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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3505

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Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Congressional Gold Medal Act

Dear Colleague:

Please join me in becoming an original cosponsor of legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) for their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

The OSS was America's first effort to implement a system of strategic intelligence during World War II and provided the basis for the modern-day American intelligence and special operations communities, including being the direct precursor to the CIA and the U.S. Special Operations Command.

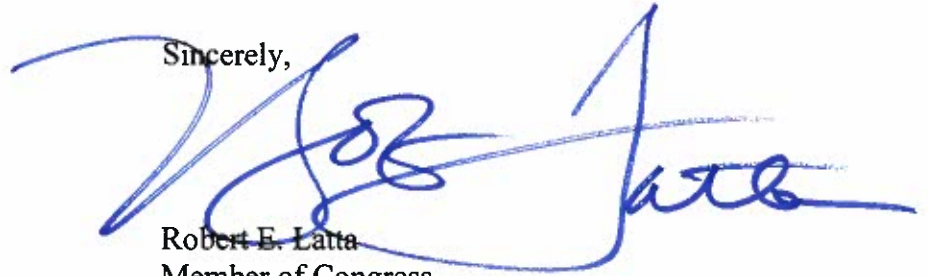
The efforts of the OSS played a crucial role in the Allied victory in WWII, including organizing, training, supplying, and fighting with resistance organizations throughout Europe and Asia; engaging in successful guerrilla warfare deep in enemy territory; establishing intelligence networks that contributed to the success of the Allied invasion of French North Africa known as Operation Torch; rescuing more than 500 down allied airmen behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia, one of the most daring and successful rescue mission of World War II; and conducting "mercy missions" at the end of the war that saved the lives of thousands of Allied prisoners of war. General Eisenhower said that if it did nothing else, the photographic reconnaissance conducted by the OSS before the D-Day Invasion justified its creation. OSS founder General William Donovan said OSS personnel "conducted some of the bravest acts of the war."

The OSS continues to inspire and instruct America's intelligence and special operations communities. Upon receiving the William J. Donovan Award from The OSS Society in 2013, Admiral William McRaven, the former commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command who led the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, said "the OSS is back."

Members of the OSS included United States Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Hollywood film director John Ford, American cooking icon Julia Child, Ralph Bunche, the first African-American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize; Virginia Hall, the only civilian woman to receive the Distinguished Service Cross in World War II; the actor Sterling Hayden, and four directors of Central Intelligence. It is time for members of the OSS to be collectively recognized for their extraordinary efforts.

Thank you for your consideration to honor these men and women. To become a co-sponsor, or request additional information, please contact Jason Isakovic on my staff at 202-225-6405, or jason.isakovic@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Latta", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. LATTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To award the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in recognition of their superior service and major contributions 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Office of Strategic
5 Services Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was
2 America's first effort to implement a system of stra-
3 tegic intelligence during World War II and provided
4 the basis for the modern-day American intelligence
5 and special operations communities. The U.S. Spe-
6 cial Operations Command and the National Clandes-
7 tine Service chose the OSS spearhead as their insig-
8 nias.

9 (2) OSS founder General William J. Donovan is
10 the only person in American history to receive our
11 Nation's four highest decorations, including the
12 Medal of Honor. Upon learning of his death in
13 1959, President Eisenhower called General Donovan
14 the "last hero". In addition to founding and leading
15 the OSS, General Donovan was also selected by
16 President Roosevelt, who called him his "secret
17 legs", as an emissary to Great Britain and conti-
18 nental Europe before the United States entered
19 World War II.

20 (3) All the military branches during World War
21 II contributed personnel to the OSS. The present-
22 day Special Operations Forces trace their lineage to
23 the OSS. Its Maritime Unit was a precursor to the
24 U.S. Navy SEALs. The OSS Operational Groups
25 and Jedburghs were forerunners to U.S. Army Spe-

1 cial Forces. The 801st/492nd Bombardment Group
2 (“Carpetbaggers”) were progenitors to the Air Force
3 Special Operations Command. The Marines who
4 served in the OSS, including the actor Sterling Hay-
5 den and Col. William Eddy, whom General Donovan
6 described as the “American Lawrence of Arabia”,
7 were predecessors to the Marines Special Operations
8 Command. U.S. Coast personnel were recruited for
9 the Maritime Unit and its Operational Swimmer
10 Group.

11 (4) The OSS organized, trained, supplied, and
12 fought with resistance organizations throughout Eu-
13 rope and Asia that played an important role in
14 America’s victory during World War II. General Ei-
15 senhower credited the OSS’s covert contribution in
16 France to the equivalent to having an extra military
17 division. General Eisenhower told General Donovan
18 that if it did nothing else, the photographic recon-
19 naissance conducted by the OSS prior to the D-Day
20 Invasion justified its creation.

21 (5) Four future directors of central intelligence
22 served as OSS officers: William Casey, William
23 Colby, Allen Dulles, and Richard Helms.

24 (6) Women comprised more than one-third of
25 OSS personnel and played a critical role in the orga-

1 nization. They included Virginia Hall, the only civil-
2 ian female to receive a Distinguished Service Cross
3 in World War II, and Julia Child.

4 (7) OSS recruited Fritz Kolbe, a German dip-
5 lomat who became America's most important spy
6 against the Nazis in World War II.

7 (8) America's leading scientists and scholars
8 served in the OSS Research and Analysis Branch,
9 including Ralph Bunche, the first African-American
10 to receive the Nobel Peace Prize; Pulitzer Prize-win-
11 ning historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.; Supreme
12 Court Justice Arthur Goldberg; Sherman Kent;
13 John King Fairbank; and Walt Rostow. It ranks in-
14 cluded seven future presidents of the American His-
15 torical Association, five of the American Economic
16 Association, and two Nobel laureates.

17 (9) The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of
18 Intelligence and Research traces its creation to the
19 OSS Research and Analysis Branch.

20 (10) The OSS invented and employed new tech-
21 nology through its Research and Development
22 Branch, inventing new weapons and revolutionary
23 communications equipment. Dr. Christian
24 Lambertsen invented the first underwater re-

1 breathing apparatus that was first utilized by the
2 OSS and is known today as SCUBA.

3 (11) OSS Detachment 101 operated in Burma
4 and pioneered the art of unconventional warfare. It
5 was the first United States unit to deploy a large
6 guerrilla army deep in enemy territory. It has been
7 credited with the highest kill/loss ratio for any infan-
8 try-type unit in American military history and was
9 awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

10 (12) Its X-2 branch pioneered counterintel-
11 ligence with the British and established the modern
12 counterintelligence community. The network of con-
13 tacts built by the OSS with foreign intelligence serv-
14 ices lead to enduring Cold War alliances.

15 (13) Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of
16 French North Africa in November 1942, was aided
17 by the networks established and information ac-
18 quired by the OSS to guide Allied landings.

19 (14) OSS Operation Halyard rescued more
20 than 500 downed airmen trapped behind enemy lines
21 in Yugoslavia, one of the most daring and successful
22 rescue operations of World War II.

23 (15) OSS “Mercy Missions” at the end of
24 World War II saved the lives of thousands of Allied

1 prisoners of war whom it was feared would be mur-
2 dered by the Japanese.

3 (16) The handful of surviving men and women
4 of the OSS whom General Donovan said performed
5 “some of the bravest acts of the war” are members
6 of the “Greatest Generation”. They have never been
7 collectively recognized for their heroic and pioneering
8 service in World War II.

9 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

10 (a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of
11 the House of Representatives and the President pro tem-
12 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
13 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
14 medal of appropriate design in commemoration to the
15 members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), in rec-
16 ognition of their superior service and major contributions
17 during World War II.

18 (b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the
19 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
20 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
21 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
22 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
23 retary.

24 (c) **SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.**—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
2 gold medal in commemoration to the members of the
3 Office of Strategic Services under subsection (a), the
4 gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Insti-
5 tution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and
6 made available for research.

7 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
8 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
9 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
10 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
11 appropriate locations associated with the Office of
12 Strategic Services.

13 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

14 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
15 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3
16 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
17 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
18 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
19 and the cost of the gold medal.

20 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

21 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
22 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
23 51 of title 31, United States Code.

1 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section
2 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck
3 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.