

116TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H. R. 550

AN ACT

- 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,

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- This Act may be cited as the "Merchant Mariners
- 3 of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019".
- 4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
- 5 Congress finds the following:
- 6 (1) 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the 7 Allied victory in World War II and the restoration
- 8 of peacetime across the European and Pacific thea-
- 9 ters.
- 10 (2) The United States Merchant Marine (in 11 this section referred to as the "Merchant Marine")
- was integral in providing the link between domestic
- production and the fighting forces overseas, pro-
- viding combat equipment, fuel, food, commodities,
- and raw materials to troops stationed abroad.
- 16 (3) Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King acknowledged
- the indispensability of the Merchant Marine to the
- victory in a 1945 letter stating that, without the
- 19 support of the Merchant Marine, "the Navy could
- 20 not have accomplished its mission".
- 21 (4) President, and former Supreme Commander
- of the Allied Forces, Dwight D. Eisenhower ac-
- knowledged that "through the prompt delivery of
- supplies and equipment to our armed forces over-
- seas, and of cargoes representing economic and mili-
- tary aid to friendly nations, the American Merchant

- 1 Marine has effectively helped to strengthen the 2 forces of freedom throughout the world".
 - (5) Military missions and war planning were contingent upon the availability of resources and the Merchant Marine played a vital role in this regard, ensuring the efficient and reliable transoceanic transport of military equipment and both military and civilian personnel.
 - (6) The Merchant Marine provided for the successful transport of resources and personnel despite consistent and ongoing exposure to enemy combatants from both the air and the sea, including from enemy bomber squadrons, submarines, and mines.
 - (7) The efforts of the Merchant Marine were not without sacrifices as the Merchant Marine bore a higher per-capita casualty rate than any other branch of the military during the war.
 - (8) The Merchant Marine proved to be an instrumental asset on an untold number of occasions, participating in every landing operation by the United States Marine Corps, from Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima.
 - (9) The Merchant Marine provided the bulk tonnage of material necessary for the invasion of Normandy, an invasion which, according to a 1944

- New York Times article, "would not have been possible without the Merchant Marine".
- (10) In assessing the performance of the Merchant Marine, General Eisenhower stated, "every
 man in this Allied command is quick to express his
 admiration for the loyalty, courage, and fortitude of
 the officers and men of the Merchant Marine. We
 count upon their efficiency and their utter devotion
 to duty as we do our own; they have never failed
 us".
 - (11) During a September 1944 speech, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated that the Merchant Marine had "delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult, and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As time goes on, there will be greater public understanding of our merchant fleet's record during this war.".
 - (12) The feats and accomplishments of the Merchant Marine are deserving of broader public recognition.
 - (13) The United States will be forever grateful and indebted to these merchant mariners for their effective, reliable, and courageous transport of goods

- and resources in enemy territory throughout thea-
- 2 ters of every variety in World War II.
- 3 (14) The goods and resources transported by
- 4 the Merchant Marine saved thousands of lives and
- 5 enabled the Allied Powers to claim victory in World
- 6 War II.
- 7 (15) The Congressional Gold Medal would be
- 8 an appropriate way to shed further light on the serv-
- 9 ice of the merchant mariners in World War II and
- the instrumental role they played in winning that
- 11 war.

12 SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

- 13 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
- 14 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
- 15 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
- 16 award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of
- 17 appropriate design to the United States Merchant Mari-
- 18 ners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated
- 19 and vital service during World War II.
- 20 (b) Design and Striking.—For the purposes of the
- 21 award described in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
- 22 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall
- 23 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
- 24 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.
- 25 (c) American Merchant Marine Museum.—

- 1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the 2 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal 3 shall be given to the American Merchant Marine 4 Museum, where it will be available for display as ap-5 propriate and available for research.
- 6 (2) Sense of congress.—It is the sense of 7 Congress that the American Merchant Marine Mu-8 seum should make the gold medal given to the Mu-9 seum under paragraph (1) available for display else-10 where, particularly at appropriate locations associ-11 ated with the United States Merchant Marine and 12 that preference should be given to locations affiliated 13 with the United States Merchant Marine.

14 SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

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

20 SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

- 21 (a) National Medals.—Medals struck under this
- 22 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
- 23 31, United States Code.

- 1 (b) Numismatic Items.—For purposes of section
- 2 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
- 3 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.
- 4 SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.
- 5 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of
- 6 complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,
- 7 shall be determined by reference to the latest statement
- 8 titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this
- 9 Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record
- 10 by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-
- 11 vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the
- 12 vote on passage.

Passed the House of Representatives September 19, 2019.

Attest:

Clerk.

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