

Testimony

Senate Transportation Committee
Chair: Senator Mike Peterson
March 16, 2017

Subject: House Bill 2257

Greetings and thank you for this opportunity to speak reference the Armed services Occupation Medal license plate. House Bill No. 2257

I have come before you today to request that an Armed Services Occupation Medal license plate be made available to those of us who have served in occupied territory.

As you may know the Vietnam veterans now have a plate bearing their Medal for the Vietnam conflict. Having served in Berlin in an occupying force capacity it would be an honor and privilege to have the Occupation Medal displayed on license plates. I am sure the Purple Heart recipients, Iraq vets, Vietnam vets and numerous other vets proudly display their license plates.

In Berlin we were the "Defenders of Freedom" surrounded by a wall 110 miles behind the Iron Curtain. We stood fast at the wall staring down communism and oppression as we were the "Hot Spot" for World War III. I was in awe with Berlin as I stood on the bridge the prisoner exchange took place for Gary Francis Powers. I had been to the Christmas Bazaar where the recent terrorist ran over those shopping next to the Keiser Wilhelm Church. Although many of the "Occupation Vets" have not seen combat we have suffered vicariously. From being spat upon in the Atlanta Airport to being called "Baby Killers". The Vietnam vets did not get the reception our returning vets now receive. Vietnam vets are now finally receiving the accolades far over due. We vets of occupied territories who suffer vicariously, I am sure, would be proud to have a license plate to call their own and to bring attention to the Armed Services of Occupying forces.

But I digress, I would like to give a little history of the Occupation Medal. Although authorized in 1946, it was not until 1947 that the first Army of Occupation Medals were distributed. The first medal was presented to General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had been the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force Commander during World War II.

Because of the legal status of West Berlin as an occupied territory until the unification of Germany the Occupation Medal was issued for forty-five years making it one of the longest active military awards of both the Second World War and the Cold War.

In addition, some recipients of the award were born two generations after the end of the conflict which the medal was designed to represent.

The ribbon consists of equal portion of red and black with white edge stripes. The colors are taken from the American Campaign Medal, where they appear as pinstripes inside each edge. The red and white represent Japan and the black and white represent Germany, the primary opponents of the United States during the Second World War, and the primary countries occupied after the war.

The effective dates for being awarded the Medal are:

Germany (May 9, 1945 to May 5, 1955)

Austria (May 9, 1945 to July 7, 1955)

Berlin (May 9, 1945 to October 2, 1990)

Italy (May 9, 1945 to September 15, 1947)

Japan (September 3, 1945 to April 27, 1952)

Korea (September 3, 1945 to June 29, 1949)

In closing I would like to thank the panel the Committee for listening to my plea for this license plate.

What ever your decision it is an honor and privilege to have been here today .

I stand for questions

Very Respectfully,

Alan Thagard
SFC, US Army Retired

[OBJ]

"For those who wish to reap the benefits of this great nation must also bear the fatigue of supporting it" Thomas Paine

"My word is my promise, it requires no disclaimer, no qualifier" Alan Thagard, US Army Retired

