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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-5-2008

SPONSOR Lujan, B. LAST UPDATED _____ HM 35

SHORT TITLE Congressional Gold Medal for Bataan Veterans SB _____

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 35 resolves that the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to introduce federal legislation to award the congressional gold medal to the men of the 200th coast artillery of the New Mexico National Guard.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

House Memorial 35 carries no appropriation or fiscal impact to the department.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

History of the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery

According to the Bataan Corregidor Memorial Foundation of New Mexico, "On April 9, 1942, the weakened survivors from the combined American and Filipino forces were unconditionally surrendered to the Japanese by major General Edward King. Thus began one of the most cruel and unrelenting prisoner-of-war episodes in modern U.S. history."

Most POWs were assembled in Mariveles at the southern tip of the Bataan peninsula and forced to march to San Fernando, Pampanga. Wounded men were assisted by able-bodied prisoners or carried on crude stretchers. Stragglers were beaten or killed. Civilians who showed mercy to the prisoners endured a similar fate. The incident covered a distance of 104 kilometers (65 miles) and became known as the Bataan Death March.

The final leg of the northward journey was completed inside stifling railway boxcars that took them to the prison set up at Camp O'Donnell near the town of Capas, Tarlac. Most of the American POWs were eventually transferred to Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija. The captured soldiers were subjected to inhumane conditions. Death from malnutrition, disease and abuse was a common occurrence. More than 4,000 American POWs and 25,000 Filipino POWs died in these two camps alone.

Prison camps became the staging places for forced labor. POWs were routinely relocated to distant work camps in Manchuria, Formosa, Japan, Korea and throughout the Philippine Islands. The Japanese transported prisoners aboard unmarked vessels and many POWs died when Allied forces mistakenly attacked these "HELL-SHIPS."

On August 15, 1945 the Japanese surrendered. The liberation forces rescued approximately 1, 000 brutalized and malnourished POWs from the 200th and 515th. Due to their weak condition, nearly a fourth of them died shortly after returning to the United States.

New Mexico earned the tragic distinction of having the highest prisoner-of-war population per capita of any state in the Union. The plight of the New Mexico soldiers motivated next-of-kin and organizations throughout the state to participate in government war relief efforts and to raise funds for the International Red Cross. "Remember Bataan" became one of America's most enduring wartime credos.¹

History of the Congressional Gold Medal

According to the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, "Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. Each medal honors a particular individual, institution, or event. Although the first recipients included citizens who participated in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, Congress broadened the scope of the medal to include actors, authors, entertainers, musicians, pioneers in aeronautics and space, explorers, lifesavers, notables in science and medicine, athletes, humanitarians, public servants, and foreign recipients.

In addition to the requirement that all Congressional Gold Medal legislation must be cosponsored by at least two-thirds (290) of the Members of the House, specific

¹*History of the 200TH AND 515TH COAST ARTILLERY (AA) PRISONERS OF WAR (Panel Two); Bataan Corregidor Memorial Foundation of New Mexico, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/nm/bcmfofnn/bataanpark/panels.html>*

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standards are set forth by Rule VII (c)(vii) of the House Committee on Banking and Financial Service's Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy when considering such legislation. Additionally, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee requires that at least 67 Senators must cosponsor any Congressional Gold Medal legislation before the committee will consider it.²

PD/mt

² Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives; http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/goldMedal.html