



NEWS

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In historic vote, House approves Congressional Gold Medal for Civil Air Patrol

Medal to honor founding members' World War II service

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – When the founding members of Civil Air Patrol, the U.S. Air Force auxiliary, risked life and limb to help protect the home front during the early days of World War II, they weren't looking for recognition.

Some seven decades later, though, they're receiving it, thanks to the U.S. House of Representatives' voice vote Monday afternoon to award CAP a Congressional Gold Medal for its volunteer service during the war, when more than 120,000 members stepped up to support the military effort and help keep the nation secure. The Senate approved the gold medal legislation a year ago. [A new CAP website](#) provides full coverage of CAP's Congressional Gold Medal journey, including vintage photos, bios of living World War II veterans, nationally renowned veterans, B-roll video and blog posts.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, who introduced [the Senate legislation](#) in February 2013, hailed the House vote Monday. "I am delighted to see this bill receive final approval," said Harkin, commander of CAP's Congressional Squadron. "The men and women of Civil Air Patrol stepped up and served their country when it needed them during the darkest days of World War II, and it's time we recognized them and thanked them for their service."

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, who introduced the gold medal proposal in the House, praised the legacy CAP's founders established.

"The awarding of the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, to the members of the Civil Air Patrol ensures that long overdue and proper recognition has finally been bestowed upon these brave men," McCaul said.

"The Civil Air Patrol's valiant efforts in defending our coastline, providing combat services and flying dangerous humanitarian missions in America during World War II embodies the American

Spirit of volunteerism. These brave men were an integral part in defending not only our homeland but also our principles of freedom and liberty.

"I am proud Congress has taken this step to recognize all of the important work the Civil Air Patrol did," he said.

CAP was founded Dec. 1, 1941, a week before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Within three months, CAP members were using their own planes to fly anti-submarine missions off the East and Gulf coasts, where German U-boats were sinking American ships carrying oil and other vital supplies to the Allies. By the time that mission ended Aug. 31, 1943, CAP's coastal patrols had flown 86,685 missions totaling 244,600 hours and than 24 million miles. Seventy-four planes sent out from coastal patrol bases crashed into the water; 26 CAP members were killed.

Elsewhere, CAP's airborne missions throughout the U.S. included border patrols, target-towing for military trainees, fire and forest patrols, searches for missing people and aircraft, disaster relief, emergency transport of people and supplies, and orientation flights for future pilots. Many from the organization's ranks went on to join the Army Air Forces.

Civil Air Patrol's national commander, Maj. Gen. Chuck Carr, said, "The heroic service provided by our members during World War II helped save lives and preserve our nation's freedom. I am very grateful they are finally receiving the recognition they so deserve."

CAP's legacy of selfless service for the nation and its communities continues today. In all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, CAP members stand ready to respond to such challenges as natural and manmade disasters and searches for missing aircraft or individuals.

#capgoldmedal

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with 60,000 members nationwide, operating a fleet of 550 aircraft. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs about 85 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 70 lives annually. Its unpaid professionals also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to more than 25,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet programs. CAP received the World Peace Prize in 2011 and has been performing missions for America for 72 years. CAP also participates in Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com or www.capvolunteernow.com for more information.

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