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Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1930

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MEDAL OF HONOR TO EDWARD V. RICKENBACKER

JANUARY 27, 1930.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed

Mr. SPEAKS, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 325]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 325) authorizing the President of the United States to present in the name of Congress a congressional medal of honor to Capt. Edward V. Rickenbacker, introduced by Mr. Clancy, having considered the same, report thereon with the recommendation that it do pass.

A similar measure was reported in the Seventieth Congress and passed the House on February 26, 1929. The report made then is made a part of this report, as follows:

[House Report No. 2568, Seventieth Congress, second session]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 12674) to authorize the President of the United States to present in the name of Congress the congressional medal of honor to Capt. Edward V. Rickenbacker, having considered the same, report thereon with the recommendation that it do pass.

The records of the War Department show that Captain Rickenbacker is originally credited with 25 victories against enemy airplanes and balloons, which record has won for him the sobriquet of the American "ace of aces."

During the war he shot down 21 enemy planes and 4 balloons. Included in his many citations for valor in battle Captain Rickenbacker was awarded the distinguished service cross for extraordinary heroism in action. Seven bronze oak leaves were given him in lieu of additional distinguished service crosses for deeds in action, which the War Department describes as "extraordinary heroism."

In addition to the distinguished service cross and oak leaves, Captain Rickenbacker has been decorated by foreign countries. He was awarded two Croix de Guerre and the French Légion d'Honneur. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre with palm May 9, 1918, and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur under presidential decree and Croix de Guerre with palm under orders of November 30, 1918. Each of these decorations were accompanied by citations setting out Captain Rickenbacker's disregard of danger and his bravery under fire.

Congress awarded a congressional medal of honor to Col. Charles A. Lindbergh for his flight across the Atlantic; to Commander Richard Byrd and his mechanic, the late Floyd Bennett, for their flight to the North Pole. Altogether 90 con-

gressional medals of honor were awarded during the Great War and only 1 to a fighting aviator, Frank Luke, who was dead when it was awarded.

Luke shot down 18 planes and balloons; Captain Rickenbacker shot down 21 planes and 4 balloons.

Rickenbacker fought with planes and equipment far inferior to those used by Colonel Lindbergh or Commander Byrd in their flights. Captain Rickenbacker and his men were not permitted to use parachutes which increased the danger of his heroic work. His opponents, the Germans, had the very best of equipment and were all permitted to use parachutes.

Colonel Lindbergh, Commander Byrd, and all aviators of note favor the award of a congressional medal of honor to Captain Rickenbacker. Colonel Lindbergh issued a public statement in which he said Rickenbacker deserved the medal.

From facts laid before this committee and from records of the War Department it has been shown that Captain Rickenbacker, formerly captain in the Air Service of the Army of the United States and commander of the famous "Hat-in-the-Ring" Squadron, displayed unusual heroic courage and skill as an aviator during the World War in that on April 29, 1918, near the town of Montsec, France, he attacked an enemy Albatross monoplane, and after a vigorous fight, in which he followed his foe into German territory, he succeeded in shooting it down near Vigneulles-les-Hatton Chatel; that on May 17, 1918, he attacked three Albatross enemy planes, shooting one down in the vicinity of Richécourt, France, and forcing the others to retreat over their own lines; that on May 22, 1918, he attacked three Albatross monoplanes, 4,000 meters over St. Mihiel, France. He drove them back into German territory, separated one from the group, and shot it down near Flirey; that on May 28, 1918, he sighted a group of two battle planes and four monoplanes, German planes, which he at once attacked vigorously, shooting down one and dispersing the others; that on May 30, 1918, 4,000 meters over Jaulnoy, France, he attacked a group of five enemy planes, and after a violent battle, he shot down one plane and drove the others away; that on September 14, 1918, in the region of Villency, he attacked four Fokker enemy planes at an altitude of 3,000 meters, and after a sharp and hot action he succeeded in shooting one down in flames and dispersing the other three; that on September 15, 1918, in the region of Boisdeuville, he encountered six enemy planes, who were in the act of attacking four Spads which were below them, and undeterred by their superior numbers he unhesitatingly attacked them and succeeded in shooting one down in flames and completely breaking the formation of the others; that on September 25, 1918, near Billely, France, while on voluntary patrol over the lines, he attacked seven enemy planes (five type Fokker, protecting the two type Halberstadts) and, disregarding the odds against him, he dived on them and shot down one of the Fokkers out of control and attacked one of the Halberstadts and sent it down also.

All of the foregoing acts of remarkable heroic courage and skill were at the unusual risk of his own life and a tribute to the characteristic valor of an American citizen.

In recognition of his great achievements and contribution to the advancement of aviation and to his country, your committee is of the unanimous opinion that Captain Rickenbacker should be awarded the congressional medal of honor.

The following letter from the National Secretary of the Reserve Officers' Association of the United States is quoted for the information of the House:

RESERVE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D. C., May 5, 1928.

HON. ROBERT H. CLANCY,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR CONGRESSMAN: For your information the following is submitted:

At a meeting of the national council of the Reserve Officers' Association of the United States, held in the city of Washington, D. C., April 29, 1928, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, That the Reserve Officers' Association of the United States hereby indorse and recommend for passage the bills introduced in Congress by Senator Millard Tydings and Congressmen Royal C. Johnson, Clarence J. McLeod, and Robert H. Clancy, to confer the congressional medal of honor on Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, Air Service Reserve, known as the American ace of aces, who in France, against an armed enemy of the United States, did perform in action certain deeds of heroism far above and beyond the call of duty."

Very sincerely yours,

ORVEL JOHNSON, *National Secretary.*