

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3929

To award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 4, 2015

Mr. LATTA (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PITTINGER, Mr. STEWART, Mr. JONES, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. TURNER, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. GIBBS, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FORBES, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. MESSER, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mr. ZINKE) 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 the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions 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.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Office of Strategic
3 Services Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was
7 America’s first effort to implement a system of stra-
8 tegic intelligence during World War II and provided
9 the basis for the modern-day American intelligence
10 and special operations communities. The U.S. Spe-
11 cial Operations Command and the National Clandes-
12 tine Service chose the OSS spearhead as their insig-
13 nias.

14 (2) OSS founder General William J. Donovan is
15 the only person in American history to receive our
16 Nation’s four highest decorations, including the
17 Medal of Honor. Upon learning of his death in
18 1959, President Eisenhower called General Donovan
19 the “last hero”. In addition to founding and leading
20 the OSS, General Donovan was also selected by
21 President Roosevelt, who called him his “secret
22 legs”, as an emissary to Great Britain and conti-
23 nental Europe before the United States entered
24 World War II.

25 (3) All the military branches during World War
26 II contributed personnel to the OSS. The present-

1 day Special Operations Forces trace their lineage to
2 the OSS. Its Maritime Unit was a precursor to the
3 U.S. Navy SEALs. The OSS Operational Groups
4 and Jedburghs were forerunners to U.S. Army Spe-
5 cial Forces. The 801st/492nd Bombardment Group
6 (“Carpetbaggers”) were progenitors to the Air Force
7 Special Operations Command. The Marines who
8 served in the OSS, including the actor Sterling Hay-
9 den (a Silver Star recipient), Col. William Eddy (a
10 Distinguished Service Cross recipient who was de-
11 scribed as the “nearest thing the United States has
12 had to a Lawrence of Arabia”), and Col. Peter Ortiz
13 (a two-time Navy Cross recipient), were predecessors
14 to the Marine Special Operations Command. U.S.
15 Coast Guard personnel were recruited for the Mari-
16 time Unit and its Operational Swimmer Group.

17 (4) The OSS organized, trained, supplied, and
18 fought with resistance organizations throughout Eu-
19 rope and Asia that played an important role in
20 America’s victory during World War II. General Ei-
21 senhower credited the OSS’s covert contribution in
22 France to the equivalent to having an extra military
23 division. General Eisenhower told General Donovan
24 that if it did nothing else, the photographic recon-

1 naissance conducted by the OSS prior to the D-Day
2 Invasion justified its creation.

3 (5) Four future directors of central intelligence
4 served as OSS officers: William Casey, William
5 Colby, Allen Dulles, and Richard Helms.

6 (6) Women comprised more than one-third of
7 OSS personnel and played a critical role in the orga-
8 nization. They included Virginia Hall, the only civil-
9 ian female to receive a Distinguished Service Cross
10 in World War II, and Julia Child.

11 (7) OSS recruited Fritz Kolbe, a German dip-
12 lomat who became America's most important spy
13 against the Nazis in World War II.

14 (8) America's leading scientists and scholars
15 served in the OSS Research and Analysis Branch,
16 including Ralph Bunche, the first African-American
17 to receive the Nobel Peace Prize; Pulitzer Prize-win-
18 ning historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.; Supreme
19 Court Justice Arthur Goldberg; Sherman Kent;
20 John King Fairbank; and Walt Rostow. Its ranks in-
21 cluded seven future presidents of the American His-
22 torical Association, five of the American Economic
23 Association, and two Nobel laureates.

1 (9) The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of
2 Intelligence and Research traces its creation to the
3 OSS Research and Analysis Branch.

4 (10) James Donovan, who was portrayed by
5 Tom Hanks in the Steven Spielberg movie “Bridge
6 of Spies” and negotiated the release of U–2 pilot
7 Francis Gary Powers, served as General Counsel of
8 the OSS.

9 (11) The OSS invented and employed new tech-
10 nology through its Research and Development
11 Branch, inventing new weapons and revolutionary
12 communications equipment. Dr. Christian
13 Lambertsen invented the first underwater re-
14 breathing apparatus that was first utilized by the
15 OSS and is known today as SCUBA.

16 (12) OSS Detachment 101 operated in Burma
17 and pioneered the art of unconventional warfare. It
18 was the first United States unit to deploy a large
19 guerrilla army deep in enemy territory. It has been
20 credited with the highest kill/loss ratio for any infan-
21 try-type unit in American military history and was
22 awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

23 (13) Its X–2 branch pioneered counterintel-
24 ligence with the British and established the modern
25 counterintelligence community. The network of con-

1 tacts built by the OSS with foreign intelligence serv-
2 ices led to enduring Cold War alliances.

3 (14) Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of
4 French North Africa in November 1942, was aided
5 by the networks established and information ac-
6 quired by the OSS to guide Allied landings.

7 (15) OSS Operation Halyard rescued more
8 than 500 downed airmen trapped behind enemy lines
9 in Yugoslavia, one of the most daring and successful
10 rescue operations of World War II.

11 (16) OSS “Mercy Missions” at the end of
12 World War II saved the lives of thousands of Allied
13 prisoners of war whom it was feared would be mur-
14 dered by the Japanese.

15 (17) The handful of surviving men and women
16 of the OSS whom General Donovan said performed
17 “some of the bravest acts of the war” are members
18 of the “Greatest Generation”. They have never been
19 collectively recognized for their heroic and pioneering
20 service in World War II.

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

22 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
23 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
24 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
25 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold

1 medal of appropriate design in commemoration to the
2 members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), in rec-
3 ognition of their superior service and major contributions
4 during World War II.

5 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
6 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
7 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
8 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
9 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
10 retary.

11 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
13 gold medal in commemoration to the members of the
14 Office of Strategic Services under subsection (a), the
15 gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Insti-
16 tution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and
17 made available for research.

18 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
19 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
20 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
21 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
22 appropriate locations associated with the Office of
23 Strategic Services.

1 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

2 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
3 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
4 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
5 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
6 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
7 and the cost of the gold medal.

8 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

9 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
10 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
11 51 of title 31, United States Code.

12 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
13 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
14 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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