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Congressional Gold Medals: Background, Legislative Process, and Issues for Congress

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Summary

Senators and Representatives are frequently asked to support or sponsor proposals recognizing historic events and outstanding achievements by individuals or institutions. Among the various forms of recognition that Congress bestows, the Congressional Gold Medal is often considered the most distinguished. Through this venerable tradition—the occasional commissioning of individually struck gold medals in its name—Congress has expressed public gratitude on behalf of the nation for distinguished contributions for more than two centuries. Since 1776, this award, which initially was bestowed on military leaders, has also been given to such diverse individuals as Sir Winston Churchill and Bob Hope, George Washington and Robert Frost, Joe Louis and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Congressional gold medal legislation generally has a specific format. Once a gold medal is authorized, it follows a specific process for design, minting, and awarding. This process includes consultation and recommendations by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Commission (CCAC) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), pursuant to any statutory instructions, before the Secretary of the Treasury makes the final decision on a gold medal's design. Once the medal has been struck, a ceremony will often be scheduled to formally award the medal to the recipient.

In recent years, the number of gold medals awarded has increased and some have expressed interest in examining the gold medal awarding process. Should Congress want to make such changes, several individual and institutional options might be available. The individual options include decisions made by Members of Congress as to what individual or groups might be honored; potential specification of gold medal design elements; and where gold medals for groups might be housed once the award is made. The institutional options could include House, Senate, or committee rules for the consideration of gold medal legislation and whether statutory standards on the number of gold medals issued per year or per Congress might be established for gold medals.

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Introduction

Since the late 1700s, Congress has expressed public gratitude to individuals and groups by awarding medals and other similar decorations.[1] The first Congressional Gold Medals were issued by the Continental Congress. Since that time, Congress has awarded gold medals to express public gratitude for distinguished contributions, dramatize the virtues of patriotism, and perpetuate the remembrance of great events. This tradition of authorizing individually struck gold medals bearing the portraits or actions of honorees is rich with history.

Although Congress has approved legislation stipulating specific requirements for numerous other awards and decorations, there are no permanent statutory provisions specifically relating to the creation of Congressional Gold Medals. When such an award has been deemed appropriate, Congress has, by special action, provided for the creation of a personalized medal to be given in its name.[2]

Early Practices

The first Congressional Gold Medals were issued by the Continental Congress. As initially conceived, Congressional Gold Medals were awards "imbued with the conviction that only the very highest achievements [were] entitled to such a distinction, and that the value of a reward is enhanced by its rarity!"[3] At that time, the Continental Congress concluded there was no better way to honor "and preserve the memory of illustrious characters and splendid events than medals—whether we take into consideration the imperishable nature of the substance whence they are formed, the facility of multiplying copies, or the practice of depositing them in the cabinets of the curious."[4] The first gold medals were struck in Paris under the direction of Colonel David Humphrey.[5]

Following a long-standing historical practice, Congress commissioned gold medals as tributes for what were considered to be the most distinguished achievements. Silver and bronze medals, and ceremonial swords, were awarded for less eminent, but still notable, accomplishments.[6] However, only the gold medal has been continuously awarded to the present day.

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[1] See "Decorations, Medals, and Badges," in the general index of the *United States Code: 2000 Edition* (Washington: GPO, 2001).

[2] Other options for recognizing individuals and groups include naming post offices or federal office buildings, establishing a commemorative time period, minting commemorative coins, and creating memorials. For more information on these recognitions, see CRS Report R43539, *Commemorations in Congress: Options for Honoring Individuals, Groups, and Events*, coordinated by Jacob R. Straus.

[3] J.F. Loubat, *The Medallic History of the United States of America, 1776-1876*, 2 vols. (New York: Printed by Author, 1878), vol. 1, p. viii.

[4] David Humphrey to Matthew Carey (Printer of the American Museum), November 1787, in Labatt, *The Medallic History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. xxiv.

[5] Humphrey "succeeded in securing the cooperation of the *Academe d'Insciptions et Belles-Lettres* in Paris and this learned institution nominated a committee of four among its members who worked very expeditiously in devising designs and inscriptions" for the medals the Continental Congress had authorized. Vladimir Clain-Stefanelli and Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, *Medals Commemorating Battles of the American Revolution* (Washington: The National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 1973), p. 1.

[6] T. Bailey Meyers, "Our National Medals," *Magazine of American History*, vol. 2, September 1878, pp. 529-532. Altogether Congress authorized a total of 15 medals and 10 ceremonial swords during the Confederation period. Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, pp. 54-55.

The first Congressional Gold Medal was authorized on March 25, 1776, for George Washington, then commander of the Continental Army, for his "wise and spirited conduct" in bringing about British evacuation of Boston.[7] During the next 12 years, the Continental Congress authorized an additional six gold medals for Revolutionary military leaders. **Table 1** lists the Congressional Gold Medals issued by the Continental Congress, the year, the awardee, and the reason the medal was authorized.

Table 1. Congressional Gold Medals Issued by the Continental Congress, 1776-1787

Year	Awardee	Reason
1776	General George Washington	"Wise and spirited conduct" in bringing about British evacuation of Boston[a]
1777	Major General Horatio Gates	"Brave and successful efforts" in bringing about the surrender of the British Army at Saratoga[b]
1779	Major General Anthony Wayne	Courageous assault on the British at Stony Point, NY[c]
1779	Major Henry Lee	Skill and bravery exhibited against the British at Paulus Hook, NJ[d]
1781	Brigadier General Daniel Morgan	Gallant efforts in South Carolina during 1781[e]
1781	Major General Nathaniel Greene	Gallant efforts in South Carolina during 1781[f]
1787	John Paul Jones	"Valor and brilliant services" in capturing the *Serapis*[g]

Source: CRS analysis of Congressional Gold Medal legislation.

Notes: For discussions of these medals, see Theodore T. Belote, "War Medals of the American Revolution," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, vol. 55, September 1921, pp. 487-499; Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, pp. xxxv-xli, 53-66; Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint*, pp. 114-117, 120, 122, 149; Labatt, *The Medallic History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 1-21, 29-36, 40-45, 50-56, 97-112; Martha L. Turner, "Commemorative Medals of the American Revolution and the War of 1812," *Numismatist*, vol. 88, January 1975, pp. 6-15.

a. U.S. Continental Congress, *Journals of the Continental Congress: 1774-1789*, vol. 4, March 25, 1776, p. 234. Brief histories of George Washington's gold medal are found in Georgia Stamm Chamberlain, *American Medals and Medalists* (Annandale, VA: Designed and Lithographed by the Turnpike Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 16-17; R.W. Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint: The First Century 1792-1892* (El Cajon, CA: The Token and Medal Society, Inc., 1977), pp. 114-115.

b. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 9, November 4, 1777, pp. 861-862.

c. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 14, July 26, 1779, p. 890.

d. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 15, September 24, 1779, p. 1099.

e. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 19, January 17, 1781, pp. 246-247.

f. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 21, October 19, 1781, pp. 1083-1085.

g. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, vol. 33, October 16, 1787, p. 687.

The gold medal conferred upon Major Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee for his "remarkable prudence" and "bravery" during the surprise raid of Paulus Hook, NJ, was the first to be struck in the United States.[8]

[7] U.S. Continental Congress, *Journals of the Continental Congress: 1774-1789*, vol. 4, March 25, 1776, p. 234. Brief histories of George Washington's gold medal are found in Georgia Stamm Chamberlain, *American Medals and Medalists* (Annandale, VA: Designed and Lithographed by the Turnpike Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 16-17; R.W. Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint: The First Century 1792-1892* (El Cajon, CA: The Token and Medal Society, Inc., 1977), pp. 114-115.

[8] Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint*, p. xviii.

19th Century Recipients

Following the ratification of the Constitution, the first two Congressional Gold Medals were given in 1800 to Captain Thomas Truxtun for his gallant effort during the action between the U.S. frigate *Constellation* and the French ship *La Vengeance* and in 1805 to Commodore Edward Preble for gallantry and good conduct during the War with Tripoli.[9] After those medals were awarded, Congress issued gold medals primarily for military achievements in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. All told, 27 gold medals were awarded for the War of 1812,[10] and a series of medals were awarded for expeditions led by Major General Zachary Taylor and Major General Winfield Scott in the Mexican War. General Taylor received three Congressional Gold Medals,[11] while General Scott received one.[12]

In 1854, Congress began to broaden the scope of activities that merited a Congressional Gold Medal. This change was prompted by Commander Duncan N. Ingraham of the USS *St. Louis*'s rescue of Martin Koszta from illegal seizure and imprisonment about the Austrian war-brig *Hussar*.[13] Subsequently, gold medals were issued to several individuals recognized for nonmilitary heroic activities or their work in specific fields. For example, in 1864 Cornelius Vanderbilt was honored for donating a steamship to the United States;[14] in 1867 Cyrus W. Field was praised for his work in the laying of the transatlantic cable;[15] and Private George F. Robinson was awarded for saving Secretary of State William H. Seward from an assassination attempt.[16] At this time, Congress also established the Medal of Honor as a military award and increasingly focused the Congressional Gold Medal as an award for individuals and events.[17]

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[9] 2 Stat. 87, 346-347. See also Theodore T. Belote, "Naval War Medals of the United States 1800-1815, Part III," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, vol. 56, January 1922, pp. 77-93; Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint*, p. 150; Labatt, *The Medallic History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 128-132.

[10] 3 Stat. 341. See also Theodore T. Belote, "Military and Naval Medals of the War of 1812-1815, Part II," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, vol. 55, November 1921, p. 639; Belote, "Naval War Medals of the United States 1800-1815, Part III," pp. 92-93; Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint*, p. 153; Labatt, *The Medallic History of the United States*, vol. 1, pp. 249-252.

[11] 9 Stat. 111, 206, 334-335. See also Chamberlain, *American Medals and Medalists*, pp. 75-93.

[12] 9 Stat. 333. See also Theodore T. Belote, "Military Medals of the War with Mexico and the Civil War," *Numismatist*, vol. 56, May 1922, pp. 280-281; Julian, *Medals of the United States Mint*, p. 138. In addition to medals for Generals Taylor and Scott, gold medals were given to 10 officers and seamen belonging or attached to the French, British, and Spanish ships-of-war, who on December 10, 1846, gallantly rescued 37 of the officers and crew from the wreck of the United States brig *Somers* in Vera Cruz harbor (9 Stat. 208).

[13] 10 Stat. 594-595.

[14] 13 Stat. 401-402. See also U.S. President, 1861-1865 (Lincoln), Message of the President of the United States Recommending That Some Suitable Acknowledgment Be Made to Cornelius Vanderbilt for the Valuable Present to the United States of the Steamer "Vanderbilt," S. Ex. Doc. 71, 37th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 1862), p. 1.

[15] 14 Stat. 574. See also U.S. President, 1865-1869 (A. Johnson), Gold Medal Presented to Cyrus W. Field, Message From the President in Relation to the Gold Medal Presented to Mr. Cyrus W. Field, H. Ex. Doc. 89, 40th Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington: GPO, 1869).

[16] 16 Stat. 704. See also U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *George F. Robinson*, report to accompany H.Res. 501, 41st Cong., 3rd sess., H.Rept. 33 (Washington: GPO, 1874).

[17] 12 Stat. 330, 623-624. Also, see CRS Report 95-519, *Medal of Honor: History and Issues*, by Barbara Salazar Torreon; *Above and Beyond: A History of the Medal of Honor From the Civil War to Vietnam* (Boston: Boston Publishing Co., 1985); E. Kerrigan, *American War Medals and Decorations* (New York: The Viking Press), 1964, pp. 3-11; George Lang, *Medal of Honor Recipients*, 1863-1994, 2 vols. (New York: Facts on File, 1995); U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1978, committee print no. 3, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1979); Mendel L. Peterson, "The Navy Medal of Honor," *Numismatist*, vol. 63, June 1950, pp. 305-312; Mendel L. Peterson, "The Army Medal of Honor," *Numismatist*, vol. 63, September 1950, pp. 557-565.

20th and 21st Century Recipients

In the 20th and 21st centuries, Congress continued to broaden the scope of Congressional Gold Medals to include recognition of excellence in such varied fields as the arts, athletics, aviation, diplomacy, entertainment, exploration, medicine, politics, religion, and science. Several of the following individuals were the first in their specialties to be awarded gold medals:

- Composer George M. Cohan (1936) was the first entertainer to receive a gold medal, for his patriotic songs "Over There" and "A Grand Old Flag."[18]
- Wilbur and Orville Wright (1909) were the first aeronautical or space pioneers to receive a gold medal, for their achievements in demonstrating to the world the potential of aerial navigation.[19]
- Lincoln Ellsworth (1926) was the first explorer honored, for his polar flight in 1925 and transpolar flight in 1926.[20]
- Major Walter Reed and his associates (1928) were the first scientists honored, for discovering the cause and means of transmission of yellow fever in 1921.[21]
- Vice President Alben W. Barkley (1949) was the first political honoree.[22]

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, numerous other individuals have been honored for a variety of contributions including civil rights activism and humanitarian contributions.[23] For a complete list of Congressional Gold Medal recipients since 1776, see the **Appendix**.

Authorizing Congressional Gold Medals

Once a Congressional Gold Medal bill is introduced, it is typically referred to the House Committee on Financial Services or the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.[24] The process for considering legislation varies between the House and Senate.

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[18] 49 Stat. 2371; 68 Stat. A120. See also U.S. Congress, House Committee on the Library, *To Authorize the President to Present a Gold Medal to George M. Cohan in Recognition of His Patriotic Service*, H.Rept. 2868, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 1936).

[19] 35 Stat. 1627. See also "Gold Medal by Congress to Wright Brothers," *Numismatist*, vol. 22, August 1919, pp. 231-232; Arthur L. Newman, "Some Medals Struck in Honor of the Wright Brothers," *Numismatist*, vol. 81, December 1968, p. 1576.

[20] 45 Stat. 2026-2027. See also U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Commerce, *A Medal of Honor to Lincoln Ellsworth*, S.Rept. 831, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1928).

[21] 45 Stat. 1409-1410; 52 Stat. 1365. See also U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Military Affairs, *To Recognize the High Public Service Rendered by Major Walter Reed and Those Associated with Him in the Discovery of the Cause and Means of Transmission of Yellow Fever*, S.Rept. 1912, 70th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 1929).

[22] 63 Stat. 599; See also U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, *Medal for Vice President Alben W. Barkley*, S.Rept. 742, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 1949).

[23] For examples of civil rights activists receiving gold medals, see 98 Stat. 173-174; 112 Stat. 2681-597; 113 Stat. 50-51; 117 Stat. 2017-2019; 117 Stat. 2645-2647; 118 Stat. 1746-1748. See also *Gold Medals to the Daughter of Harry S. Truman; Lady Bird Johnson; and the Widow of Roy Wilkins*, pp. 11-108. For examples of the recognition of humanitarian efforts, see 111 Stat. 35-36, 1170-1171; 112 Stat. 895-896.

[24] U.S. Congress, House, Financial Services Committee, at http://financialservices.house.gov; and U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, at https://www.banking.senate.gov. Additionally, some bills are also referred to the Committee on House Administration.

House of Representatives

In the House, there are currently no chamber or committee rules regarding the procedures for gold medal bills. Rule 28(a)(7) of the House Republican Conference, however, prohibits the Republican leader from scheduling any bill or resolution for consideration under suspension of the rules[25] which directs the Secretary of the Treasury to strike a Congressional Gold Medal unless

- the recipient is a natural person;
- the recipient has performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipient's field long after the achievement;
- the recipient has not received a medal previously for the same or substantially the same achievement;
- the recipient is living or, if deceased, has not been deceased for less than 5 years or more than 25 years; and
- the achievements were performed in the recipient's field of endeavor, and represent either a lifetime of continuous superior achievements or a single achievement so significant that the recipient is recognized and acclaimed by others in the same field, as evidenced by the recipient having received the highest honors in the field.[26]

The rules of the House Republican Conference also place an indirect restriction on the number of gold medals that may be awarded annually. Rule 28(a)(7)(F) prohibits the Republican leader from scheduling, or requesting to have scheduled, any bill for consideration under suspension of the rules which "directs the Secretary of the Treasury to strike a Congressional Gold Medal ...[that causes] the total number of measures authorizing the striking of such medals in that Congress to substantially exceed the average number of such measures enacted in prior Congresses."[27]

A waiver on the restriction can be granted by the majority of the elected leadership of the conference. Note that these party conference rules provide parameters placed by the party members on their leaders' scheduling prerogatives; since the restrictions are not reflected in chamber rules, they cannot be enforced through points of order on the floor.[28] The House could also consider an otherwise-prohibited bill under an alternative procedure, such as a special rule.[29] However, gold medal legislation generally appears to be considered under suspension of the rules in the House.

[25] Suspension of the rules is a procedure by which the House can expeditiously process legislation, but approval requires a two-thirds vote for final passage. See CRS Report 98-314, *Suspension of the Rules in the House: Principal Features*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

[26] Rule 28(a)(7), *Rules of the House Republican Conference for the 115th Congress*, available at http://www.gop.gov/about/115th-rules.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See CRS Report 98-307, *Points of Order, Rulings, and Appeals in the House of Representatives*, by Valerie Heitshusen.

[29] See CRS Report 98-354, *How Special Rules Regulate Calling up Measures for Consideration in the House*, by Richard S. Beth.

Senate

In the Senate, the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee in the 115th Congress requires that at least 67 Senators cosponsor any Congressional Gold Medal bill before being considered by the committee.[30] This committee rule presumably does not formally preclude committee consideration of a House bill referred to it.[31] The committee rule also does not prevent the Senate from considering or passing gold medal legislation. Referred bills may be brought to the floor without committee consideration; in other cases, a bill may avoid being referred to committee at all.[32] Indeed, in current practice, many enacted gold medal bills receive no formal committee consideration. Rather, the Senate often discharges the committee of the bill by unanimous consent; however, it appears that this discharge practice only occurs after the requisite number of cosponsors sign on to a Senate bill.

Other Statutory Limitations

Although Congress has approved legislation stipulating requirements for numerous other awards and decorations,[33] there are no permanent statutory provisions specifically relating to the creation of Congressional Gold Medals. When a Congressional Gold Medal has been deemed appropriate, Congress has, by legislative action, provided for the creation of a medal on an *ad hoc* basis. Additionally, there is no statutory limit on the number of Congressional Gold Medals that may be struck in a given year.

Sample Congressional Gold Medal Language

Congressional Gold Medal legislation generally has certain features, including

- findings that summarize the subject's history and importance;
- specifications for awarding the medal;
- instructions, if any, for the medal's design and striking;
- permission to mint and sell duplicates; and
- certification that medals are minted pursuant to existing requirements for national medals (5 U.S.C. §5111).

Findings

Congressional Gold Medal legislation typically includes a section of findings. These often include historical facts about the people or groups being awarded the medal. For example, the

[30] "Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Rules of Procedure," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 161 (January 24, 2017), p. S433.

[31] A House bill would have no Senate cosponsors. For more information on sponsorship, see CRS Report 98-279, *Sponsorship and Cosponsorship of Senate Bills*, by Mark J. Oleszek; and CRS Report RS22477, *Sponsorship and Cosponsorship of House Bills*, by Mark J. Oleszek.

[32] See CRS Report RS22309, *Senate Rule XIV Procedure for Placing Measures Directly on the Senate Calendar*, for explanation of the ways in which an introduced bill (or one received from the House) may receive floor consideration without a committee referral or committee action.

[33] See "Decorations, Medals, and Badges," in the general index of the *United States Code: 2000 Edition* (Washington: GPO, 2001).

legislation to authorize the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders" stated

> SECTION 1. FINDINGS.
>
> Congress finds that—
>
> (1) on April 18, 1942, the brave men of the 17th Bombardment Group (Medium) became known as the "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders" for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting the bombings of Tokyo;
>
> (2) 80 brave American aircraft crewmen, led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, volunteered for an "extremely hazardous mission", without knowing the target, location, or assignment, and willingly put their lives in harm's way, risking death, capture, and torture;
>
> (3) the conduct of medium bomber operations from a Navy aircraft carrier under combat conditions had never before been attempted;
>
> (4) after the discovery of the USS Hornet by Japanese picket ships 170 miles further away from the prearranged launch point, the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders proceeded to take off 670 miles from the coast of Japan;
>
> (5) by launching more than 100 miles beyond the distance considered to be minimally safe for the mission, the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders deliberately accepted the risk that the B-25s might not have enough fuel to reach the designated air-fields in China on return;
>
> (6) the additional launch distance greatly increased the risk of crash landing in Japanese occupied China, exposing the crews to higher probability of death, injury, or capture;
>
> (7) because of that deliberate choice, after bombing their targets in Japan, low on fuel and in setting night and deteriorating weather, none of the 16 airplanes reached the prearranged Chinese airfields;
>
> (8) of the 80 Doolittle Tokyo Raiders who launched on the raid, 8 were captured, 2 died in the crash, and 70 returned to the United States;
>
> (9) of the 8 captured Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, 3 were executed and 1 died of disease; and
>
> (10) there were only 5 surviving members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders as of February 2013.[34]

Medal Presentation, Design, and Striking

Congressional Gold Medal legislation typically includes a section that provides details on the presentation, design, and striking of the medal. For example, the legislation to authorize the Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965 stated

> SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.
>
> (a) Presentation Authorized.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March during March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
>
> (b) Design and Striking.—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.[35]

Additionally, this section can contain specific instructions to the Smithsonian, when it is the recipient of the physical gold medal, on its display and availability to be loaned to other

[34] P.L. 113-106, 128 Stat. 1160, May 23, 2014.

[35] P.L. 114-5, 129 Stat. 78, March 7, 2015.

institutions. For example, the legislation authorizing the American Fighter Aces Congressional Gold Medal stated

> (c) Smithsonian Institution.—
>
> (1) In general.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the American Fighter Aces, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be available for display as appropriate and available for research.
>
> (2) Sense of the Congress.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal awarded pursuant to this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly at appropriate locations associated with the American Fighter Aces, and that preference should be given to locations affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.[36]

Duplicate Medals

Gold medal legislation also generally authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to strike and sell duplicate medals in bronze. The duplicates are generally sold in two sizes: 1.5 inches and 3 inches. Duplicates are sold at a price which allows the U.S. Mint to cover the cost of striking the gold medal. For example, legislation authorizing the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, Congressional Gold Medal stated

> SEC. 3. 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 2, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.[37]

Status of Medals

Gold medal legislation generally contains a statement that these awards are considered as national medals for the purpose of the U.S. Mint's statutory requirements for producing medals. For example, legislation authorizing the Montford Point Marines Congressional Gold Medal stated

> SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.
>
> Medals struck pursuant to this Act are National medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.[38]

Authorization of Appropriations; Proceeds

In some cases, authorizing legislation includes language authorizing appropriations for a Congressional Gold Medal. In these examples, Congress has authorized a specific sum from the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund to pay for the cost of the medal. In cases where the authorization of appropriations is provided, a provision requiring that proceeds from the sale of duplicates be deposited in the same Fund is generally included. For example, legislation authorizing the Women Airforce Service Pilots Congressional Gold Medal stated

[36] P.L. 113-105, 128 Stat. 1157, May 23, 2014.

[37] P.L. 113-120, 128 Stat. 1192, June 10, 2014.

[38] P.L. 112-59, 125 Stat. 751, November 23, 2011.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed $30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section 2.

(b) Proceeds of Sale.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.[39]

Design of Medals

Congressional Gold Medal designs vary for each issuance. In general, the authorizing legislation provides that the Secretary of the Treasury "shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary."[40] When designing a Congressional Gold Medal, the Secretary consults with the Citizens Coinage Advisory Commission (CCAC) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) before determining the final design.

Citizens Coinage Advisory Commission

Established by P.L. 108-15,[41] the CCAC advises the Secretary of the Treasury on theme and design of all U.S. coins and medals. For Congressional Gold Medals, the CCAC advises the Secretary "on any theme or design proposals relating to ... Congressional Gold Medals."[42]

The CCAC consists of 11 members appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, with four persons appointed upon the recommendation of the congressional leadership (one each by the Speaker of the House, the House minority leader, the Senate majority leader, and the Senate minority leader).[43] The CCAC meets several times each year to consider design suggestions for coins and medals. For each coin considered, the CCAC provides advice to the Secretary "on thematic, technical, and design issues related to the production of coins."[44] Recommendations are then published to the committee's website, at http://www.ccac.gov.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

In tandem with recommendations received from the CCAC, the U.S. Mint also seeks a recommendation from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). Established in 1910, the CFA advises "upon the location of statues, fountains, and monuments in the public squares, streets, and parks in the District of Columbia; the selection of models for statues, fountains, and monuments erected under the authority of the Federal Government; the selection of artists; and questions of art generally when required to do so by the President or a committee of Congress."[45] This includes review of commemorative coins when they are presented by the U.S. Mint and the issuance of recommendations for a coin's design.

[39] P.L. 111-40, 123 Stat. 1961, July 1, 2009.

[40] For example, see P.L. 111-253, 124 Stat. 2636, October 5, 2010.

[41] 31 U.S.C. §5135.

[42] Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, "About Us," at https://www.ccac.gov/aboutUs/index.html.

[43] For a list of current members of the CCAC, see Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, "Members," at https://www.ccac.gov/aboutUs/members.html.

[44] U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, *Civic Art: A Centennial History of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), p. 480. [Hereinafter CFA, *Civic Art*.]

[45] 40 U.S.C. §9102.

For example, in March 2014, the U.S. Mint presented several alternative designs for the First Special Service Force Congressional Gold Medal. In a letter to the U.S. Mint, the CFA provided recommendations on the design for the gold medal. CFA's letter stated

> 27 March 2014
>
> Dear Mr. Peterson:
>
> In its meeting of 20 March, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed alternative designs for a Congressional Gold Medal honoring the First Special Service Force. The Commission members present provided the following recommendations.
>
> For the obverse, the Commission members recommended alternative #8, commenting on its strong three−dimensional character and clear compositional elements. They recommended reverse #2, supporting the reported recommendation of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Commission, due to the compatibility of its composition with the recommended obverse.
>
> As there was not a quorum for the review of the submission, these recommendations will be placed on the administrative agenda for confirmation at the Commission's meeting of 17 April. As always, the staff is available to assist you with future submissions.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> /s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
>
> Secretary[46]

U.S. Mint

After receiving advice from the CCAC and the CFA, the Secretary of the Treasury, through the U.S. Mint, finalizes the coin's design and schedules it for production. **Figure 1** shows the final design of two Congressional Gold Medals: the New Frontier Gold Medal for Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, Buzz Aldrin, and John Glenn; and the Jack Nicklaus Gold Medal.

[46] Letter from Thomas E. Luebke, secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, to Richard A. Peterson, deputy director, U.S. Mint, March 27, 2014, at https://www.cfa.gov/records-research/project-search/cfa-20mar14-6.

Figure 1. Examples of Congressional Gold Medal Design

Source: U.S. Mint, "New Frontier Congressional Gold Medal," at https://catalog.usmint.gov/new-frontier-bronze-medal-3-inch-920.html?cgid=humanitarian-cultural; and U.S. Mint, "Jack Nicklaus Congressional Gold Medal," at https://catalog.usmint.gov/jack-nicklaus-bronze-medal-3-inch-15ME.html?cgid=humanitarian-cultural.

Issues for Congress

As Members of Congress contemplate introducing legislation, and the House or the Senate potentially consider Congressional Gold Medal measures, there are several issues that could be considered. These can be divided into issues for individual Members of Congress with respect to individual Congressional Gold Medals, and issues for Congress as an institution. Individual issues include choices Members may make about which people or groups might be honored and whether specific design elements might be specified statutorily. Institutional issues might include committee or chamber rules on the consideration of Congressional Gold Medals and creating standards for the issuance of gold medals.

Individual Considerations

Individuals and Groups Honored

Some Congressional Gold Medals have honored individuals (e.g., Arnold Palmer, Muhammad Yunus), some discrete groups of individuals (e.g., General of the Army George Catlett Marshall and Fleet Admiral Ernest Joseph King, Ruth and Billy Graham), and some larger groups (e.g., military units such as Women Airforce Service Pilots ("WASP"), Monuments Men). In choosing whom or what to recognize, Members of Congress generally evaluate whether they believe that the individual's or group's activities merit recognition by Congress. Congressional Gold Medals

are "the highest civilian honor award program ... [to] honor national achievement in patriotic, humanitarian, and artistic endeavors."[47] There are no specific criteria to determine whether or not an individual or group meets those lofty goals. Instead, each individual or group is judged on their merits by Congress should the legislation be considered.

Specification of Design Elements

Congressional Gold Medal authorizations generally do not specify design elements. Instead, they direct the Secretary of the Treasury to "strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary."[48] Should Congress want to specify particular design elements, they might be included in the authorizing legislation.[49] This would provide the Secretary of the Treasury with congressional intent on what should be incorporated into the gold medal design. Similar statutory specificity is sometimes included in commemorative coin legislation.[50] Such specification, however, could serve to limit design choices for the gold medal and might alter the cost structure of striking the award, if the required element diverges from standard practices.[51]

Location of Medal Awarded to Groups

Congressional Gold Medal legislation for groups generally provides that only a single gold medal is struck and specifies where it will be located after it is formally awarded. In many cases, the gold medal is given to the Smithsonian for appropriate display and where it can be made available for research.[52] In other cases, the gold medal is provided to an organization that represents the honored group.[53] Since most gold medal legislation contains a provision on the medal's location, a Member of Congress can help determine where the medal will be located.

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[47] *Civic Art*, p. 480.

[48] For example, see P.L. 113-11, §2(b) ("The Little Rock Four"), 127 Stat. 447, May 24, 2013; or P.L. 113-114, §2(b) (Shimon Peres), 128 Stat. 1176, June 9, 2014.

[49] For example, the Native American Code Talkers Congressional Gold Medal provided general specifications for the gold medal. It stated that "the design of a gold medal ... shall be emblematic of the participation of the code talkers of each recognized tribe" P.L. 110-420, 122 Stat. 4776, October 18, 2008.

[50] For example, Congress specified that the Apollo 11 50th Anniversary commemorative coin "shall be produced in a fashion similar to the 2014 National Baseball Hall of Fame 75th Anniversary Commemorative Coin, so that the reverse of the coin is convex to more closely resemble the visor of the astronaut's helmet of the time and the obverse concave, providing a more dramatic display of the obverse design.... " P.L. 114-282, §3(d)(1), 130 Stat. 1443, December 16, 2016.

[51] For example, see discussion on the size of precious-metal blanks for the 2014 National Baseball Hall of Fame commemorative coin that accompanied P.L. 113-10 (127 Stat. 445, May 17, 2013), at "National Baseball Hall of Fame Commemorative Coin Act Amendment," *Congressional Record*, vol. 159, daily edition (April 24, 2013), pp. H2260-H2261.

[52] For example, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Gold Medal provided "(1) ... Following the award of the gold medal in commemoration to the members of the Office of Strategic Services under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research [; and] (2) ... It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the Office of Strategic Services." P.L. 114-269, §3(c), 130 Stat. 1393, December 14, 2016.

[53] For example, the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Congressional Gold Medal was provided to the National Museum of the United States Air Force. P.L. 113-106, §2(a)(3), 128 Stat. 1161, May 23, 2014.

Institutional Consideration

Requirements for Legislative Considerations

As discussed above under "Authorizing Congressional Gold Medals," neither the House nor Senate rules provide any restrictions specifically concerning consideration of Congressional Gold Medal legislation on the House or Senate floor. In the 115th Congress, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs requires that at least 67 Senators must cosponsor any Senate Congressional Gold Medal bill before being considered by the committee.[54] Currently, the House Financial Services Committee has not adopted any specific rules concerning committee consideration of Congressional Gold Medal legislation, although it has required a minimum number of cosponsors in past Congresses for committee consideration.[55] Additionally, House Republican Conference rules provide guidance for the Majority Leader when scheduling Congressional Gold Medal legislation.[56]

As demonstrated by the discontinuation of the House Financial Services Committee rule requiring a minimum number of cosponsors for committee gold medal legislation, committee rules can be changed from Congress to Congress. Should the committee want to place requirements on its consideration of gold medal legislation, the Financial Services Committee could readopt its former rule, or something similar. Adopting committee rules to require a minimum number of cosponsors might encourage bill sponsors to build support among Representatives for gold medal bills. Such a minimum requirement, however, could potentially limit the number or type of gold medal bills the committee considers.[57] Since only the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs has a rule that imposes a formal qualification on the potential committee consideration of gold medal legislation, the possible path forward for a bill can be different within each chamber.

Should the House, the Senate, or both want to adopt similar language for committee or chamber consideration of gold medal legislation, such language could be incorporated into future committee rules, into House and Senate Rules, or into law. Taking steps to formally codify the gold medal consideration process might provide sponsors with a single process for award consideration, which could make it easier for gold medal bills to meet minimum requirements for consideration across both the House and Senate. Such codification could also limit congressional flexibility and might result in fewer proposals or authorizations to comply with new standards.

Statutory Standards

Currently, there is no statutory limit to the number of Congressional Gold Medals that can be authorized. Should Congress want to place a limit on the number of gold medals awarded, standards could be adopted to provide a maximum number of gold medals authorized in any year

[54] "Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Rules of Procedure," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 161 (January 24, 2017), p. S433.

[55] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Financial Services, Rules for the Committee on Financial Services, 113th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2013), p. 6, at http://financialservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/113-a.pdf#page=12.

[56] Rule 28(a)(7), *Rules of the House Republican Conference for the 115th Congress*, available at http://www.gop.gov/about/115th-rules.

[57] As noted earlier, however, neither the current House Republican Conference rules, nor the previous House Financial Services Committee rules, formally preclude House consideration of any gold medal bill; the House has alternative mechanisms for floor consideration should it wish to employ them.

or Congress. Congress has previously adopted similar standards for commemorative coins—only two coins may be minted in any given calendar year.[58]

Legislation to place a limit on the number of gold medals authorized has previously been introduced and considered in the House. During the 109th Congress (2005-2006), H.R. 54 passed the House and would have restricted the Secretary of the Treasury from striking "more than 2 congressional gold medals for presentation ... in any calendar year."[59] Introduced by Representative Michael Castle, the stated purpose of the legislation was to "maintain the prestige of the medal by limiting the number that may be awarded each year," and to "clarify that recipients are individuals and not groups." Passage of the measure, he argued, would "ensure the future integrity and true honor of the award."[60] H.R. 54 did not receive further consideration in the Senate.

While proponents of a limit on the number of gold medals issued might make arguments similar to those made by Representative Castle, opponents believe that Congress should reserve the right to authorize as many gold medals as it deems necessary, without consideration of the number struck in any calendar year. Representative Joseph Crowley in opposing the legislation told his House colleagues, "We are rushing to act on an issue that does not represent a problem." "Who that received this medal in the past," he asked, "was not worthy of it?" Further, Crowley argued that "there are occasions when more than one person is justified to receive the medal for their honorable actions in tandem with others." He continued by emphasizing that had this bill already been law, "Congress would not have been able to issue" a Congressional Gold Medal "to the Little Rock Nine," to "President and Mrs. Reagan," or to "Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King."[61]

Concluding Observations

Congressional Gold Medals have long been an important way for Congress to express public gratitude for important historical events and achievements. Congressional Gold Medals, which have been issued since the American Revolution, are "the highest civilian honor award program ... [to] honor national achievement in patriotic, humanitarian, and artistic endeavors."[62] In recent years, the number of gold medals awarded has "soared from four or five per decade for most of its history to an average of almost twenty in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s."[63]

Each Congress, legislation to award Congressional Gold Medals is introduced. In the 113th Congress (2013-2014), 52 bills were introduced, 34 in the House and 18 in the Senate, to award a gold medal. In the 114th Congress (2015-2016), 52 bills were introduced, 38 in the House and 14 in the Senate.

Based on the number of measures offered in both chambers, some Members of Congress clearly feel it is important to recognize individuals and groups for their patriotic, humanitarian, and artistic achievements. Several considerations appear important when Members decide to

[58] P.L. 104-208, §529, 110 Stat. 3009-349, September 30, 1996; 31 U.S.C. §5112(m)(1). For more information on commemorative coins, see CRS Report R44623, *Commemorative Coins: Background, Legislative Process, and Issues for Congress*, by Jacob R. Straus.

[59] H.R. 54 (109th Congress), passed the House on January 26, 2005.

[60] "Congressional Gold Medal Enhancement Act of 2005," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 151 (January 26, 2004), p. H207. See also "Limits May Be Imposed on Honor Medals," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2005, p. A17.

[61] Ibid., pp. H206-H207, H209.

[62] *Civic Art*, p. 480.

[63] *Civic Art*, p. 484.

introduce gold medal legislation. These include who should be honored, how many medals should be awarded in a given Congress, and whether specific design elements should be prescribed for the medal design. As Congress continues to consider legislation to award future gold medals, these considerations and others will likely be important factors for issuing the award.

Appendix. Summary of Congressional Gold Medals Awarded: 1776-2017

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
George Washington	March 25, 1776	Continental Congress
Major General Horatio Gates	November 4, 1777	Continental Congress
Major General Anthony Wayne	July 26, 1779	Continental Congress
Major Henry Lee	September 24, 1779	Continental Congress
Brigadier General Daniel Morgan	March 9, 1781	Continental Congress
Major General Nathanael Greene	October 29, 1781	Continental Congress
John Paul Jones	October 16, 1787	Continental Congress
Captain Thomas Truxtun	March 29, 1800	2 Stat. 87
Commodore Edward Preble	March 3, 1805	2 Stat. 346-347
Captain Isaac Hull, Captain Stephen Decatur, and Captain Jacob Jones	January 29, 1813	2 Stat. 830
Captain William Bainbridge	March 3, 1813	2 Stat. 831
Captain Oliver Hazard Perry and Captain Jesse D. Elliott	January 6, 1814	3 Stat. 141
Lieutenant William Burrows and Lieutenant Edward R. McCall	January 6, 1814	3 Stat. 141-142
Captain James Lawrence	January 11, 1814	3 Stat. 142
Captain Thomas MacDonough, Captain Robert Henly, and Lieutenant Stephen Cassin	October 20, 1814	3 Stat. 245-246
Captain Lewis Warrington	October 21, 1814	3 Stat. 246
Captain Johnston Blakely	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 246-247
Major General Jacob Brown	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 247
Major General Winfield Scott	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 247
Brigadier General Eleazar W. Ripley, Brigadier General James Miller, and Major General Peter B. Porter	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 247
Major General Edmund P. Gaines	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 247
Major General Alexander Macomb	November 3, 1814	3 Stat. 247
Major General Andrew Jackson	February 27, 1815	3 Stat. 249
Captain Charles Stewart	February 22, 1816	3 Stat. 341
Captain James Biddle	February 22, 1816	3 Stat. 341
Major General William Henry Harrison and Governor Isaac Shelby	April 4, 1818	3 Stat. 476

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Colonel George Croghan	February 13, 1835	4 Stat. 792
Major General Zachary Taylor	July 16, 1846; March 2, 1847	9 Stat. 111; 9 Stat. 206
Rescuers of the Officers and Crew of the U.S. brig *Somers*	March 3, 1847	9 Stat. 208
Major General Winfield Scott	March 9, 1848	9 Stat. 333
Major General Zachary Taylor	May 9, 1848	9 Stat. 334-335
Commander Duncan N. Ingraham	August 4, 1854	10 Stat. 594-595
Frederick A. Rose	May 11, 1858	11 Stat. 369
Major General Ulysses S. Grant	December 17, 1863	13 Stat. 399
Cornelius Vanderbilt	January 28, 1864	13 Stat. 401
Captain Creighton, Captain Low, and Captain Stouffer	July 26, 1866	14 Stat. 365-366
Cyrus W. Field	March 2, 1867	14 Stat. 574
George Peabody	March 16, 1867	15 Stat. 20
George F. Robinson	March 1, 1871	16 Stat. 704
Captain Jared S. Crandall and Others	February 24, 1873	17 Stat. 638
John Horn Jr.	June 20, 1874 April 28, 1904	18 Stat. 573 33 Stat. 1684-1685
John F. Slater	February 5, 1883	22 Stat. 636
Joseph Francis	August 27, 1888	25 Stat. 1249
Chief Engineer George Wallace Melville and Others	September 30, 1890	26 Stat. 552-553
First Lieutenant Frank H. Newcomb	May 3, 1900	31 Stat. 717
First Lieutenant David H. Jarvis, Second Lieutenant Ellsworth P. Bertholf, and Dr. Samuel J. Call	June 28, 1902	32 Stat. 492
Wright Brothers	March 4, 1909	35 Stat. 1627
Captain Arthur Henry Rostron	July 6, 1912	37 Stat. 639
Captain Paul H. Kreibohm and Others	March 19, 1914	38 Stat. 769
Domicio da Gama, Romulo S. Naon, and Eduardo Suarez	March 4, 1915	38 Stat. 1228
Charles A. Lindbergh	May 4, 1928	45 Stat. 490
Lincoln Ellsworth, Roald Amundsen, and Umberto Nobile	May 29, 1928	45 Stat. 2026-2027
Thomas A. Edison	May 29, 1928	45 Stat. 1012
First Successful Trans-Atlantic Flight	February 9, 1929	45 Stat. 1158

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Major Walter Reed and Associates for Yellow Fever Experimentations in Cuba	February 28, 1929	45 Stat. 1409-1410
Officers and Men of the Byrd Antarctic Expedition	May 23, 1930	46 Stat. 379
Lincoln Ellsworth	June 16, 1936	49 Stat. 2324
George M. Cohan	June 29, 1936	49 Stat. 2371
Mrs. Richard Aldrich and Anna Bouligny	June 20, 1938	52 Stat. 1365
Howard Hughes	August 7, 1939	53 Stat. 1525
Reverend Francis X. Quinn	August 10, 1939	53 Stat. 1533
William Sinnott	June 15, 1940	54 Stat. 1283
Roland Boucher	January 20, 1942	56 Stat. 1099-1100
George Catlett Marshall, General of the Army, and Fleet Admiral Ernest Joseph King	March 22, 1946	60 Stat. 1134-1135
John J. Pershing, General of the Armies of the United States	August 7, 1946	60 Stat. 1297-1298
Brigadier General William Mitchell	August 8, 1946	60 Stat. 1319
Vice President Alben W. Barkley	August 12, 1949	P.L. 81-221, 63 Stat. 599
Irving Berlin	July 16, 1954	P.L. 83-536, 68 Stat. A120
Doctor Jonas E. Salk	August 9, 1955	P.L. 84-297, 69 Stat. 589
Surviving Veterans of the War Between the States	July 18, 1956	P.L. 84-730, 70 Stat. 577
Rear Admiral Hyman George Rickover	August 28, 1958	P.L. 85-826, 72 Stat. 985
Doctor Robert H. Goddard	September 16, 1959	P.L. 86-277, 73 Stat. 562-563
Robert Frost	September 13, 1960	P.L. 86-747, 74 Stat. 883
Doctor Thomas Anthony Dooley III	May 27, 1961	P.L. 87-42, 75 Stat. 87
Bob Hope	June 8, 1962	P.L. 87-478, 76 Stat. 93
Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives	September 26, 1962	P.L. 87-478, 76 Stat. 605
Douglas MacArthur, General of the Army	October 9, 1962	P.L. 87-760, 76 Stat. 760
Walt Disney	May 24, 1968	P.L. 90-316, 82 Stat. 130-131
Winston Churchill	May 7, 1969	P.L. 91-12, 83 Stat. 8-9
Roberto Walker Clemente	May 14, 1973	P.L. 93-33, 87 Stat. 71

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Marian Anderson	March 8, 1977	P.L. 95-9, 91 Stat. 19
Lieutenant General Ira C. Eaker	October 10, 1978	P.L. 95-438, 92 Stat. 1060
Robert F. Kennedy	November 1, 1978	P.L. 95-560, 92 Stat. 2142
John Wayne	May 26, 1979	P.L. 96-15, 93 Stat. 32
Ben Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson, and Larry Newman	June 13, 1979	P.L. 96-20, 93 Stat. 45
Hubert H. Humphrey	June 13, 1979	P.L. 96-91, 93 Stat. 46
American Red Cross	December 12, 1979	P.L. 96-138, 93 Stat. 1063
Ambassador Kenneth Taylor	March 6, 1980	P.L. 96-201, 94 Stat. 79
Simon Wiesenthal	March 17, 1980	P.L. 96-211, 94 Stat. 101
1980 United States Summer Olympic Team	July 8, 1980	P.L. 96-306, 94 Stat. 937
Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands	March 22, 1982	P.L. 97-158, 96 Stat. 18-19
Admiral Hyman George Rickover	June 23, 1982	P.L. 97-201, 96 Stat. 126-127
Fred Waring	August 26, 1982	P.L. 97-246, 96 Stat. 315-316
Joe Louis	August 26, 1982	P.L. 97-246, 96 Stat. 315-316
Louis L'Amour	August 26, 1982	P.L. 97-246, 96 Stat. 315-316
Leo J. Ryan	November 18, 1983	P.L. 98-159, 97 Stat. 992
Danny Thomas	November 29, 1983	P.L. 98-159, 97 Stat. 992
Harry S. Truman	May 8, 1984	P.L. 98-278, 98 Stat. 173-175
Lady Bird Johnson	May 8, 1984	P.L. 98-278, 98 Stat. 173-175
Elie Wiesel	May 8, 1984	P.L. 98-278, 98 Stat. 173-175
Roy Wilkins	May 17, 1984	P.L. 98-285, 98 Stat. 186
George and Ira Gershwin	August 9, 1985	P.L. 99-86, 99 Stat. 288-289

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Anatoly and Avital Shcharansky	May 13, 1986	P.L. 99-298, 100 Stat. 432-433
Harry Chapin	May 20, 1986	P.L. 99-311, 100 Stat. 464
Aaron Copland	September 23, 1986	P.L. 99-418, Stat. 952-953
Mary Lasker	December 24, 1987	P.L. 100-210, 101 Stat. 1441
Jesse Owens	September 20, 1988	P.L. 100-437, 102 Stat. 1717
Andrew Wyeth	November 9, 1988	P.L. 100-639, 102 Stat. 3331-3332
Laurence Spelman Rockefeller	May 17, 1990	P.L. 101-296, 104 Stat. 197-199
General Matthew B. Ridgeway	November 5, 1990	P.L. 101-510, 104 Stat. 1720-1721
General H. Norman Schwarzkopf	April 23, 1991	P.L. 102-32, 105 Stat. 175-176
General Colin Powell	April 23, 1991	P.L. 102-33, 105 Stat. 177-178
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson	November 2, 1994	P.L. 103-457, 108 Stat. 4799-4800
Ruth and Billy Graham	February 13, 1996	P.L. 104-111, 110 Stat. 772-773
Francis Albert "Frank" Sinatra	May 14, 1997	P.L. 105-14, 111 Stat. 32-33
Mother Teresa of Calcutta	June 2, 1997	P.L. 105-16, 111 Stat. 35-36
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew	October 6, 1997	P.L. 105-51, 111 Stat. 117-1171
Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela	July 29, 1998	P.L. 105-215, 112 Stat. 895-896
Little Rock Nine	October 21, 1998	P.L. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681-597
Gerald R. and Betty Ford	October 21, 1998	P.L. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681-598
Rosa Parks	May 4, 1999	P.L. 106-26, 113 Stat. 50-51
Theodore M. Hesburgh	December 9, 1999	P.L. 106-153, 113 Stat. 1733-1734

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
John Cardinal O'Connor	March 3, 2000	P.L. 106-175, 114 Stat. 20-21
Charles M. Schulz	June 20, 2000	P.L. 106-225, 114 Stat. 457-458
Pope John Paul II	July 27, 2000	P.L. 106-250, 114 Stat. 622-623
Ronald and Nancy Reagan	July 27, 2000	P.L. 106-251, 114 Stat. 624-625
Navajo Code Talkers	December 21, 2000	P.L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763
General Henry H. Shelton	January 16, 2002	P.L. 107-127, 115 Stat. 2405-2406
Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom	July 17, 2003	P.L. 108-60, 117 Stat. 862-863
Jackie Roosevelt Robinson	October 23, 2003	P.L. 108-101, 117 Stat. 1195-1197
Dr. Dorothy Height	December 6, 2003	P.L. 108-162, 117 Stat. 2017-2019
Reverend Joseph A. DeLaine, Harry and Eliza Briggs, and Levi Pearson	December 15, 2003	P.L. 108-180, 117 Stat. 2645-2647
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King	October 25, 2004	P.L. 108-368, 118 Stat. 1746-1748
The Tuskegee Airmen	April 11, 2006	P.L. 109-213, 120 Stat. 322
Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama	September 27, 2006	P.L. 109-287, 120 Stat. 1231-1232
Byron Nelson	October 16, 2006	P.L. 109-357, 120 Stat. 2044-2046
Dr. Norman E. Borlaug	December 14, 2006	P.L. 109-395, 120 Stat. 2709
Michael Ellis DeBakey, M.D.	October 10, 2007	P.L. 110-95, 121 Stat. 1008
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi	May 6, 2008	P.L. 110-209, 122 Stat. 721
Constantino Brumidi	July 1, 2008	P.L. 110-259, 122 Stat. 2430-2432
Edward William Brooke III	July 1, 2008	P.L. 110-260, 122 Stat. 2433-2435
Native American Code Talkers	October 15, 2008	P.L. 110-420, 122 Stat. 4774

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII ('WASP')	July 1, 2009	P.L. 111-40, 123 Stat. 1958
Neil A. Armstrong, Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr., Michael Collins, and John Herschel Glenn Jr.	August 7, 2009	P.L. 111-44, 123 Stat. 1966-1967
Arnold Palmer	September 30, 2009	P.L. 111-65, 123 Stat. 2003
Dr. Muhammad Yunus	October 5, 2010	P.L. 111-253, 124 Stat. 2635
100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service, United States Army	October 5, 2010	P.L. 111-254, 124 Stat. 2637
Montford Point Marines	November 11, 2011	P.L. 112-59, 125 Stat. 751
The Fallen Heroes of 9/11	December 23, 2011	P.L. 112-76, 125 Stat. 1275 and 1276
Raoul Wallenberg	July 26, 2012	P.L. 112-148, 126 Stat. 1140-1143
Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley	May 24, 2013	P.L. 113-11, 127 Stat. 447
The First Special Service Force, World War II	July 12, 2013	P.L. 113-16,127 Stat. 477
American Fighter Aces	May 23, 2014	P.L. 113-105, 128 Stat. 1159
World War II members of the 17th Bombardment Group known as "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders"	May 23, 2014	P.L. 113-106, 128 Stat. 1160
World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol	May 30, 2014	P.L. 113-108, 128 Stat. 1164
President Shimon Peres	June 9, 2014	P.L. 113-114, 128 Stat. 1175
Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section under the Allied Armies (Monuments Men)	June 9, 2014	P.L. 113-116, 128 Stat. 1179
65th Infantry Regiment, United States Army, known as the Borinqueneers	June 10, 2014	P.L. 113-120, 128 Stat. 1183
Jack Nicklaus	December 16, 2014	P.L. 113-210, 128 Stat. 2077
Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965	March 7, 2015	P.L. 114-5, 129 Stat. 78
Filipino Veterans of World War II	December 14, 2016	P.L. 114-265, 130 Stat. 1376

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
Office of Strategic Services	December 14, 2016	P.L. 114-269, 130 Stat. 1391
Bob Dole	September 15, 2017	P.L. 115-60, 131 Stat. 1154

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