WWII Rangers Earn Congressional Gold Medal

The elite group of soldiers was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for playing a crucial role in the Normandy invasion and other campaigns

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America's World War II Army Rangers received a collective Congressional Gold Medal on June 7. President Joe Biden signed legislation P.L. 117-132 that day, which authorized the awards.

They were recognized for their "bravery and sacrifice in combat" and earned the Gold Medal for "contributing greatly to the military success" of Allied forces, according to Congress.

"Army Ranger veterans of World War II played a crucial role in the D-Day invasion in Normandy," Biden said during a ceremony at the White House. "This elite group once numbered 7,000, but now it's down to 12. On behalf of our nation, we want to thank them for their heroism and their service."

The 2nd and 5th Ranger battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment participated in the June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion on Omaha Beach. Rangers of the 2nd Battalion scaled cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc to eliminate German guns that overlooked the beach, according to official Army history.

The first combat operation with Rangers took place on Aug. 19, 1942, when 50 Rangers, along with British and Canadian troops, raided Dieppe, France, a town in the northern part of the country on the English Channel.

U.S. Army Rangers also fought valiantly and decisively in the Battle of El Guettar in 1943 during the Tunisia Campaign in northern Africa.

In 1943, the 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger battalions fought in WWII's Sicily Campaign and landings in Italy. By 1945, Rangers liberated more than 500 Allied prisoners of the war.

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To commemorate the Congressional Gold Medal award, a Gold Medal will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Earlier this year, troops of WWII's 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, known as the "Ghost Army," and the African American women of WWII's 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, known as "Six Triple Eight," also were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. Last year, 13 troops who were killed on Aug. 26, 2021, at Hamid Karzai International Airport during the U.S. evacuation of Afghanistan were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal as well.

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