

163rd CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H.R.4.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 16, 2022

Representative Ms. Natalia Poklonskaya of Olympia (for herself,
Senator Mr. Sullivan of Olympia;) introduced the following bill;

A BILL

To post humorously award a Congressional Gold Medal to former Rear Admiral and former Senator Jeremiah Andrew Denton Jr., in recognition of his extraordinary contributions and commitment to his nation while he served in the armed forces, his upholding of the highest traditions of the Naval Service and United States Armed Forces, and his immense contribution to this nation as a Senator for the State of Alabama.

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Jeremiah Denton Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2022”

SEC. 2. SHORT TITLE.

Congress finds that. —

- (a) Rear Admiral Jeremiah Denton was a Naval aviator and served in the United States Navy for 34 Years. In this time he served in various ships and carriers and contributed immensely as a test pilot, flight instructor, and commanding officer of an attack squadron flying the A-6 Intruder;
- (b) Denton was born July 15, 1924, in Mobile, Alabama, the oldest of three brothers, and the son of Jeremiah Sr. and Irene (Steele) Denton. He attended McGill–Toolen Catholic High School (Class of 1942) and Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama;
- (c) In June 1943, he entered the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and graduated three years later in the accelerated Class of 1947 on June 5, 1946, with a Bachelor of Science degree;
- (d) In 1957, he was credited with revolutionizing naval strategy and tactics for nuclear war as the architect of the "Haystack Concept." This strategy called for concealing aircraft

carriers from radar by intermingling with commercial shipping and avoiding formations suggestive of a naval fleet. The strategy was simulated in maneuvers and demonstrated effectiveness, allowing two aircraft carrier fleets thirty-five simulated atomic launches before aggressor aircraft and submarines could repel them. He went on to serve on the staff of the Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet at the rank of Commander (O-5) as Fleet Air Defense Officer;

- (e) Denton was awarded the prestigious President's Award for his thesis on international affairs;
- (f) In 1965 he became the prospecting commanding officer of his squadron;
- (g) On July 18, 1965, Commander Denton was piloting his A-6A Intruder jet while leading a twenty-eight aircraft bombing mission over North Vietnam and was forced to eject due to a bomb exploding preemptively. He and his Navigator were both captured and taken Prisoners of War;
- (h) Denton followed the code of conduct in the best traditions of the United States navy by assuming command in makeshift prison camps and not cooperating with the enemy even after facing grueling conditions which motivated his fellow soldiers;
- (i) During the Hanoi March in July of 1996 he notably ordered his fellow aviators to keep their heads up after the Vietnamese asked them to bow and walk with their heads down. He reportedly said "You are Americans. So walk with your heads up like Americans do";
- (j) In 1966 in a televised press interview with a Japanese reporter, he sent a distress message home, without thinking of future repercussions to help his fellow aviators. Through expert coordination he answered questions being asked to him while blinking out the words T O R T U R E through his eyes in Morse code. This helped the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence confirm that American POWS were indeed being tortured in Vietnam.;
- (k) When asked about his views on the wars he replied "I don't know what is happening, but whatever the position of my government is, I support it fully. Whatever the position of my government, I believe in it, yes, sir. I am a member of that government, and it is my job to support it, and I will as long as I live." In a clear blowback to Vietnamese propaganda efforts;
- (l) 2) Denton was sent to various prison camps including the notorious Hanoi Hilton, the Zoo and Alcatraz. He heroically resisted cruelties and continued to promulgate resistance policy and detailed instructions.;
- (m) He was a member of the so-called Alcatraz gang. He was thrown in a 3-by-9-foot cell where he spent most of his time in leg cuffs. He was one of the leaders of the resistance group against the Vietnamese. He faced grueling and torturous conditions but abided by the code of conduct to the best of his abilities. Displaying extraordinary skill, fearless dedication to duty, and resourcefulness, he reflected great credit upon himself and his country. He inspired other prisoners to resist the Vietnamese. He was also one of the leaders of the 4th allied POW wing. He continued serving even after his repatriation to the United States;
- (n) He was awarded various medals for his courage, including the Navy Cross; and
- (o) He was elected to the Senate of the United States in 1981, where he continued to honorably serve this nation.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

- (a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.** — The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President *Pro-Tempore* of the Senate shall make the appropriate arrangements for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration of Senator Jeremiah Andrew Denton Jr., in recognition of his achievements and contributions to American Culture.
- (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.
- (c) **MUSEUM.** —
 - a. **IN GENERAL.** — Following the award of the gold medal in honor of Jeremiah Andrew Denton Jr. subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the National Museum of the United States Navy, where it shall be made available for display as appropriate and made available for research.
 - b. **SENSE OF CONGRESS.** — It is the sense of Congress that the National Museum of the United States Navy shall make the gold medal received under paragraph (a) available for display, particularly at. —
 - i. Appropriate locations associated with Senator Jeremiah Andrew Denton Jr.

SEC. 4. 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 cost of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.

- 1) **National Medals.** — Medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.
- 2) **Numismatic Items.** — For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered Numismatic Items.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

- 1) **Authority To Use Fund Amounts.** — There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

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- 2) Proceeds Of Sale. — Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.