

To the Honorable U.S. Representative (INSERT NAME)

Please add your support to **H.R. 906** seeking to award the **Congressional Gold Medal to WW II Merrill's Marauders**, an "expendable," top-secret, commando unit, code-named "Galahad," for their heroism, sacrifice and success in the "forgotten" theater of WW II, the China Burma India Theater. Only NINE are still alive. The oldest is 99, and the youngest turns 96 this year

We realize that now – while you and Congress are tirelessly focused on the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic -- is not the "best of times" to seek support for H.R. 906, introduced by Congressman Peter King from New York with Georgia Congressman Sanford Bishop major cosponsor. However, this request is time-sensitive due to the ages and health of the nine surviving Marauders. We cannot afford to wait and start again during the next congressional session in 2021.

H.R. 906 already has more than 60 percent of the required 290 cosponsors for the bill to pass. The companion bill introduced by former Senator Johnny Isakson from Georgia, passed in December 2019. Support for H.R. 906 shot up dramatically following a series of Feb. 5, 2020, meetings that Marauders Bob Passanisi, 95, from New York, and Gilbert Howland, 97, from New Jersey had with representatives in Washington, DC. Covid-19 abruptly stopped the bill's progress. When Passanisi and Howland made their first visit to Congress in May 2019, there were 14 Marauders alive. Fourteen were alive last year.

In 1944, none of the almost 3,000 Marauders were expected to survive their "suicide" mission. Yet the poorly supplied and emaciated Infantrymen defeated the elite Japanese 18th Division in five major battles and 30 minor engagements. Only a few hundred were fit for combat when they completed their mission of seizing northern Burma's strategic Myitkyina airfield, which "changed the course" of WW II in Asia by freeing airways over the Himalayas so supplies could be flown in to complete a critical land route into China, one of our Allies. They made military history by walking almost 1,000 miles with only what they could carry on their backs or mules as they hacked through dense jungle and climbed the Himalayas 6,100-foot Naura Hkyat Pass into Burma. Malaria, mite typhus, dysentery and other jungle diseases ravaged their bodies, yet nothing could stop them.

Merrill's Marauders were NOT a Ranger unit during WW II – that recognition came much later during the Vietnam War. "They were at the cutting edge of modern guerilla and special operations," said one Special Operations veteran. "No unit of any war is more deserving than the Marauders who changed the thinking at that time of what was militarily and humanly possible. After WW II, their guerrilla tactics were recognized as so 'Ranger-like' that their operations became part of Army Ranger doctrine and tradition."

The 75th Ranger Regiment headquartered at Ft. Benning, GA, traces its lineage to the 5307th CUP, honors their legacy by wearing the Marauder patch as its crest and named its military intelligence building after Georgia's last Marauder. Camp Frank D. Merrill in Dahlonaga, GA, is named after their commander. This year, the Army Ranger Hall of Fame selected its 30th Merrill's Marauder for induction in its annual ceremony.

Please cosponsor and help honor Merrill's Marauders while nine are still living. Thank you for your consideration during this difficult time.

H.R. 906 -- Please contact Ryan Woodward to process co-sponsorship at:
Ryan.Woodward@mail.house.gov

Respectfully, (YOUR NAME)