

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 418

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of  
the Civil Air Patrol.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 28, 2011

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. INOUE, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. WYDEN,  
and Mr. BEGICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and  
referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War  
II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

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 makes the following findings:

5               (1) The volunteer members of the Civil Air Pa-  
6       trol (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “CAP”)  
7       during World War II, civilian men and women rang-  
8       ing in age from 18 to 81, provided extraordinary  
9       public and combat services during a critical time of  
10      need for the Nation.

1           (2) During the war, CAP members used their  
2           own aircraft to perform a myriad of essential tasks  
3           for the military and the Nation within the United  
4           States, including attacks on enemy submarines off  
5           the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United  
6           States.

7           (3) This extraordinary service set the stage for  
8           the post-war CAP to become a valuable nonprofit,  
9           public service organization chartered by Congress  
10          and the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force  
11          that provides essential emergency, operational, and  
12          public services to communities, States, the Federal  
13          Government, and the military.

14          (4) The CAP was established, initially as a part  
15          of the Office of Civil Defense, by air-minded citizens  
16          one week before the surprise attack on Pearl Har-  
17          bor, Hawaii, on December 1, 1941, “out of the de-  
18          sire of civil airmen of the country to be mobilized  
19          with their equipment in the common defense” of the  
20          Nation.

21          (5) Within days of the start of the war, the  
22          German Navy started a massive submarine offensive,  
23          known as Operation Drumbeat, off the east coast of  
24          the United States against oil tankers and other crit-  
25          ical shipping that threatened the overall war effort.

1           (6) Neither the Navy nor the Army had enough  
2           aircraft, ships, or other resources to adequately pa-  
3           trol and protect the shipping along the Atlantic and  
4           Gulf of Mexico coasts of the United States, and  
5           many ships were torpedoed within sight of civilians  
6           on shore, including 52 tankers sunk between Janu-  
7           ary and March 1942.

8           (7) At that time General George Marshall re-  
9           marked that “[t]he losses by submarines off our At-  
10          lantic seaboard and in the Caribbean now threaten  
11          our entire war effort”.

12          (8) From the beginning CAP leaders urged the  
13          military to use its services to patrol coastal waters  
14          but met with great resistance because of the non-  
15          military training and status of CAP pilots.

16          (9) Finally, in response to the ever-increasing  
17          submarine attacks, the Tanker Committee of the Pe-  
18          troleum Industry War Council urged the Navy De-  
19          partment and the War Department to consider the  
20          use of the CAP to help patrol the sea lanes off the  
21          coasts of the United States.

22          (10) While the Navy initially rejected this sug-  
23          gestion, the Army decided it had merit, and the Civil  
24          Air Patrol Coastal Patrol began in March 1942.

1           (11) Oil companies and other organizations pro-  
2       vided funds to help pay for some CAP operations,  
3       including vitally needed shore radios that were used  
4       to monitor patrol missions.

5           (12) By late March 1942, the Navy also began  
6       to use the services of the CAP.

7           (13) Starting with three bases located in Dela-  
8       ware, Florida, and New Jersey, CAP aircrews imme-  
9       diately started to spot enemy submarines as well as  
10      lifeboats, bodies, and wreckage.

11          (14) Within 15 minutes of the first Coast Pa-  
12      trol flight, the pilot had sighted a torpedoed tanker  
13      and was coordinating rescue operations.

14          (15) Eventually 21 bases, ranging from Bar  
15      Harbor, Maine, to Brownsville, Texas, were set up  
16      for the CAP to patrol the Atlantic and Gulf of Mex-  
17      ico coasts of the United States, with 40,000 volun-  
18      teers participating.

19          (16) The CAP used a wide range of civilian-  
20      owned aircraft, mainly light-weight, single engine  
21      aircraft—manufactured by Cessna, Beech, Waco,  
22      Fairchild, Stinson, Piper, Taylorcraft, and Sikorsky,  
23      among others—as well as some twin engine aircraft  
24      such as the Grumman Widgeon.

1           (17) These aircraft were painted in their civil-  
2           ian prewar colors (red, yellow, blue, etc.) and carried  
3           special markings (a blue circle with a white triangle)  
4           to identify them as CAP aircraft.

5           (18) Patrols were conducted up to 100 miles off  
6           shore, generally with 2 aircraft flying together, in  
7           aircraft often equipped with only a compass for navi-  
8           gation and a single radio for communication.

9           (19) Due to the critical nature of the situation,  
10          CAP operations were conducted in bad weather as  
11          well as good, often when the military was unable to  
12          fly, and in all seasons (including the winter) when  
13          ditching an aircraft in cold water would likely mean  
14          certain death to the aircrew.

15          (20) Personal emergency equipment was often  
16          lacking, particularly during early patrols where inner  
17          tubes and kapok duck hunter vests were carried as  
18          flotation devices since ocean worthy wet suits, life  
19          vests, and life rafts were unavailable.

20          (21) The initial purpose of the CAP was to spot  
21          submarines, report their position to the military, and  
22          force them to dive below the surface, which limited  
23          their operating speed and maneuverability and re-  
24          duced their ability to detect and attack shipping.

1           (22) It soon became apparent that there were  
2           opportunities for CAP pilots to attack submarines,  
3           such as when a Florida CAP aircrew came across a  
4           surfaced submarine that quickly stranded itself on a  
5           sand bar. However, the aircrew could not get any as-  
6           sistance from armed military aircraft before the sub-  
7           marine freed itself.

8           (23) Finally, after a number of these instances,  
9           a decision was made by the military to arm CAP air-  
10          craft with 50 and 100 pound bombs, and to arm  
11          some larger twin engine aircraft with 325 pound  
12          depth charges.

13          (24) The arming of CAP aircraft dramatically  
14          changed the mission for these civilian aircrews and  
15          resulted in more than 57 attacks on enemy sub-  
16          marines.

17          (25) While CAP volunteers received \$8 a day  
18          flight reimbursement, their patrols were accom-  
19          plished at a great economic cost to many of the  
20          members of the CAP who—

21                 (A) used their own aircraft and other  
22                 equipment in defense of the Nation;

23                 (B) paid for much of their own aircraft  
24                 maintenance and hangar use; and

1 (C) often lived in primitive conditions  
2 along the coast, including old barns and chicken  
3 coops converted for sleeping.

4 (26) More importantly, the CAP Coastal Patrol  
5 service came at the high cost of 26 fatalities, 7 seri-  
6 ous injuries, and 90 aircraft lost.

7 (27) At the conclusion of the 18-month Coastal  
8 Patrol, the heroic CAP aircrews would be credited  
9 with the following:

10 (A) 2 submarines destroyed or damaged.

11 (B) 57 submarines attacked.

12 (C) 82 bombs dropped against submarines.

13 (D) 173 radio reports of submarine posi-  
14 tions (with a number of credited assists for kills  
15 made by military units).

16 (E) 17 floating mines reported.

17 (F) 36 dead bodies reported.

18 (G) 91 vessels in distress reported.

19 (H) 363 survivors in distress reported.

20 (I) 836 irregularities noted.

21 (J) 1,036 special investigations at sea or  
22 along the coast.

23 (K) 5,684 convoy missions for the Navy.

24 (L) 86,685 missions flown.

25 (M) 244,600 total flight hours logged.

1 (N) More than 24,000,000 miles flown.

2 (28) At least one high-level German Navy Offi-  
3 cer credited the CAP with being the primary reason  
4 that submarine attacks were withdrawn from the At-  
5 lantic coast of the United States in 1943, when he  
6 said that “[i]t was because of those damned little  
7 red and yellow planes!”.

8 (29) The CAP was dismissed from coastal mis-  
9 sions with little thanks in August 1943 when the  
10 Navy took over the mission completely and ordered  
11 the CAP to stand down.

12 (30) While the Coastal Patrol was ongoing, the  
13 CAP was also establishing itself as a vital wartime  
14 service to the military, States, and communities na-  
15 tionwide by performing a wide range of missions in-  
16 cluding—

17 (A) border patrol;

18 (B) forest fire patrol;

19 (C) courier flights for mail, repair and re-  
20 placement parts, and urgent deliveries;

21 (D) emergency transportation of personnel;

22 (E) target towing (with live ammunition  
23 being fired at the targets and seven lives being  
24 lost) and searchlight tracking training missions;



1 (F) missing aircraft and personnel  
 2 searches;

3 (G) rescue of aircraft crash survivors;

4 (H) radar training flights;

5 (I) aerial inspections of camouflaged mili-  
 6 tary and civilian facilities;

7 (J) aerial inspections of city and town  
 8 blackout conditions;

9 (K) mock bombing attacks on cities and  
 10 facilities to test air defenses;

11 (L) aerial searches for scrap metal mate-  
 12 rials;

13 (M) support of war bond drives;

14 (N) airport guard duties;

15 (O) support for State and local emer-  
 16 gencies such as natural disasters;

17 (P) recruiting for the Army Air Force; and

18 (Q) a cadet youth program which provided  
 19 aviation and military training.

20 (31) The CAP flew more than 500,000 hours  
 21 on these additional missions, including—

22 (A) 20,500 missions involving target tow-  
 23 ing (with live ammunition) and gun/searchlight  
 24 tracking which resulted in 7 deaths, 5 serious  
 25 injuries, and the loss of 25 aircraft;

1 (B) a courier service involving 3 major Air  
2 Force Commands over a 2-year period carrying  
3 more than 3,500,000 pounds of vital cargo and  
4 543 passengers;

5 (C) southern border operations flying more  
6 than 30,000 hours, with 7,000 reports of un-  
7 usual sightings including a vehicle (that was ap-  
8 prehended) with 2 enemy agents attempting to  
9 enter the country;

10 (D) a week in February 1945 during which  
11 CAP units found seven missing Army and Navy  
12 pilots; and

13 (E) a State in which the CAP flew 790  
14 hours on forest fire patrol missions and re-  
15 ported 576 fires to authorities during a single  
16 year.

17 (32) On April 29, 1943, the CAP was trans-  
18 ferred to the Army Air Forces, thus beginning its  
19 long association with the United States Air Force.

20 (33) Hundreds of CAP-trained women joined  
21 military women's units including the Women's Air  
22 Force Service Pilots (WASP) program.

23 (34) Many members of the Women's Air Force  
24 Service Pilots program joined or rejoined the CAP  
25 during the post-war period because it provided

1 women opportunities to fly and continue to serve the  
2 Nation that were severely lacking elsewhere.

3 (35) Due to the exceptional emphasis on safety,  
4 unit discipline, and pilot discipline, and the organi-  
5 zation of the CAP, by the end of the war only 64  
6 members of the CAP had died in service and only  
7 150 aircraft had been lost (including its Coastal Pa-  
8 trol loses from early in the war).

9 (36) There were more than 60,000 adult civil-  
10 ian members of the CAP in wide range of positions,  
11 and CAP aircrews flew a total of approximately  
12 750,000 hours during the war, most of which were  
13 in their personal aircraft and often at real risk to  
14 their lives.

15 (37) After the war, at a CAP dinner for Con-  
16 gress, a quorum of both Houses attended with the  
17 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the  
18 President thanking the CAP for its service.

19 (38) While air medals were issued for those  
20 participating in the Coastal Patrol, little other rec-  
21 ognition was forthcoming for those efforts or for the  
22 other services the CAP volunteers provided during  
23 the war.

24 (39) Despite efforts to end the organization at  
25 the end of the war, the CAP had proved its capabili-

1       ties and strengthened its ties with the Air Force and  
2       Congress.

3           (40) In 1946, Congress chartered the CAP as  
4       a nonprofit, public service organization and in 1948  
5       as the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

6           (41) Today the CAP conducts many of the  
7       same missions it performed during World War II,  
8       including a vital role in homeland security.

9   **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

10       (a) AWARD.—

11           (1) AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore  
12       of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-  
13       resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements  
14       for the award, on behalf of Congress, of a single  
15       gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the  
16       World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol collec-  
17       tively, in recognition of the military service and ex-  
18       emplary record of the Civil Air Patrol during World  
19       War II.

20           (2) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes  
21       of the award referred to in paragraph (1), the Sec-  
22       retary of the Treasury shall strike the gold medal  
23       with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to  
24       be determined by the Secretary.

25           (3) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of  
2 the gold medal referred to in paragraph (1) in  
3 honor of the World War II members of the Civil  
4 Air Patrol, the gold medal shall be given to the  
5 Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be dis-  
6 played as appropriate and made available for  
7 research.

8 (B) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense  
9 of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution  
10 should make the gold medal received under this  
11 paragraph available for display elsewhere, par-  
12 ticularly at other locations associated with the  
13 Civil Air Patrol.

14 (b) DUPLICATE MEDALS.—Under such regulations  
15 as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike  
16 and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck  
17 under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of  
18 the medals, including labor, materials, dyes, use of ma-  
19 chinery, and overhead expenses.

20 (c) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to  
21 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51  
22 of title 31, United States Code.

1 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**  
2 **OF SALE.**

3 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
4 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint  
5 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000  
6 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section  
7 2.

8 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the  
9 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 2(b) shall  
10 be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise  
11 Fund.

