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House of Representatives

AWARDING A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE WWII CIVIL AIR PATROL VETERANS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently reintroduced H.R. 719, which will award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

During World War II, the volunteer members of the Civil Air Patrol, civilian men and women ranging in age from 19 to 81, provided extraordinary public and combat services at a critical time of need for the nation.

Civil Air Patrol members used their own aircraft to perform a myriad of essential tasks for the military and the entire country, including attacks on enemy submarines off the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Civil Air Patrol was established on December 1, 1941, one week before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After performing exemplary service in WWII, the Civil Air Patrol was chartered by Congress as a non-profit, public

service organization and in 1948 as the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

The Civil Air Patrol was initially mobilized in response to a massive German Navy submarine offensive off the east coast of the United States that targeted oil tankers and other critical shipping.

As 52 tankers were sunk by enemy submarines between January and March 1942 alone, neither the Navy nor Army had sufficient resources to patrol and protect the coastline, threatening the entire war effort.

The Civil Air Patrol Coastal Patrol undertook the challenge of protecting our sea lanes and supporting the military's efforts at this critical time. From March 1942 until August 1943, more than 40,000 volunteers at 21 Civil Air Patrol bases stretching from Maine

to Texas coordinated thousands of patrols, investigations, and convoy missions.

Heroic Civil Air Patrol Coastal Patrol aircrews were responsible for attacking 57 submarines, destroying or damaging two, as well as reporting nearly 200 submarine positions, 17 floating mines, 91 vessels and 363 survivors in distress.

In addition to the work of its Coastal Patrol, the Civil Air Patrol also established itself as a vital wartime service to the military, states, and communities across the nation.

These brave volunteers engaged in an impressive array of missions including border patrol, forest fire patrol, courier flights for mail and urgent deliveries, emergency transportation of personnel, search and rescue, and various military support duties. Overall, during the war

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the Civil Air Patrol undertook tens of thousands of missions and logged hundreds of thousands of flight hours in defense of our country.

The Civil Air Patrol's WWII service came at the high cost of 64 fatalities and 150 aircraft lost. Indeed, the courage and sacrifice of the estimated 200,000 civilians in the Civil Air Patrol exemplifies the spirit and dedication of an entire generation who were willing to risk their lives for America and the cause of freedom.

In recognition of this remarkable volunteer service and commendable record, H.R. 719 will award a single gold medal collectively in honor of the WWII members of the Civil Air Patrol.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the valuable wartime servicemen and women rendered by the civilian volunteers of the Civil Air Patrol by supporting this legislation.