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CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL DESIGN



In accordance with Public Law 114-265, the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015 awards a Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) collectively to the Filipino Veterans of World War II in recognition of their outstanding wartime achievements and honorable service to the United States during World War II.

By law, the Secretary of the Treasury and the U.S. Mint are tasked by the U.S. Congress with the design, minting and circulation of Congressional Gold Medals. In this case, the U.S. Mint designed and struck a CGM specifically to honor and commemorate the Filipino, American, and Filipino American Veterans of World War II for whom the medal is awarded. The medal is distinguishable in appearance and portrays the historical significance and accomplishments of the veterans. Congressional Gold Medals are also considered “non-portable” meaning they are not meant to be worn on the uniform or other clothing. The Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal is one-of-a-kind: an original and true symbol of honor, valor, integrity and selfless service to our Nation.

The Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project led by Major General Tony Taguba, US Army Retired, worked extensively with the U.S. Mint Project Team. We worked with the Project’s academic advisory team, living WWII veterans and U.S. Mint’s design team. On the review of the original 43 medal designs of the obverse (front) and reverse (back), the groups selected 4 designs of the obverse, and 1 design of the reverse. FiVetREP was tasked with reviewing the selected designs to ensure they met specific criteria: historically accurate design and inscriptions and correct design elements (uniform, insignias, weapons, etc).

On June 15, 2017, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (“CFA”) deliberated on and approved the CGM obverse and reverse designs preferred by FiVetREP, subject to FiVetREP’s proposed minor modifications. Similarly, on June 21, 2017, the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee (“CCAC”) deliberated on and approved the same designs, subject to FiVetREP’s proposed minor modifications. After extensive reviews of the CGM designs, and consistent with the recommendations of the CCAC and the CFA, the final designs of the obverse and reverse of the CGM as shown on this page were approved by the Secretary of the Treasury on August 25, 2017, and produced by the U.S. Mint.

The obverse is very distinctive in depicting faces of soldiers and guerrillas in their period uniforms, headgear, and weapons in representing the Philippine Commonwealth Army, Philippine Scouts, First Filipino Infantry Regiment, Second Filipino Infantry Battalion, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, and Recognized Guerrillas – units that comprised major combat forces of the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFEF) from July 26, 1941 to December 31, 1946.

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The obverse also depicts a landscape scene of a U.S. Army soldier in a guard and defend position on a beachhead in Leyte during the liberation of the Philippines -- a Commonwealth or territory of the United States, in October 20, 1944. The reverse highlights the theme “Duty to Country” – the core value inherent in citizenship, patriotism, courage, honor, selfless service, integrity of men and women who willingly served their country in defense of freedom and liberty. The thousands of soldiers who fought and died in battle in the Philippines over a 4-year period did so with uncommon valor and intrepidity. The four major campaigns inscribed on the reverse – Bataan and Corregidor, Luzon, Leyte, and Southern Philippines were fought in an archipelago of over 7,000 islands that exemplified the herculean mission of U.S. troops defending a key nation in the war in the Pacific. The dates emblazoned on the scroll below the campaign: 1941-Japanese attack of the Philippines, 1945 – liberation of the Philippines and defeat of Japanese Imperial Forces, and 1946 – end of war and passage of the Rescission Acts by Congress which revoked veterans benefits and payments to the Filipino soldiers, and denied them of their U.S. citizenship evoke the period of desperation, humiliation, and daunting experience of the Filipino Veterans of World War II (the “WWII Veterans”) on their wartime service.

On October 25, 2017, Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, will formally present the Congressional Gold Medal to the Veterans, at the Emancipation Hall, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Following the ceremony, the original medal will be taken to the Smithsonian Institution for future display. It is also the goal of FiVetRep to develop an education program to complement the Congressional Gold Medal and educate the American public on the history and worthiness of sacrifice made by the Veterans in earning their recognition with the medal. The interminable cost of their mission and brutal ordeal to defend the United States and Philippines were unprecedented. They had guaranteed their mission with their lives, and in full measure to defend and save their country against a formidable and inhumane enemy.

For 75 years, the WWII Veterans remained proud, steadfast, and loyal to the United States despite the injustice, discrimination, and sense of inferiority they suffered after the war. They had waited all these long years and envisioned the day the United States and Congress would finally recognize them for their wartime accomplishments. They will not be forgotten, but will be remembered eternally.

Bronze replicas of the Congressional Gold Medal will be made available for purchase at the U.S. Mint. The cost of the three inch medal and display case is approximately \$52.00.

