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Grothman, Johnson Lead Bipartisan Effort to Award Medal of Honor to WWII Veteran

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-WI-06) and Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) introduced companion legislation to the U.S. House and U.S. Senate to award Fond du Lac native [Lt. Col. James “Maggie” Megellas](#) the Medal of Honor. The bills authorize and request President Joe Biden to posthumously award Megellas with the United States’ highest military honor for the courage he showed during the Battle of the Bulge.

Megellas was born in Fond du Lac, WI and graduated from Ripon college in 1942.

Grothman’s bipartisan House bill is cosponsored by every member of Wisconsin’s U.S. House delegation, as well as Congresswoman Beth Van Duyne (R-TX-24), who represents Colleyville, TX, where Megellas made his home before passing.

Johnson’s bipartisan Senate Bill is cosponsored by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX).

*“More than 70 years ago, Lt. Col. Megellas proudly represented the United States with a display of heroism in the face of one of WWII’s bloodiest battles that is deserving of our nation’s highest military honor,” **said Rep. Grothman.** “He saved many lives and stopped the advance of enemy troops to protect his brothers in arms without regard to his own safety. Luckily, Maggie survived the ordeal and so did many American soldiers who would not have if Maggie was absent. I thank Senator Johnson for joining me in recognizing a local hero and hope that the rest of my colleagues in Congress can come together in a bipartisan manner to recognize that Maggie is a true American hero who deserves to be awarded the Medal of Honor.”*

*“It is a privilege to continue this quest on behalf of Lt. Col. Megellas,” **Sen. Johnson said.** “His heroic actions helped ensure the liberation of Europe and our nation’s continued freedom. He is the most decorated officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne with the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts. He has been recommended for the Medal of Honor since 1945. It’s high time this happens.”*

“I am proud to support this bipartisan effort to recognize Lt. Col. Megellas’ courage and heroic leadership during World War II,” said Rep. Kind. “His bravery on the battlefield and continued service to our country following the war are an inspiration to Wisconsinites and Americans across the country.”

“Lt. Colonel James ‘Maggie’ Megellas was not only a Wisconsin legend, but also an American icon whose courage in battle was second to none,” said Rep. Gallagher. “I’m proud to join Rep. Grothman in introducing this legislation to help ensure our nation can rightfully award Maggie our highest honor for his courage under fire during the Battle of the Bulge.”

“Lt. Col. Megellas showed great leadership and sacrifice during the horrors of the Battle of the Bulge. I’m pleased to join Congressman Grothman and Senator Johnson who are leading this effort to award the Medal of Honor to Lt. Col. Megellas. Our nation must never forget this Wisconsin hero’s service and bravery,” said Rep. Steil.

“Wisconsin native, Lt. Col. James Megellas, is an example of the many brave men and women who have helped forge our history. During World War II, Megellas courageously led his platoon in a successful attack on the enemy to help advance the Allied forces. I am proud to work with my colleagues to help honor him and his family with the Medal of Honor for their sacrifices,” said Rep. Tiffany.

“To fully appreciate James ‘Maggie’ Megellas’ loyalty to this country, you need look no further than his decorated service record in the Army. Maggie is, in every sense of the word, an American hero. I am proud to join my colleagues as an original cosponsor of this bill to authorize the President to award Maggie with the Medal of Honor,” said Rep. Fitzgerald

“Lt. Col. Megellas is a true American hero, putting his life on the line for our country during one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. The bravery and courage he displayed during the Battle of the Bulge saved countless lives, ensuring no man in his platoon was left behind. Lt. Col. Megellas is the type of soldier who makes me proud to be an American, and there’s no question that he is deserving of our nation’s highest military honor. I can’t think of a better way to honor his life and legacy than to award him with the Medal of Honor, which is why I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this legislation today,” said Rep. Van Duyne.

Background

On January 28, 1945, First Lieutenant Megellas led his platoon in a successful attack on an enemy battalion near Herresbach, Belgium, that outnumbered it ten-to-one. After the attack, he advanced his platoon towards the town when a German Mark V Panther tank pinned them down. Megellas weathered enemy fire to attack and destroy the tank himself with just two grenades and his submachine gun. He then led his platoon to secure Herresbach for advancing Allied forces. Under Megellas’ command, his platoon did not suffer a single casualty that day.

Megellas is the most-decorated soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division, receiving the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of the Bulge. He was born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and graduated from Ripon College.

Megellas made his home in Colleyville, Texas until his passing on April 2, 2020 at age 103.

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U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) is serving his fourth term representing Wisconsin's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Link to the release: <https://grothman.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2035>