

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6788

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 761st Tank Battalion, collectively, in recognition of their crucial role in the success of Allied forces in Europe and for the example they set as the first Black soldiers to go to war as part of an American armored unit.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 18, 2022

Mr. PALMER (for himself and Ms. SEWELL) 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 761st Tank Battalion, collectively, in recognition of their crucial role in the success of Allied forces in Europe and for the example they set as the first Black soldiers to go to war as part of an American armored unit.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “761st Tank Battalion
5 Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The 761st Tank Battalion, known as the
4 “Black Panthers”, was activated on April 1, 1942,
5 and served as the first predominantly Black Amer-
6 ican armored battalion in the European Theater of
7 World War II until its deactivation on June 1, 1946,
8 in Germany.

9 (2) Lieutenant Jackie Robinson, the first Black
10 Major League baseball player, was among the few
11 Black officers in the 761st, but he was court
12 martialed before seeing combat for an act of civil
13 disobedience in refusing to move to the back of a
14 bus.

15 (3) Despite resistance from many top-level
16 American politicians and military officers, the 761st
17 served valiantly under Lieutenant General George S.
18 Patton.

19 (4) In his welcoming speech, Patton said, “I
20 would never have asked for you if you weren’t good.
21 I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don’t care
22 what color you are as long as you go up there and
23 kill those. . .”.

24 (5) After entering combat in late fall 1944, the
25 761st lived up to their motto, “Come Out Fighting”,

1 enduring 183 days of combat without being pulled
2 from the line.

3 (6) The 761st played a crucial role in numerous
4 battles including the Battle of the Bulge and helped
5 break out the encircled American paratroopers in the
6 town of Bastogne.

7 (7) During their time in combat, the 761st in-
8 flicted 130,000 casualties on the Germans while en-
9 during a casualty rate of almost 50 percent with the
10 loss of 71 tanks.

11 (8) As the spearhead for several of Patton's
12 moves toward Germany, they were the first Amer-
13 ican unit to break through the Siegfried Line and
14 they were one of the first American units to link up
15 with the Russian Army at the Enns River at Steyr,
16 Austria.

17 (9) Sadly, like other Black soldiers in World
18 War II, members of the 761st did not receive the
19 recognition that was due them upon returning home,
20 and instead faced prejudice at home after the war.

21 (10) The accomplishments of the 761st were
22 largely unrecognized until 1978 when, over three
23 decades after the war, the battalion finally received
24 a Presidential Unit Citation.

1 (11) The citation acknowledges “the extraor-
2 dinary gallantry, courage, professionalism, and high
3 esprit de corps displayed in the accomplishment of
4 unusually difficult and hazardous operations in the
5 European Theater of Operations”.

6 (12) In addition to that citation, individual
7 members of the 761st had earned the following: 1
8 Medal of Honor, 11 Silver Stars, and approximately
9 300 Purple Hearts.

10 (13) The United States is eternally grateful to
11 the soldiers of the 761st Tank Battalion for their
12 crucial role in the success of Allied forces in Europe
13 and for helping ensure freedom around the globe.

14 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

15 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
16 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
17 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
18 for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold
19 medal of appropriate design to the 761st Tank Battalion,
20 collectively, in recognition of their crucial role in the suc-
21 cess of Allied forces in Europe and for the example they
22 set as the first Black soldiers to go to war as part of an
23 American armored unit.

24 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
25 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary

1 of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
2 “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable em-
3 blems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the
4 Secretary.

5 (c) NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HIS-
6 TORY AND CULTURE.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
8 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal
9 shall be given to the National Museum of African
10 American History and Culture, where the medal
11 shall be available for display as appropriate and
12 available for research.

13 (2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense
14 of Congress that the National Museum of African
15 American History and Culture should make the gold
16 medal received under paragraph (1) available for
17 display elsewhere, particularly at appropriate loca-
18 tions associated with the 761st Tank Battalion.

19 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

20 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
21 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at
22 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
23 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
3 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
4 51 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
6 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
7 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

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