

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 719

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of
the Civil Air Patrol.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2011

Mr. FILNER 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 World War
II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) The volunteer members of the Civil Air Pa-
6 trol (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “CAP”)
7 during World War II, civilian men and women rang-
8 ing in age from 19 to 81, provided extraordinary

1 public and combat services during a critical time of
2 need for the Nation.

3 (2) During the war, CAP members used their
4 own aircraft to perform a myriad of essential tasks
5 for the military and the Nation within the United
6 States, including attacks on enemy submarines off
7 the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United
8 States.

9 (3) This extraordinary service set the stage for
10 the post-war CAP to become a valuable nonprofit,
11 public service organization chartered by Congress
12 and the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force
13 that provides essential emergency, operational, and
14 public services to communities, States, the Federal
15 Government, and the military.

16 (4) The CAP was established, initially as a part
17 of the Office of Civil Defense, by air-minded citizens
18 one week before the surprise attack on Pearl Har-
19 bor, Hawaii, on December 1, 1941, “out of the de-
20 sire of civil airmen of the country to be mobilized
21 with their equipment in the common defense” of the
22 Nation.

23 (5) Within days of the start of the war, the
24 German Navy started a massive submarine offensive,
25 known as Operation Drumbeat, off the east coast of

1 the United States against oil tankers and other crit-
2 ical shipping that threatened the overall war effort.

3 (6) Neither the Navy nor the Army had enough
4 aircraft, ships, or other resources to adequately pa-
5 trol and protect the shipping along the Atlantic and
6 Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United States, and
7 many ships were torpedoed within sight of civilians
8 on shore, including 52 tankers sunk between Janu-
9 ary and March 1942.

10 (7) At that time General George Marshall re-
11 marked that “[t]he losses by submarines off our At-
12 lantic seaboard and in the Caribbean now threaten
13 our entire war effort”.

14 (8) From the beginning CAP leaders urged the
15 military to use its services to patrol coastal waters
16 but met with great resistance because of the non-
17 military training and status of CAP pilots.

18 (9) Finally, in response to the ever-increasing
19 submarine attacks, the Tanker Committee of the Pe-
20 troleum Industry War Council urged the Navy De-
21 partment and the War Department to consider the
22 use of the CAP to help patrol the sea lanes off the
23 coasts of the United States.

1 (10) While the Navy initially rejected this sug-
2 gestion, the Army decided it had merit, and the Civil
3 Air Patrol Coastal Patrol began in March 1942.

4 (11) Oil companies and other organizations pro-
5 vided funds to help pay for some CAP operations,
6 including vitally needed shore radios that were used
7 to monitor patrol missions.

8 (12) By late March 1942, the Navy also began
9 to use the services of the CAP.

10 (13) Starting with three bases located in Dela-
11 ware, Florida, and New Jersey, CAP aircrews imme-
12 diately started to spot enemy submarines as well as
13 lifeboats, bodies, and wreckage.

14 (14) Within 15 minutes of the first Coast Pa-
15 trol flight, the pilot had sighted a torpedoed tanker
16 and was coordinating rescue operations.

17 (15) Eventually 21 bases, ranging from Bar
18 Harbor, Maine, to Brownsville, Texas, were set up
19 for the CAP to patrol the Atlantic and Gulf of Mex-
20 ico coasts of the United States, with 40,000 volun-
21 teers participating.

22 (16) The CAP used a wide range of civilian-
23 owned aircraft, mainly light-weight, single engine
24 aircraft—manufactured by Cessna, Beech, Waco,
25 Fairchild, Stinson, Piper, Taylorcraft, and Sikorsky,

1 among others—as well as some twin engine aircraft
2 such as the Grumman Widgeon.

3 (17) These aircraft were painted in their civil-
4 ian prewar colors (red, yellow, blue, etc.) and carried
5 special markings (a blue circle with a white triangle)
6 to identify them as CAP aircraft.

7 (18) Patrols were conducted up to 100 miles off
8 shore, generally with 2 aircraft flying together, in
9 aircraft often equipped with only a compass for navi-
10 gation and a single radio for communication.

11 (19) Due to the critical nature of the situation,
12 CAP operations were conducted in bad weather as
13 well as good, often when the military was unable to
14 fly, and in all seasons (including the winter) when
15 ditching an aircraft in cold water would likely mean
16 certain death to the aircrew.

17 (20) Personal emergency equipment was often
18 lacking, particularly during early patrols where inner
19 tubes and kapok duck hunter vests were carried as
20 flotation devices since ocean worthy wet suits, life
21 vests, and life rafts were unavailable.

22 (21) The initial purpose of the CAP was to spot
23 submarines, report their position to the military, and
24 force them to dive below the surface, which limited

1 their operating speed and maneuverability and re-
2 duced their ability to detect and attack shipping.

3 (22) It soon became apparent that there were
4 opportunities for CAP pilots to attack submarines,
5 such as when a Florida CAP aircrew came across a
6 surfaced submarine that quickly stranded itself on a
7 sand bar. However, the aircrew could not get any as-
8 sistance from armed military aircraft before the sub-
9 marine freed itself.

10 (23) Finally, after a number of these instances,
11 a decision was made by the military to arm CAP air-
12 craft with 50- and 100-pound bombs, and to arm
13 some larger twin engine aircraft with 325-pound
14 depth charges.

15 (24) The arming of CAP aircraft dramatically
16 changed the mission for these civilian aircrews and
17 resulted in more than 57 attacks on enemy sub-
18 marines.

19 (25) While CAP volunteers received \$8 a day
20 flight reimbursement, their patrols were accom-
21 plished at a great economic cost to many of the
22 members of the CAP who—

23 (A) used their own aircraft and other
24 equipment in defense of the Nation;

1 (B) paid for much of their own aircraft
2 maintenance and hangar use; and

3 (C) often lived in primitive conditions
4 along the coast, including old barns and chicken
5 coops converted for sleeping.

6 (26) More importantly, the CAP Coastal Patrol
7 service came at the high cost of 26 fatalities, 7 seri-
8 ous injuries, and 90 aircraft lost.

9 (27) At the conclusion of the 18-month Coastal
10 Patrol, the heroic CAP aircrews would be credited
11 with the following:

12 (A) 2 submarines destroyed or damaged;

13 (B) 57 submarines attacked;

14 (C) 82 bombs dropped against submarines;

15 (D) 173 radio reports of submarine posi-
16 tions (with a number of credited assists for kills
17 made by military units);

18 (E) 17 floating mines reported;

19 (F) 36 dead bodies reported;

20 (G) 91 vessels in distress reported;

21 (H) 363 survivors in distress reported;

22 (I) 836 irregularities noted;

23 (J) 1,036 special investigations at sea or
24 along the coast;

25 (K) 5,684 convoy missions for the Navy;

1 (L) 86,685 missions flown;

2 (M) 244,600 total flight hours logged; and

3 (N) more than 24,000,000 miles flown.

4 (28) At least one high-level German Navy Offi-
5 cer credited the CAP with being the primary reason
6 that submarine attacks were withdrawn from the At-
7 lantic coast of the United States in 1943 when he
8 said that “[i]t was because of those damned little
9 red and yellow planes!”.

10 (29) The CAP was dismissed from coastal mis-
11 sions with little thanks in August 1943 when the
12 Navy took over the mission completely and ordered
13 the CAP to stand down.

14 (30) While the Coastal Patrol was ongoing, the
15 CAP was also establishing itself as a vital wartime
16 service to the military, States, and communities na-
17 tionwide by performing a wide range of missions in-
18 cluding—

19 (A) border patrol;

20 (B) forest fire patrol;

21 (C) courier flights for mail, repair and re-
22 placement parts, and urgent deliveries;

23 (D) emergency transportation of personnel;

- 1 (E) target towing (with live ammunition
2 being fired at the targets and seven lives being
3 lost) and searchlight tracking training missions;
- 4 (F) missing aircraft and personnel
5 searches;
- 6 (G) rescue of aircraft crash survivors;
- 7 (H) radar training flights;
- 8 (I) aerial inspections of camouflaged mili-
9 tary and civilian facilities;
- 10 (J) aerial inspections of city and town
11 blackout conditions;
- 12 (K) mock bombing attacks on cities and
13 facilities to test air defenses;
- 14 (L) aerial searches for scrap metal mate-
15 rials;
- 16 (M) support of war bond drives;
- 17 (N) airport guard duties;
- 18 (O) support for State and local emer-
19 gencies such as natural disasters;
- 20 (P) recruiting for the Army Air Force; and
- 21 (Q) a cadet youth program which provided
22 aviation and military training.
- 23 (31) The CAP flew more than 500,000 hours
24 on these additional missions, including—

1 (A) 20,500 missions involving target tow-
2 ing (with live ammunition) and gun/searchlight
3 tracking which resulted in 7 deaths, 5 serious
4 injuries, and the loss of 25 aircraft;

5 (B) a courier service involving 3 major Air
6 Force Commands over a 2-year period carrying
7 more than 3,500,000 pounds of vital cargo and
8 543 passengers;

9 (C) southern border operations flying more
10 than 30,000 hours, with 7,000 reports of un-
11 usual sightings including a vehicle (that was ap-
12 prehended) with 2 enemy agents attempting to
13 enter the country;

14 (D) a week in February 1945 during which
15 CAP units found seven missing Army and Navy
16 pilots; and

17 (E) a State in which the CAP flew 790
18 hours on forest fire patrol missions and re-
19 ported 576 fires to authorities during a single
20 year.

21 (32) On April 29, 1943, the CAP was trans-
22 ferred to the Army Air Forces, thus beginning its
23 long association with the United States Air Force.

1 (33) Hundreds of CAP-trained women joined
2 military women's units including the Women's Air
3 Force Service Pilots (WASP) program.

4 (34) Many members of the Women's Air Force
5 Service Pilots program joined or rejoined the CAP
6 during the post-war period because it provided
7 women opportunities to fly and continue to serve the
8 Nation that were severely lacking elsewhere.

9 (35) Due to the exceptional emphasis on safety,
10 unit discipline, and pilot discipline, and the organi-
11 zation of the CAP, by the end of the war only 64
12 members of the CAP had died in service and only
13 150 aircraft had been lost (including its Coastal Pa-
14 trol losses from early in the war).

15 (36) It is estimated that more than 200,000 ci-
16 vilians were members of the CAP in wide range of
17 positions and that CAP aircrews flew a total of ap-
18 proximately 750,000 hours during the war, most of
19 which was in their personal aircraft and often at
20 real risk to their lives.

21 (37) After the war, at a CAP dinner for Con-
22 gress, a quorum of both Houses attended with the
23 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
24 President thanking the CAP for its service.

1 (38) While air medals were issued for those
2 participating in the Coastal Patrol, little other rec-
3 ognition was forthcoming for those efforts or for the
4 other services the CAP volunteers provided during
5 the war.

6 (39) Despite efforts to end the organization at
7 the end of the war, the CAP had proved its capabili-
8 ties and strengthened its ties with the Air Force and
9 Congress.

10 (40) In 1946, Congress chartered the CAP as
11 a nonprofit, public service organization and in 1948
12 as the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

13 (41) Today the CAP conducts many of the
14 same missions it performed during World War II,
15 including a vital role in homeland security.

16 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

17 (a) AWARD.—

18 (1) AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore
19 of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
20 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements
21 for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single
22 gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the
23 World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol collec-
24 tively, in recognition of the military service and ex-

1 emplary record of the Civil Air Patrol during World
2 War II.

3 (2) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes
4 of the award referred to in paragraph (1), the Sec-
5 retary of the Treasury shall strike the gold medal
6 with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to
7 be determined by the Secretary.

8 (3) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of
10 the gold medal referred to in paragraph (1) in
11 honor of the World War II members of the Civil
12 Air Patrol, the gold medal shall be given to the
13 Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be dis-
14 played as appropriate and made available for
15 research.

16 (B) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense
17 of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
18 should make the gold medal received under this
19 paragraph available for display elsewhere, par-
20 ticularly at other locations associated with the
21 Civil Air Patrol.

22 (b) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under such regulations
23 as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike
24 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck
25 under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of

1 the medals, including labor, materials, dyes, use of ma-
2 chinery, and overhead expenses.

3 (c) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to
4 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
5 of title 31, United States Code.

6 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
7 **OF SALE.**

8 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
9 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
10 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000
11 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section
12 2.

13 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
14 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 2(b) shall
15 be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
16 Fund.

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