

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 906

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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 30, 2019

Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. AGUILAR) 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 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 makes the following findings:

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. This unit’s mission would be to cut off
8 Japanese communications and supply lines, and cap-
9 ture Japanese-held airfield and town of Myitkyina.

10 (2) President Roosevelt issued a call for volun-
11 teers for “a dangerous and hazardous mission”, the
12 call was answered by approximately 3,000 American
13 soldiers. The unit was officially designated as the
14 “5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)” Code Name:
15 “Galahad”. Later it became known as “Merrill’s
16 Marauders” named after its leader, Brigadier Gen-
17 eral Frank Merrill.

18 (3) In February 1944 the Marauders began
19 their approximately 1,000-mile trek through the
20 dense Burmese jungle. The Marauders had no artil-
21 lery support and carried their supplies on their
22 backs or the pack saddles of mules.

23 (4) Over the course of their 5-month trek to
24 Myitkyina, the Marauders fought victoriously
25 against larger Japanese forces through 5 major and
26 30 minor engagements.

1 (5) During their march to Myitkyina the Ma-
2 raiders faced hunger and disease that were exacer-
3 bated by inadequate aerial resupply drops. Malaria,
4 typhus, and dysentery inflicted more casualties on
5 the Marauders than the Japanese.

6 (6) By August 1944 the Marauders accom-
7 plished their mission, successfully disrupting Japa-
8 nese supply and communication lines, taking the
9 town of Myitkyina and the Myitkyina airstrip, the
10 only all-weather airstrip in Northern Burma.

11 (7) After taking Myitkyina only 130 Marauders
12 out of the original 2,750 were fit for duty. All re-
13 maining Marauders still in action were evacuated to
14 hospitals due to tropical diseases, exhaustion, and
15 malnutrition.

16 (8) For their bravery and accomplishments the
17 Marauders were awarded the “Distinguished Unit
18 Citation”, later redesignated as the “Presidential
19 Unit Citation”. Each Marauder also earned a
20 Bronze Star for his service.

21 (9) Though Merrill’s Marauders were oper-
22 ational for only a few months, the legacy of their
23 bravery is honored by the United States Army
24 through the modern day 75th Ranger Regiment,

1 which traces its lineage directly to the 5307th Com-
2 posite Unit.

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

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

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

18 (c) **SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.**—

19 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Following the award of the
20 gold medal referred to in subsection (a) in honor of
21 the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), who be-
22 came known as “Merrill’s Marauders”, the gold
23 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,
24 where it will be displayed as appropriate and made
25 available for research.

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

7 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

8 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
9 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
10 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 4, at a price
11 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
12 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

13 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

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

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