

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO  
INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO  
BATAAN VETERANS.

WHEREAS, beginning December 8, 1941, in the critical early hours of World War II, the 200th coast artillery of the New Mexico national guard was in the first line of defense in the United States commonwealth territory of the Philippines against the attack launched by Japanese forces immediately after Japan's December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, during the 1941 Japanese invasion of the Philippines, the 200th coast artillery of the New Mexico national guard stood between the invading Japanese forces and the freedom of the American and Filipino peoples; and

WHEREAS, the 200th coast artillery was the first to fire upon Japanese forces and the last to put down their rifles when ordered to surrender on April 9, 1942; and

WHEREAS, before being ordered to surrender, the men of the 200th coast artillery made a valiant stand in the face of terrible odds, while suffering through months of enemy attack with outmoded equipment; a scarcity of food, medicine and ammunition; and diseases such as malaria, dysentery and beriberi that ravaged them to utter exhaustion; and

WHEREAS, the men of the 200th coast artillery were captured by Japanese forces on April 9, 1942 and, in an already starved, exhausted and sickened state, they had to endure the infamous Bataan death march, during which Japanese soldiers forced the men of the 200th coast artillery to march for six long days in scorching tropical heat while starving and brutalizing the men along the way; and

WHEREAS, the courageous men of the 200th coast artillery endured four years in prisoner of war camps, where they were forced into slave labor and lost scores of their ranks to starvation, disease and brutality; and

WHEREAS, the men who returned home contributed immeasurably to the country's growth as members of the "greatest generation"; and

WHEREAS, the 200th coast artillery received four presidential unit citations and the Philippine presidential citation for their valorous defense of the American and Filipino peoples; and

WHEREAS, the congressional gold medal is considered the nation's highest civilian award and the most distinguished award given by the United States congress to citizens who represent the best characteristics of the American people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to

introduce legislation to award the congressional gold medal to the men of the 200th coast artillery of the New Mexico national guard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation and to Governor Richardson.