

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2800

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick “Roddie” Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2023

Mr. BURCHETT (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. ROSE, Mr. KUSTOFF, Mr. OGLES, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. WESTERMAN, Ms. SCHOLTEN, Ms. MACE, Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina, Mr. RYAN, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. WILLIAMS of New York, and Mr. MANN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

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## A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick “Roddie” Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions 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 “Master Sergeant  
5 Roddie Edmonds Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Rodrick W. Edmonds (in this Act referred  
2           to as “Roddie Edmonds” or “Edmonds”) was born  
3           in 1919 in South Knoxville, Tennessee, and grad-  
4           uated from Knoxville High School in 1938.

5           (2) Roddie Edmonds was a Master Sergeant in  
6           the United States Army and a member of the 422nd  
7           Infantry Regiment while serving during World War  
8           II.

9           (3) Roddie Edmonds landed in Europe in 1944  
10          and fought to the border between Belgium and Ger-  
11          many. In December of 1944, while fighting in the  
12          Battle of the Bulge, Edmonds was captured by Nazi  
13          forces and detained in Stalag IX–A, a prisoner of  
14          war camp in Ziegenhain, Germany.

15          (4) Stalag IX–A was a site used to identify,  
16          segregate, and remove Jewish soldiers from the gen-  
17          eral population of prisoners of war and many of the  
18          Jewish soldiers who were so removed were sent to  
19          labor camps or murdered. Members of the Armed  
20          Forces were warned of this policy and aware that  
21          their fellow servicemen could be at risk.

22          (5) As the senior noncommissioned officer in  
23          Stalag IX–A, Master Sergeant Edmonds was re-  
24          sponsible for 1,275 members of the Armed Forces at  
25          the camp. Approximately 1 month after the date on

1 which Edmonds was detained, Edmonds was di-  
2 rected to order the Jewish-American soldiers under  
3 his command to fall out in order to separate the  
4 Jewish-American soldiers from their fellow prisoners.

5 (6) Disregarding the orders of the Nazis,  
6 Roddie Edmonds commanded all of his men to fall  
7 out and, the following morning, all of the 1,275  
8 members of the Armed Forces under the command  
9 of Edmonds stood outside of their prison barracks.

10 (7) Upon seeing the soldiers, a German officer  
11 angrily shouted, “They cannot all be Jews!”, to  
12 which Edmonds replied, “We are all Jews here”.

13 (8) The German officer took out his pistol and  
14 pointed the gun at the head of Edmonds, but Ed-  
15 monds refused to identify the Jewish soldiers. In-  
16 stead, Edmonds responded, “According to the Gene-  
17 va Convention, we only have to give our name, rank,  
18 and serial number. If you shoot me, you will have  
19 to shoot all of us and, after the war, you will be  
20 tried for war crimes”.

21 (9) The German officer turned away from Ed-  
22 monds and the other soldiers and left the scene. The  
23 actions taken by Edmonds saved the lives of ap-  
24 proximately 200 Jewish-American members of the  
25 Armed Forces.

1           (10) Lester Tanner, a Jewish-American mem-  
2 ber of the Armed Forces also captured during the  
3 Battle of the Bulge, witnessed the incident and stat-  
4 ed that, “There was no question in my mind, or that  
5 of Master Sergeant Edmonds, that the Germans  
6 were removing the Jewish prisoners from the general  
7 population at great risk to their survival. The U.S.  
8 Army’s standing command to its ranking officers in  
9 POW camps is that you resist the enemy and care  
10 for the safety of your men to the greatest extent  
11 possible. Master Sergeant Edmonds, at the risk of  
12 his immediate death, defied the Germans with the  
13 unexpected consequences that the Jewish prisoners  
14 were saved”.

15           (11) Edmonds survived 100 days in captivity  
16 and returned home after the war. Later, Edmonds  
17 served the United States in Korea as a member of  
18 the National Guard. Edmonds died in 1985, but  
19 never told his family or anyone else of his brave ac-  
20 tions outside the barracks of Stalag IX–A during  
21 World War II.

22           (12) Edmonds was posthumously recognized by  
23 Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance  
24 Center in Jerusalem, as “Righteous Among the Na-  
25 tions”, the first member of the Armed Forces and

1       1 of only 5 people of the United States to be so rec-  
2       ognized. Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem,  
3       announced the selection of Edmonds by saying,  
4       “Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds seemed like an  
5       ordinary American soldier, but he had an extraor-  
6       dinary sense of responsibility and dedication to his  
7       fellow human beings. . . . The choices and actions  
8       of Master Sergeant Edmonds set an example for his  
9       fellow American soldiers as they stood united against  
10      the barbaric evil of the Nazis”.

11 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12       (a) **AWARD AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the  
13 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore  
14 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
15 posthumous award, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal  
16 of appropriate design to Roddie Edmonds in recognition  
17 of his achievements and heroic actions during World War  
18 II.

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

24       (c) **PRESENTATION AND AWARD OF MEDAL.**—The  
25 gold medal referred to in subsection (a) shall be presented,

1 and following the presentation awarded, to his son, Pastor  
2 Christopher Waring Edmonds, or the next of kin of  
3 Roddie Edmonds.

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

5 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in  
6 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3 under  
7 such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price  
8 sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, mate-  
9 rials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

10 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

11 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under  
12 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51  
13 of title 31, United States Code.

14 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections  
15 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals  
16 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic  
17 items.

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