

115th CONGRESS

2nd Session

H.R. 0x0x

A BILL

To authorize the President to present gold medals on behalf of the Congress to Korean War Veterans, who served during the Korean conflict in which the United States being involved in recognition of their contributions while serving under the United Nations.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as — “*Korean War Veterans Battles of Valor - Congressional Gold Medal Act*”

SECTION 2. EXPRESSIONS OF RECOGNITION

The purpose of the medals authorized by this Act are to express recognition by this great Nation, the United States and its citizens, for their exemplary contributions to honor all Korean War veterans, both US and Allied Forces of their respective countries, who demonstrated selfless acts when outnumbered and with overwhelming odds during the designated battles of the Korea conflict in which the United States being involved while serving under the United Nations.

SECTION 3. FINDINGS.

The Congress makes the following findings

From 1910 until the end of WWII in the Pacific, Imperial Japan had occupied the entire country of Korea.

In August 1945 just prior to the official Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, the US and Allies prepared an arrangement to divide Korea horizontal into two regions North and South, with a border at the 38th Parallel along the Taebaek Mountain region, each under separate rule of governments.

On June 25, 1950 the North Korea Peoples’ Army (NKPA) forces with support from their allies (PROC & PVA) crossed the border at the 38th Parallel invading South Korea. The United Nations Security Council was quick to respond and adopted a U.N. Resolution to send U.N. Forces into Korea.

Then on June 27, 1950, President Truman called upon the American people for support as we again sent US troops across the pacific under the aegis of the United Nations to aid in a police action.

On October 19th, China’s Peoples Volunteer Army (PVA) officially entering the conflict by encroaching passed the border into North Korea.

On October 31st China’s ruling party by then Chairman Mao Zedong offended by the success of the US Marines landing at Wonsan Korea, had ordered by telegram to immediately destroy the entire 1st Marine Division, the ROK Army Divisions and the US Army’s 7th Infantry Division.

***Pusan Perimeter** From August 4th through September 16th, 1950 well over 84,000 US troops reinforced with ROK forces and aviation support participate in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter, the port city of Pusan. The Marine Brigade find themselves in a struggle while engaged in heavy combat against the overwhelming NKPA forces near Chinju over the next two months, but with success allowed U.N. allied troops to advance out of the perimeter to liberate the south, moving towards the battle for “No Name Ridge” to help destroy an enemy bridgehead at Naktong. While NKPA forces fail to break the stalwart defense of reinforced U.N. troops and equipment along the perimeter at Pusan, the Chinese communist forces with continuous counterattacks throughout September, once more unmatched against the mighty strength of the US Marine Brigade.

***Battle of Inchon** September 15 through Sept 19, 1950, Amphibious landing by US Marines off the Port of Inchon deemed risky, the strategic landing paved the way for forces to move inland, breaking enemy supply lines. Later the effectiveness proved victorious with the recapture of the capital City of Seoul, that the Communists took control since June 28.

***Battle of Naktong Breakout** From September 16, 1950 the planned offensive was to push out of the Pusan Perimeter and start driving the enemy back up to the North. Throughout the eleven days, along the entire defensive line, continued attacks on the dug-in, well-established enemy, making the fighting extreme. Then on September 27, 1950, US Forces finally broke through enemy lines, after several attacks that weaken and exhausted the Chinese communist forces.

***Battle of Seoul–Second** September 22 through Sept 25, 1950, After the success of the Port landing, approaching the city of Seoul, US Marines engage in a bloody urban warfare. Days later, with added reinforcements from the opposite edge of the city, US Army Infantry Division advances. With most of the enemy retreating, those left behind engaged in house-to-house battles with the Marines.

***Battle of Changjin Reservoir - “The Chosin Few”** The week of November 14, 1950 a severe cold front moved down over the Chosin Reservoir area. The temperatures sank to near freezing and caused the ground to become nearly solid. Transportation of desperately needed supplies of food and medical materials became impossible along the frozen roads which were in poor shape before. Over the next few days equipment and weaponry began to malfunction rapidly and medical supplies such as vials of morphine syrettes froze rendered useless. The number of casualties escalated on both sides, from the harsh weather conditions which created frostbite to limbs and gangrene.

By November 24, 1950 US Marines from the 1st Marine Division secured both Sinhung-ni on the east side, and Yudami-ni on the west end of the reservoir. Unknown to the Marines, China deploy their elite formation, the 9th Corps Army Group (PVA) consisting of approximately Twelve Divisions with an estimated strength of ten thousand plus per Division (nine engaged the US Marines alone). The Commander was to send full reinforcements; he then replaced the 42nd Corps only weeks before with the 20th Corps.

On November 27, China’s 9th Army Corps Group attacked U.N. Forces along the Korean coast of the Chosin Reservoir. The brutal battle had inflicted some 15,000 casualties to the U.N. Forces, spread over seventeen days through December 13, 1950. Continuous attacks and ambushes launched against on U.N. allied forces being cut off by the following day, but with continued engagement they were able to break out of the enemies’ stronghold, imposing heavy losses on the Chinese PVA 9th Army.

The conditions fought over this hilly terrain, along with dropping peaks and cliffs’ surrounding the Chosin Reservoir were considered the roughest, add the elements of the unusable weather became unbearable and against an enemy force five times in numbers is considered the most ferocious battle of the entire Korean War. All of the UN allied troops that served at Chosin were later nicknamed as "The Chosin Few" a notable honor.

***Battle of Kunu-ri (the “Gauntlet”)** On November 25, 1950, the Chinese Communist Forces launched an all-out assault and poured more than 400,000 soldiers across the Yalu River swiftly overtaking the U.N. Forces. In a matter of days, if not hours, the Chinese border region became a chaotic maze of intense close-quarters fighting and hasty withdraws by U.N. troops in sub-zero temperatures.

The 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion and the 503rd Artillery Battalion both units attached to the US Army 2nd Infantry Division were assigned to provide ground support to the rear for the Eighth Army retreat.

In late fall of 1950 Chinese forces surprised and overran US and U.N. troops, including the Eighth Army and the 2nd Infantry Division. The 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion was ordered to hold the town of **Kunu-Ri** protecting the rear and right flank of the Eighth Army as it retreated. Companies from the battalion were attached to two infantry regiments, the 9th and 38th, to fill gaps in the defending lines.

By nightfall on Nov. 26, after three days of heavy fighting, the lines eventually gave way to brutal assaults by the three original Chinese divisions which had grown to an enormous five divisions during the battle, then CCF troops overran the defense line of the reinforced US and U.N. troops, they were forced to withdraw south.

***Battle of Chipyeong-ni** On February 13, 1951 a mass assault by some eight thousand Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) troops is contained by the 23rd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), US Army 2nd Infantry Division and a French Battalion.

***Battle of Seoul–Fourth (Operations Ripper/Tomahawk)** March 7 through April 4, 1951, By far the largest artillery operation of the Korean conflict commences. With ground forces advancing by both the US Army and ROK Infantry Divisions, it was during the night on March 14th the City of Seoul was recaptured, again liberated for the fourth and final time during the conflict. Battle of Tomahawk included airborne units, part of Operation Courage at Munsan-Ni. As the Communist forces almost surrounded, they quickly abandon their position of the city and forced to retreat northward. In continuing the push by U.N. allied forces onward, the towns of Hongch’on and later Ch’unch’on, a major communist supply hub too were recaptured, the last objective of Ops’Ripper. As March ends, US forces reach the 38th Parallel.

***Battle of Imjin River (Gloster Hill)** From April 22 through April 25, 1951, UN allied forces from nine countries slows down Chinese advance, that includes the 29th Infantry Brigade (UK) and the Philippines 10th BCT. Another particular notable stand known as "Gloster Hill” was made by the 1st Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment on Hill 235.

***Spring Offensive** On April 22, 1951 The largest battles of the Korean War is seen, when Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) launches an all-out "Spring Offensive" with approximately 250,000 men with some twenty-seven Divisions, faced against a mere six US Divisions, 5-US Army Divisions and of the 1st Marine Division. In addition during the offensive, the Battle of Yultong, provided immense support to the US Army 3rd Infantry Division by the Filipino 10th BCT allowing the US Army 3rd Infantry Division to successfully withdraw.

***Battle of Kapyong** From April 22, 1951, not far away, the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade composed largely of Australian and Canadian forces reduce CCF troops from advancing. Through April 25, 1951 actions taken by the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade also serve to protect the U.N. and prevents a Chinese advancement on Seoul until further U.N. forces can successfully blunt the Chinese offensive. Then on April 30, 1951 US and U.N. Allied Forces succeed and halt major CCF offensive north of Seoul.

***Battle for the Punchbowl** On June 1, 1951, a ridgeline overlooking a deep circular valley nicknamed the "Punchbowl" the 1st Marine Division advances northeast of the Hwach'on Reservoir and encounters heavy North Korean resistance, is successful in taking its objective on June 20, 1951.

On August 31, 1951 United Nations allied forces assume the offensive with the 1st Marine Division ordered to take the rest of the "Punchbowl" after truce negotiations break off. This results in more than two weeks of heavy fighting against the North Koreans. By September 18, 1951 the US Marines manage to advance to the Soyang River northeast of the Punchbowl.

***Battle of Bloody Ridge (Hill 983)** During the battle from August 18, 1951 through September 5, 1951, on one such occurrence the US Army 15th Field Artillery Battalion sets record by firing 14,425 rounds in 24 hours. Order to take Bloody Ridge, in the central mountain range comes down from X Corps command, to be led by the ROK 36th Regiment and U.N. allied forces.

***Battle of Heartbreak Ridge (Hill 931)** On September 13, 1951 the Heartbreak Ridge battle begins, also known as the Battle of Wendengli, its month-long battle in North Korea of which involved both US and U.N. allied troops reinforced seizes Heartbreak Ridge on October 15, 1951.

***Battle of Eerie (on Hill 191)** from March 21 through July 18, 1952 heavily fortified by CCF troops, both US and U.N. allied forces engage in ferocious attacks, when counterattacked by two CCF battalions, the military outpost was taken several times with teeter-totter results by both sides; each fiercely sabotaging the others' position.

***Battle of Bunker Hill** On August 9, 1952 in the western part of Korea, first major US Marine ground action is fought by the 1st Marine Division through August 16th, 1952.

***Battle for White Horse Hill** From October 6 through October 15, 1952, ROK 9th Division holds outpost with aid of massive American fire support against repeated attacks from nine Chinese Regiments. A turning point and important as a sign of the ROK Army's overall improvement.

***Battle for the "Hook"** On October 26, 1952, the 7th Marines encounter stiff enemy opposition during the Battle for the "Hook" a critical salient in the Main Line of Resistance (MLR), in only three days on October 28th the US Marines prevailed against the enemy forces.

***Battle of Pork Chop Hill (I & II)** On April 16, 1953, the Battle of Pork Chop Hill begins. The 17th and 31st Infantry Regiments (7th Infantry Division) hit hard and suffer heavy casualties during these two days ending on April 18th. Then again, a few months later on July 6th the CCF enemy attacks the US Army 7th Infantry Division and the battle for the Hill continues. On July 10th 1953, after five days of fierce fighting and continuous Chinese assaults the Infantry Division is then ordered to evacuate its defensive positions sustaining heavy casualties taken in the defense of Pork Chop Hill.

***Battle of Kumsong River Salient** Then from July 13th, unknown as the last major communist offensive, CCF launch a full six division attack partly directed at ROK forces because of the Republic of Korea's refusal to participate in the peace negotiations. CCF forces used superior firepower and overwhelming force to break the salient and destroy the elite ROK "White Tiger" regiment. Fighting continued in the area until the signing of the Armistice on July 27, 1953.

***Armistice Agreement** Then on July 27, 1953 The United States, North Korea and China sign an Armistice agreement that ends the conflict and created the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) again dividing Korea but fails to bring about peace. To date, these two governments, the Republic of Korea (South) and Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (North) have not signed a peace treaty, that would officially end the war.

The troops of the Korean conflict held their stance separated only by the bayonets on their weapons, the modern weapon of technology then, quite often outnumbered by the enemy, many times surrounded but never out performed. Upon each offensive enemy attack by either the NKPA or the CCF, our troops both American and allied forces stood their ground in the face of adversity at all times, at all costs

with courage. Demonstrating defensive counter maneuvers battle after battle from enemy engagements, while most battles were noteworthy and victorious, others not. So be it guaranteed, the sacrifices and bloodshed from all these combined battles fought, were with gallantry, valor and selfless service.

One of two principle objectives was not to lose the war over the aggressors and the other was to keep Seoul, South Korea from occupation by the Communist NKPA to the north. American combat troops, to include allied forces from sixteen nations, helped secure this mission. Today the highly industrialist and technological capitol city of Korea is possible from the hundreds of thousands who served and sacrificed. We feel it is the appropriate time for America to honor the troops to include all United Nations allied forces of the designated noteworthy battles listed during the Korean conflict and to award the Congressional Gold Medal, evidence that the forgotten war is no longer, but forever remembered by its people.

SECTION 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) Award Presentation Authorized - The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award presentation, on behalf of the Congress, with two gold medals and duplicate bronze medals of appropriate design in honor of the distinguished service of combat Korean War veterans to include all allied forces for devotion to duty, recognition with many acts of valor in the face of adversity on the battlefield while serving under the United Nations Command.

(b) Identification of Recipients.--The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense shall—

(1) In general.--Any US member of the United States Armed Forces and/or Allied Forces under the United Nations who served during these selected battles, under the designated dates of conflict in which the United States was involved during the 20th Century shall be eligible for a duplicate bronze medal under this section.

(2) Determination.--Eligibility for an award under this subsection, paragraph (1) shall be determined by the Secretary of Defense and such Secretary in accordance shall establish a list of names of each US American identified to the maximum extent practicable by each selected battle named that had a member that served in units of the US Armed Forces or Allied Forces, under Section 3, and with any updates to the list, to the Smithsonian Institution and the War Memorial of Korea for maintenance under section 5(c)(2) of such eligible individuals in each unit before the end of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act. With the exception of the 65th Infantry Regiment (aka The Borinqueneers) who were previously awarded the CGM as a unit on June 10, 2014.

(3) Posthumous -- In the event of the death of a Korean War veteran who had not been awarded a duplicate bronze medal under this subsection, the Secretary may award the duplicate medal to the next of kin or other personal representative of the Korean War veteran.

(c) Design and Striking

IN GENERAL, --For the purposes of the award presentation of a gold medal under this act, referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall strike one gold medal, one silver medal and duplicate bronze medals with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(d) Smithsonian Institution – War Memorial of Korea

(1) Following the award of the medals in honor of the Korean War veterans, one gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, and one silver medal given to the War Memorial of Korea, Seoul, where it shall be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS- It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution and the War Memorial of Korea shall make the gold and silver medals respectfully, received under this Act available for display elsewhere, and particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Korean War veterans.

SECTION 5. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SECTION 6. NATIONAL MEDALS.

National Medals - For purposes of section 5 chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck pursuant to this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SECTION 7. FUNDING.

(a) Authorization to use Funding Appropriations - There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, such amount as may be necessary to pay for the cost of the medals struck under section 3 pursuant to this Act.

(b) Proceeds of Sale- Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 4 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.