

# **H.R. 3577, U.S. Army Rangers Veterans of World War II**

## **Congressional Gold Medal Act**

Introduced by Rep. Jason Crow (CO), Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA), & Rep. Michael Waltz (FL)

### **Who were the Rangers?**

In World War II, the U.S. Army formed six all-volunteer Ranger Battalions and one provisional battalion. The initial concept of Ranger units drew both from the British method of using highly trained “Commando” units and the American military tradition of light infantry for scouting and raiding operations that went back to the 1700s. These brave soldiers participated in some of the most important battles of World War II.

Under the leadership of then-Major William O. Darby, the 1<sup>st</sup> Ranger Battalion was organized and activated in Northern Ireland in June 1942. The first combat operations of U.S. Army Rangers occurred in August 1942 when 50 Rangers took part in the British-Canadian raid on the French coastal town of Dieppe.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Ranger Battalion participated in the North African landing at Arzeu, Algeria and the Tunisian Battles. Due to the success of the Rangers in several difficult battles, particularly at the critical battle of El Guettar in early 1943, additional Ranger Battalions were organized.

Ranger Battalions participated in operations in Western Europe, including the D-Day landings at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. They bravely scaled the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc, overlooking Omaha Beach, to destroy German gun emplacements trained on the beachhead. It was during the bitter fighting along the beaches that the Rangers gained their motto, “Rangers, lead the way!”

Ranger Battalions were integral to the Sicily campaign and the landings in Italy in the fall of 1943, where Rangers seized key terrain ahead of the advancing allied forces. At the Anzio beachhead, three Ranger Battalions fought bravely despite suffering heavy casualties after being cut off behind German lines.

It was a Ranger Battalion operating in the Philippines that formed the rescue force that liberated more than 500 prisoners of war from a Japanese POW camp at Cabantuan in January 1945.

In short, these brave and daring soldiers are heroes for their exceptional contributions to the success of American and allied forces in World War II. Words cannot adequately describe the impact and influence of the World War II Army Rangers, but Congress can honor these elite soldiers by bestowing upon them the Congressional Gold Medal.

### **Why now?**

The World War II generation is getting smaller every day, and now is the time to commemorate the brave individuals that volunteered to be part of the elite Ranger Battalions of World War II. Recognize the achievements of these legendary soldiers by signing on to this bill.

### **Endorsed By:**

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Descendants of World War II Rangers, U.S. Army Ranger Association, Association of the United States Army, Arnold Community Council, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment Association, The National Ranger Association, The Darby Project, Valor Studios