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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To grant a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and Merchant Marine, as well as citizen and non-citizen civilians who served honorably with the U.S. military, who were surrendered, captured, or abandoned to become prisoners of war (POWs) of Imperial Japan throughout the Japanese Empire in the Pacific Theater of World War II from December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BOST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

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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.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “World War II Pacific
3 War Heroes Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The United States POWs held by Imperial
7 Japan in the Pacific Theater during World War II,
8 with most held in captivity for more than three
9 years, are Pacific War heroes who represent the
10 American spirit of courage, tenacity, and faith.

11 (2) Imperial Japan did not abide by the Geneva
12 and Hague Conventions for the humane treatment
13 of POWs.

14 (3) The United States POWs held by Imperial
15 Japan during World War II numbered more than
16 27,000 with more than 11,000 or 40 percent per-
17 ishing before the end of War.

18 (4) On December 7, 1941, Imperial Japan at-
19 tacked not only Pearl Harbor in the United States
20 Territory of Hawaii, but also the other United
21 States possessions and military installations in the
22 Pacific of the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island,
23 Howland Island, and Midway as preludes to full-
24 scale invasions and military occupation throughout
25 the Asia-Pacific region.

1 (5) By the end of day, December 8, 1941, more
2 than 300 United States Marines, sailors, diplomats,
3 and Mariners in China became the first United
4 States prisoners of war of Imperial Japan with most
5 held for the full duration of the war;

6 (6) Ninety-eight percent of the United States
7 POWs of Imperial Japan fought in the heroic battles
8 of Guam, Wake Island, Sunda Strait, Halsey-Doo-
9 little Raid, Bataan, and Corregidor, all within the
10 first six months of World War II.

11 (7) Most of the United States airmen, infantry-
12 men, sailors, and Marines surrendered in defense of
13 the Netherlands East Indies in March 1942 were
14 sent to be slave laborers on the Thai-Burma Death
15 Railway or at construction projects in Changi,
16 Singapore.

17 (8) On April 9, 1942, approximately 12,000
18 United States military personnel and 66,000 Fili-
19 pino soldiers became POWs with the surrender of
20 the American-Filipino forces on the Bataan Penin-
21 sula in the Philippines.

22 (9) April 9, 1942, marked the beginning of the
23 infamous Bataan Death March where the Imperial
24 Japanese Army forced all American and Filipino
25 forces from Marviveles or Bagac up the Bataan Pe-

1 ninsula on a three-part, three-province, nearly 100-
2 mile trek north to the makeshift POW facility Camp
3 O'Donnell at Capas, Tarlac. An estimated 650
4 American and 5,000–10,000 Filipino soldiers died
5 on the Bataan Death March, while hundreds of men
6 remain unaccounted for.

7 (10) On May 6, 1942, Corregidor Island, then
8 operating as the military command center for all the
9 Philippines, United States Forces in the Philippines
10 (USFIP), was surrendered. Nearly 10,000 American
11 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines as well as
12 more than 3,000 Filipino soldiers and nurses became
13 POWs of Imperial Japan.

14 (11) The May 6, 1942, fall of Corregidor Island
15 and subsequent surrender of all the Philippines Is-
16 lands marked the end of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet; the
17 U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), and
18 the U.S. Far East Air Force (USFEAF).

19 (12) Included in the surrenders the Philippines
20 were female nurses of United States Army, Navy,
21 Philippine Army, and civilian volunteers who became
22 the first large group of American women in combat
23 and, counted with the Army and Navy nurses sur-
24 rendered on Guam in December 1941, comprised the

1 first group of American military women taken cap-
2 tive and imprisoned by an enemy.

3 (13) More than 14,000 Americans POWs were
4 transported aboard “hellships”—in the holds of un-
5 marked merchant ships—from Pacific battle sites to
6 be used as slave laborers; one-third of all POW
7 deaths resulted from attacks on the “hellships” by
8 “friendly fire” from American submarines or air-
9 craft.

10 (14) More than 600 members of the United
11 States Merchant Marine including one female Mar-
12 iner, became prisoners of Imperial Japan, many of
13 whom were turned over to Japanese control after
14 being first captured by Nazi Germany’s naval forces.
15 Fifteen percent were killed by either Imperial Japan
16 Navy officers during capture or died in Japanese
17 POW camps.

18 (15) Throughout World War II, the Imperial
19 Japanese military maintained approximately 775
20 POW camps throughout the Empire: 185 POW
21 camps on the Home Islands of Japan and 590 in
22 other areas of the Pacific Theater, which includes an
23 unknown number of temporary camps.

24 (16) A priority of International Military Tri-
25 bunal for the Far East (IMTFE), also known as the

1 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and the ad hoc Amer-
2 ican and Allied military tribunals throughout the
3 Asia Pacific from 1945 to 1951 was to obtain justice
4 for the maltreatment of POWs. Approximately sev-
5 enty-five percent of the more than 5,600 defendants
6 were charged with offenses against POWs. This re-
7 flects the July 26, 1945, Potsdam Declaration's
8 warning that, "stern justice shall be meted out to all
9 war criminals, including those who have visited cru-
10 elties upon our prisoners".

11 (17) President Ronald Reagan first proclaimed
12 National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day
13 in 1988, which was established to coincide with April
14 9, the anniversary of the start of the Bataan Death
15 March.

16 (18) In 2009, the Government of Japan issued
17 an official, Cabinet of Japan approved apology say-
18 ing "We extend a heartfelt apology for our country
19 having caused tremendous damage and suffering to
20 many people, including prisoners of wars, those who
21 have undergone tragic experiences in the Bataan Pe-
22 ninsula, Corregidor Island, in the Philippines, and
23 other places".

24 (19) In 2010, the Government of Japan initi-
25 ated an annual visitation program for former United

1 States POWs of Japan and family members to visit
2 Japan for remembrance, reconciliation, and healing.

3 (20) It is time to recognize the ordinary men
4 and women who found uncommon courage in ex-
5 traordinary circumstances to fight the impossible
6 and endure the unimaginable for freedom from tyr-
7 anny and oppression.

8 (21) The Congressional Gold Medal is an ap-
9 propriate way to honor the service of the United
10 States POWs held by Imperial Japan in World War
11 II and to highlight the unique imprisonment of these
12 Pacific War heroes and their poignant history of
13 sacrifice, perseverance, patriotism, and faith.

14 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act—

16 (a) the term “prisoners of war of Imperial Japan”
17 includes any individual who—

18 (1) was taken prisoner—

19 (A) by Japan while serving honorably in
20 the service of the United States at any time
21 during the period beginning on December 8,
22 1941, and ending on September 2, 1945;

23 (B) was taken prisoner by the Japanese
24 while serving in an active-duty status under the
25 command of the United States Army Forces in

1 the Far East (USAFFE), United States Forces
2 in the Philippines (USFIP), American-British-
3 Dutch-Australian (ABDA) Command, South-
4 west Pacific Area (SWPA), Pacific Ocean Area
5 (POA), China-Burma-India (CBI), Southeast
6 Asia Command (SEAC), 1st Defense Battalion,
7 Wake Island (Marines), Guam Battalion (Ma-
8 rines), 4th Marines, Marine Raiders, U.S. Asi-
9 atic Fleet, Twentieth Air Force, Far East Air
10 Force, United States Army Air Forces, and the
11 War Shipping Administration; or

12 (C) was taken prisoner on Attu Island in
13 the Aleutians part of Alaska on June 7, 1942;

14 (2) was not granted “parole” (release) by Impe-
15 rial Japanese forces during World War II; and

16 (3) holds “veterans’ status” or a “certificate of
17 honorable service” for their service in the Pacific
18 Theater of World War II when taken prisoner by
19 Japan;

20 (b) the term “Pacific Theater” means China, the
21 Central Pacific, Southeast Asia, and the Southwest Pacific
22 of World War II; and

23 (c) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the
24 Treasury.

1 **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
3 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
4 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
5 for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold
6 medal of appropriate design to the United States to the
7 men and women of the United States military and mer-
8 chant marine as well as citizen and non-citizen civilians
9 who fought with the U.S. military and were surrendered,
10 captured, or abandoned to become prisoners of war of Im-
11 perial Japan during World War II, in recognition of their
12 dedicated and vital service during World War II.

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

18 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
20 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
21 shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution’s Na-
22 tional Museum of American History, where it shall
23 be displayed as appropriate and made available for
24 research.

25 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
26 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution’s Na-

1 tional Museum of American History should make
2 the gold medal received under paragraph (1) avail-
3 able for display at other locations, particularly at lo-
4 cations that are associated with the prisoners of war
5 of Imperial Japan during World War II, such as
6 The Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, The
7 MacArthur Memorial, National Prisoner of War Mu-
8 seum; National Museum of the Pacific War, and
9 New Mexico Military Museum.

10 **SEC. 5. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

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

16 **SEC. 6. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

17 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck under this
18 Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title
19 31, United States Code.

20 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
21 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
22 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
23 items.