

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2350

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service as a “Ghost Army” that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 2019

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself and Mr. KING of New York) 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 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company, in recognition of their unique and highly distinguished service as a “Ghost Army” that conducted deception operations in Europe 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 “Ghost Army Congres-
5 sional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The 23d Headquarters, Special Troops,
4 comprised of the 23d Headquarters and Head-
5 quarters Company, Special Troops, the 603d Engi-
6 neer Camouflage Battalion, the 406th Combat Engi-
7 neer Company, the 3132d Signal Service Company
8 and the Signal Company, Special, 23d Head-
9 quarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Serv-
10 ice Company were top-secret units of the United
11 States Army that served in Europe during World
12 War II.

13 (2) The 23d Headquarters, Special Troops, was
14 actively engaged in battlefield operations from June
15 of 1944 through March of 1945. The 3133d Signal
16 Service Company was engaged in operations in Italy
17 in 1945.

18 (3) The deceptive activities of these units were
19 integral to several Allied victories across Europe and
20 reduced American casualties.

21 (4) In evaluating the performance of these units
22 after the War, a U.S. Army analysis found that
23 “Rarely, if ever, has there been a group of such a
24 few men which had so great an influence on the out-
25 come of a major military campaign.”.

1 (5) Many Ghost Army soldiers were citizen-sol-
2 diers recruited from art schools, advertising agen-
3 cies, communications companies, and other creative
4 and technical professions.

5 (6) The first four members of the 23d Head-
6 quarters, Special Troops, landed on D-Day and two
7 became casualties while creating false beach landing
8 sites.

9 (7) The 23d Headquarters, Special Troops, se-
10 cret deception operations commenced in France on
11 June 14, 1944, when Task Force Mason, a 17-man
12 detachment of the 23d led by First Lieutenant Ber-
13 nard Mason, landed at Omaha Beach. Task Force
14 Mason conducted Operation ELEPHANT between 1
15 and 4 July, 1944, to draw enemy fire and protect
16 the 980th Field Artillery Battalion (VIII Corps) as
17 part of the Normandy Campaign.

18 (8) Operation ELEPHANT was a prelude to
19 21 full-scale tactical deceptions completed by the
20 23d Headquarters, Special Troops.

21 (9) Often operating on or near the front lines,
22 the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops, used inflat-
23 able tanks, artillery, airplanes and other vehicles, ad-
24 vanced engineered soundtracks, and skillfully crafted
25 radio trickery to create the illusion of sizable Amer-

1 ican forces where there were none and to draw the
2 enemy away from Allied troops.

3 (10) The 3132d and the 3133d Signal Service
4 Companies, activated in Pine Camp (now Fort
5 Drum), New York, at the Army Experimental Sta-
6 tion in March 1944, were the only two active duty
7 “sonic deception” ground combat units in World
8 War II.

9 (11) Soldiers of the 23d Headquarters, Special
10 Troops, impersonated other, larger Army units by
11 sewing counterfeit patches onto their uniforms,
12 painting false markings on their vehicles, and cre-
13 ating phony headquarters staffed by fake generals,
14 all in an effort to feed false information to Axis
15 spies.

16 (12) During the Battle of the Bulge, the 23d
17 Headquarters, Special Troops, created counterfeit
18 radio traffic to mask the efforts of General George
19 Patton’s Third Army as it mobilized to break
20 through to the 101st Airborne and elements of 10th
21 Armored Division in the besieged Belgian town of
22 Bastogne.

23 (13) In its final mission, Operation VIERSEN,
24 in March 1945, the 23d Headquarters, Special
25 Troops, conducted a tactical deception that drew

1 German units down the Rhine River and away from
2 the Ninth Army, allowing the Ninth Army to cross
3 the Rhine into Germany. On this mission, the 1,100
4 men of the Ghost Army, with the assistance of other
5 units, impersonated forty thousand men, or two
6 complete divisions of American forces, by using fab-
7 ricated radio networks, soundtracks of construction
8 work and artillery fire, and more than 600 inflatable
9 vehicles. According to a military intelligence officer
10 of the 79th Infantry, “There is no doubt that Oper-
11 ation VIERSEN materially assisted in deceiving the
12 enemy with regard to the real dispositions and inten-
13 tions of this Army.”.

14 (14) Three soldiers of the 23d Headquarters,
15 Special Troops, gave their lives and dozens were in-
16 jured in carrying out their mission.

17 (15) In April 1945, the 3133d Signal Service
18 Company conducted Operation CRAFTSMAN in
19 support of Operation SECOND WIND, the success-
20 ful allied effort to break through the German defen-
21 sive position to the north of Florence, Italy, known
22 as the Gothic Line. Along with an attached platoon
23 of British engineers, who were inflatable decoy spe-
24 cialists, the 3133d Signal Service Company used

1 sonic deception to misrepresent troop locations along
2 this defensive line.

3 (16) The activities of the 23d Headquarters,
4 Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Com-
5 pany remained highly classified for more than forty
6 years after the war and were never formally recog-
7 nized. The extraordinary accomplishments of this
8 unit are deserving of belated official recognition.

9 (17) The United States is eternally grateful to
10 the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops
11 and the 3133d Signal Service Company for their
12 proficient use of innovative tactics throughout World
13 War II, which saved lives and made significant con-
14 tributions to the defeat of the Axis powers.

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

16 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
17 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
18 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
19 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of ap-
20 propriate design to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops,
21 known as the “Ghost Army”, collectively, in recognition
22 of its unique and incredible service during World War II.

23 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
24 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
25 Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall

1 strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and
2 inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

3 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
5 gold medal in honor of the Ghost Army, the gold
6 medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution,
7 where it will be available for display as appropriate
8 and available for research.

9 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
10 the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
11 should make the gold medal awarded pursuant to
12 this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly
13 at appropriate locations associated with the Ghost
14 Army, and that preference should be given to loca-
15 tions affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

16 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

17 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
18 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
19 sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including labor,
20 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

21 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDAL.**

22 The gold medal struck pursuant to this Act is a na-
23 tional medal for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United
24 States Code.

○