

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1460

To grant the congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2011

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BURR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To grant the congressional gold medal, collectively, to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service 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. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) The First Special Service Force (in this Act
6 referred to as the “Force”) was organized as a joint
7 American-Canadian unit activated in July 1942 at
8 Fort Harrison near Helena, Montana.

1 (2) The Force was initially intended to target
2 military and industrial installations that were sup-
3 porting the German war effort, including important
4 hydroelectric plants, which would severely limit the
5 production of strategic materials used by the Axis
6 powers.

7 (3) From July 1942 through June 1943, volun-
8 teers of the Force trained in hazardous, arctic condi-
9 tions, in the mountains of western Montana, and the
10 waterways of Camp Bradford, Virginia.

11 (4) The combat echelon of the Force totaled
12 1,800 soldiers—half American, half Canadian. There
13 were also 800 American members of the Service
14 Battalion, which provided important support for the
15 combat troops.

16 (5) A special bond developed between the Cana-
17 dian and American soldiers. They were not seg-
18 regated by geography, although it was commanded
19 by an American colonel.

20 (6) The Force was unique, as it was the only
21 unit formed during World War II consisting of
22 troops from 2 different countries.

23 (7) In October 1943, the Force went to Italy,
24 where it fought in battles south of Cassino, including
25 Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo.

1 (8) These mountain peaks were a critical an-
2 chor of the German defense line, and on December
3 3, 1943, the Force's units ascended to the top of La
4 Difensa's precipitous face. Climbing through the
5 night, the battalion suffered heavy casualties and
6 overcame fierce resistance to overtake the German
7 line.

8 (9) After La Difensa, the Force continued to
9 fight tough battles at high altitudes, in rugged ter-
10 rain, and in severe weather. After battles on the
11 strongly defended Italian peaks of Sammucro,
12 Vischiataro, and Remetanea, the Force's combat
13 units had been reduced from 1,800 to fewer than
14 500.

15 (10) In 1944, the Force went to the Anzio
16 Beachhead for 4 months, engaging in raids and ag-
17 gressive patrols. On June 4, 1944, members of the
18 Force were the first Allied troops to liberate Rome.

19 (11) After Rome, the Force moved to southern
20 Italy, where it prepared to assist in the liberation of
21 France.

22 (12) During the early morning of August 15,
23 1944, the Force made silent landings on Les Iles
24 D'Hyeres, small islands in the Mediterranean Sea
25 along the southern coast of France. They faced a

1 sustained and withering assault from the German
2 garrisons, as the Force progressed from the islands
3 to the Franco-Italian border.

4 (13) After securing the Franco-Italian border,
5 the United States Army ordered the disbandment of
6 the First Special Service Force on December 5,
7 1944 in Nice, France.

8 (14) In 251 days of combat, the Force suffered
9 2,314 casualties, or 134 percent of its combat
10 strength. It captured more than 30,000 prisoners,
11 won 5 United States campaign stars, and 8 Cana-
12 dian battle honors. It never failed a mission.

13 (15) The United States is forever indebted to
14 the acts of bravery and selflessness of these troops,
15 risking their lives in covert missions for the cause of
16 freedom.

17 (16) The unparalleled work of the Force along
18 the seas and skies of Europe were critical in repel-
19 ling the Nazi advance and liberating numerous
20 French and Italian communities.

21 (17) The bond between the American and Ca-
22 nadian service members has endured over the dec-
23 ades, as they continue to meet every year for re-
24 unions, alternating between Canada and the United
25 States.

1 (18) The traditions and honors exhibited by the
2 First Special Service Force are carried forward with
3 its lineage embracing outstanding active units of 2
4 great democracies in the Special Forces of the
5 United States, the Canadian Airborne Regiment,
6 and the Canadian Special Operations Regiment.

7 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

8 (a) **AWARD AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
10 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
11 award, on behalf of the Congress, of 2 gold medals of ap-
12 propriate design to the First Special Service Force, collec-
13 tively, in recognition of their dedicated service during
14 World War II.

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

20 (c) **AWARD TO SMITHSONIAN AND FIRST SPECIAL**
21 **SERVICE FORCE ASSOCIATION.**—

22 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Following the award of the
23 gold medals in honor of the First Special Service
24 Force, under subsection (a)—

1 (A) one gold medal shall be given to the
2 Smithsonian Institution, where it will be dis-
3 played as appropriate and made available for
4 research; and

5 (B) one gold medal shall be given to the
6 First Special Service Force Association in Hel-
7 ena, Montana.

8 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
9 the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution and
10 the First Special Service Force Association should
11 make the gold medals received under paragraph (1)
12 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
13 appropriate locations associated with the First Spe-
14 cial Service Force, including Fort William Henry
15 Harrison in Helena, Montana.

16 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

17 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
18 bronze of the gold medals struck under section 2, at a
19 price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including
20 labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead ex-
21 penses.

22 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

23 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
24 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
25 Code.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.**

2 (a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS.**—There is author-
3 ized to be charged against the United States Mint Public
4 Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay
5 for the cost of the medals authorized under section 2.

6 (b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the
7 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
8 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
9 Fund.

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