operations and across
11 every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult, and
12 dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As
13 time goes on, there will be greater public under-
14 standing of our merchant fleet’s record during this
15 war”.

16 (12) The feats and accomplishments of the
17 Merchant Marine are deserving of broader public
18 recognition.

19 (13) The United States will be forever grateful
20 and indebted to these merchant mariners for their
21 effective, reliable, and courageous transport of goods
22 and resources in enemy territory throughout thea-
23 ters of every variety in World War II.

24 (14) The goods and resources transported by
25 the Merchant Marine saved thousands of lives and

1 enabled the Allied Powers to claim victory in World
2 War II.

3 (15) The Congressional Gold Medal would be
4 an appropriate way to shed further light on the serv-
5 ice of the merchant mariners in World War II and
6 the instrumental role they played in winning that
7 war.

8 (16) Many students of the Merchant Marine
9 Academy lost their lives as they sailed through
10 enemy-controlled waters or unloaded cargo in over-
11 seas combat areas, and, as a result, the United
12 States Merchant Marine Academy is the only insti-
13 tution among the 5 Federal academies to be author-
14 ized to carry a battle standard as part of its color
15 guard.

16 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

17 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
18 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
19 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
20 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
21 appropriate design to the United States merchant mari-
22 ners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated
23 and vital service during World War II.

24 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
25 award described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the

1 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall
2 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
3 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

4 (c) AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
6 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
7 shall be given to the American Merchant Marine
8 Museum, where it will be available for display as ap-
9 propriate and available for research.

10 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
11 Congress that the American Merchant Marine Mu-
12 seum should make the gold medal given to the Mu-
13 seum under paragraph (1) available for display else-
14 where, particularly at appropriate locations associ-
15 ated with the United States Merchant Marine and
16 that preference should be given to locations affiliated
17 with the United States Merchant Marine.

18 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
3 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
4 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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