

Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee
Public Meeting
September 28, 2006
via teleconference

In attendance:

John Alexander
Leon Billings
Bill Fivaz
Ute Wartenberg Kagan
Rita Laws
Mitch Sanders (chair)
Donald Scarinci
Ken Thomasma
Joe Winter

1. The chair called the meeting to order at 11 AM.
2. The chair explained that the committee's general practice and preference is to meet in person, because the subject matter under consideration is fundamentally visual. However, in this case an exception was made, and a telephone meeting was held due to the committee's limited agenda.
3. The minutes of the CCAC's August 18, 2006 meeting were unanimously approved, with the provision that the chair should modify the minutes to reflect the fact that Carlotta Walls Lanier, one of the "Little Rock Nine," had been in attendance.
4. Kaarina Budow of the United States Mint then presented proposed designs for the Congressional Gold Medal honoring the Tuskegee Airmen. Pursuant to Public Law 109-213, a single gold medal will be minted and given to the Smithsonian institution, and bronze duplicates in 3-inch and 1 5/16 inch are to be made for sale to the public. Ms. Budow presented a single obverse design and a single reverse design for the medal, and indicated that these designs represented the preference of the recipient organization.
5. The proposed obverse depicts three Tuskegee Airmen in profile: an officer, a mechanic, and a pilot, as designated by their headgear, left to right. An eagle flies with wings outstretched, symbolizing flight, nobility, and the highest ideals of the nation. The dates 1941 and 1949 are included on either side of the airmen.

6. The proposed reverse design is emblematic of three types of planes the Tuskegee Airmen flew in World War II, based on a logo design employed by the airmen. The planes shown in the design from top to bottom are the P-51, P-40 and B-25. Additional inscriptions are, Outstanding Combat Record Led to Integration of the Military, Act of Congress 2006.

7. John Alexander, the member of the CCAC appointed based on special expertise in American history, expressed concern that the reverse inscription "Outstanding Combat Record Led to Integration of the Military" was historically inaccurate. The committee recognized that the military record of the Tuskegee Airmen was indeed outstanding, and played a role in the integration of the military. However, regarding the inscription, there was a consensus that because of the various other factors involved in the integration of the military, the wording on the proposed design was not suitable for the medal.

8. As a result, the committee voted 9-0 to recommend that the inscription on the medal's reverse should be rejected due to historical inaccuracy.

9. The committee further voted 9-0 to recommend that "Contributed" should replace "Led" in the reverse inscription.

10. Several members raised concerns about the images of the airplanes on the reverse of the medal. Ms. Budow pointed out that design is actually based on the logo of an organization representing the Tuskegee Airmen, and that the logo itself presents stylized images of the airplanes. The committee voted 9-0 to recommend that, beyond the recommended changes in wording, the reverse design should not be modified further.

11. The committee voted 9-0 to recommend the proposed obverse for the medal. Members were generally quite pleased with this design, which was referred to as "handsome" and "well-done."

12. The committee then discussed plans for writing its 2006 Annual Report, which will be discussed further at the November CCAC meeting.

13. There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.