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AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404, substituted “DEPARTMENT” for “VETERANS’ ADMINISTRATION” in headings for subchapters I and II.

Pub. L. 102-40, title III, §305(b)(2), title IV, §402(c)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 210, 239, renumbered items 5201 to 5228 as 8501 to 8528, respectively, and substituted “PATIENT” for “INMATE” in heading for subchapter II.

SUBCHAPTER I—PROPERTY LEFT ON
DEPARTMENT FACILITY

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404, substituted “DEPARTMENT” for “VETERANS’ ADMINISTRATION”.

§ 8501. Vesting of property left by decedents

(a) Personal property left by any decedent upon premises used as a Department facility, which premises are subject to the exclusive legislative jurisdiction of the United States and are within the exterior boundaries of any State or dependency of the United States, shall vest and be disposed of as provided in this subchapter, except that—

(1) if such person died leaving a last will and testament probated under the laws of the place of such person’s domicile or under the laws of the State or dependency of the United States within the exterior boundaries of which such premises or a part thereof may be, the personal property of such decedent situated upon such premises shall vest in the person or persons entitled thereto under the provisions of such last will and testament; and

(2) if such person died leaving any such property not disposed of by a last will and testament probated in accord with the provisions of paragraph (1) such property shall vest in the persons entitled to take such property by inheritance under and upon the conditions provided by the law of the decedent’s domicile. This paragraph shall not apply to property to which the United States is entitled except where such title is divested out of the United States.

(b) Any officer or employee of the United States in possession of any such property may deliver same to the executor (or the administrator with will annexed) who shall have qualified in either jurisdiction as provided in subsection (a)(1); or if none such then to the domiciliary administrator or to any other qualified administrator who shall demand such property. When delivery shall have been made to any such

executor or administrator in accordance with this subsection, neither the United States nor any officer or employee thereof shall be liable therefor.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1256, §5201; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, §701(93), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3299; renumbered §8501, Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238; Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 5201 of this title as this section.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 102-83 substituted “Department” for “Veterans’ Administration” in introductory provisions.

1986—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 99-576 substituted “such person’s” for “his”.

§ 8502. Disposition of unclaimed personal property

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 8501 of this title, the Secretary may dispose of the personal property of such decedent left or found upon such premises as hereafter provided in this subchapter.

(b) If any veteran (admitted as a veteran), or a dependent or survivor of a veteran receiving care under the penultimate sentence of section 1781(b) of this title, upon such person’s last admission to, or during such person’s last period of maintenance in, a Department facility, has personal property situated on such facility and shall have designated in writing a person (natural or corporate) to receive such property when such veteran, dependent or survivor dies, the Secretary or employee of the Department authorized by the Secretary so to act, may transfer possession of such personal property to the person so designated. If there exists no person so designated by such veteran, dependent, or survivor or if the one so designated declines to receive such property, or failed to request such property within ninety days after the Department mails to such designate a notice of death and of the fact of such designation, a description of the property, and an estimate of transportation cost, which shall be paid by such designate if required under the regulations hereinafter mentioned, or if the Secretary declines to transfer possession to such designate, possession of such property may in the discretion of the Secretary or the Secretary’s designated subordinate, be transferred to the following persons in the order and manner herein specified unless the parties otherwise agree in writing delivered to the Department, namely, executor or administrator, or if no notice of appointment received, to the spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings of the veteran. If claim is made by two or more such relatives having equal priorities, as hereinabove prescribed, or if there are conflicting claims the Secretary or the Secretary’s designee may in such case deliver the property either jointly or separately in equal values, to those equally entitled thereto or may make delivery as may be agreed upon by those entitled, or may in the discretion of the Secretary or the Secretary’s designee withhold delivery from them and require the qualification of an administrator or executor of the veterans’ estate and thereupon make delivery to such.

(c) If the property of any decedent is not so delivered or claimed and accepted the Secretary or the Secretary's designee may dispose of such property by public or private sale in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter and regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

(d) All sales authorized by this subchapter shall be for cash upon delivery at the premises where sold and without warranty, express or implied. The proceeds of such sales after payment of any expenses incident thereto as may be prescribed by regulations, together with any other moneys left or found on a facility, not disposed of in accordance with this subchapter, shall be credited to the General Post Fund, National Homes, Department of Veterans Affairs, a trust fund provided for in section 1321(a)(45) of title 31. In addition to the purposes for which such fund may be used under the existing law, disbursements may be made therefrom as authorized by the Secretary by regulation or otherwise for the purpose of satisfying any legal liability incurred by any employee in administering the provisions of this subchapter, including any expense incurred in connection therewith. Legal liability shall not exist when delivery or sale shall have been made in accordance with this subchapter.

(e) If, notwithstanding such sale, a claim is filed with the Secretary within five years after notice of sale as herein required, by or on behalf of any person or persons who if known would have been entitled to the property under section 8501 of this title or to possession thereof under this section, the Secretary shall determine the person or persons entitled under the provisions of this subchapter and may pay to such person or persons so entitled the proceeds of sale of such property, less expenses. Such payment shall be made out of the said trust fund, and in accord with the provisions of this section or section 8501 of this title. Persons under legal disability to sue in their own name may make claim for the proceeds of sale of such property at any time within five years after termination of such legal disability.

(f) Any such property, the sale of which is authorized under this subchapter and which remains unsold, may be used, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1257, § 5202; Pub. L. 94-581, title II, § 208(a), Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2860; Pub. L. 97-258, § 3(k)(9), Sept. 13, 1982, 96 Stat. 1066; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, § 701(94), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3299; renumbered § 8502 and amended Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, § 402(b)(1), (d)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, 239; Pub. L. 102-54, § 14(f)(11), June 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 288; Pub. L. 102-83, §§ 4(a)(3), (4), (b)(1), (2)(E), 5(c)(1), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404-406; Pub. L. 103-446, title XII, § 1201(i)(11), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4689; Pub. L. 107-135, title II, § 208(e)(9), Jan. 23, 2002, 115 Stat. 2464.)

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-135 substituted “the penultimate sentence of section 1781(b)” for “the last sentence of section 1713(b)”.

1994—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 103-446 substituted “Department of Veterans Affairs,” for “Department.”

1991—Pub. L. 102-40, § 402(b)(1), renumbered section 5202 of this title as this section.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator”.

Pub. L. 102-40, § 402(d)(1), substituted “8501” for “5201”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 102-83, § 5(c)(1), substituted “1713(b)” for “613(b)”.

Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator” and “Secretary’s” for “Administrator’s” wherever appearing.

Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(a)(3), (4), substituted “Department” for “Veterans’ Administration” wherever appearing.

Pub. L. 102-54 amended subsec. (b) as in effect immediately before the enactment of Pub. L. 102-40 by inserting a comma in second sentence before “namely.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator” and “Secretary’s” for “Administrator’s” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator”.

Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(a)(3), (4), substituted “Department” for “Veterans’ Administration”.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator” in two places.

Pub. L. 102-40, § 402(d)(1), substituted “8501” for “5201” in two places.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 102-83, § 4(b)(1), (2)(E), substituted “Secretary” for “Administrator”.

1986—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(A), in first sentence substituted “such person’s last” for “his last” in two places, inserted “has personal property situated on such facility and” before “shall have designated”, substituted “to receive such property when such veteran, dependent or survivor dies,” for “to whom he desires his personal property situated upon such facility to be delivered, upon the death of such veteran”, and substituted “the Administrator” for “him” after “authorized by”.

Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(B)(i)-(iv), in second sentence substituted “by such veteran, dependent, or survivor” for “by the veteran”, struck out “if he has” before “failed to request”, and substituted “the Administrator’s” for “his” and “in writing delivered to the Veterans’ Administration” for “as provided in this subchapter”.

Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(B)(v), which directed that second sentence of subsec. (b) be amended by substituting “children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, siblings” for “child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother or sister”, was executed by substituting the new provisions for “child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother, or sister”, to reflect the probable intent of Congress and the fact that a comma appears after “brother” in the former provisions.

Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(C), struck out third sentence which read as follows: “In case two or more of those named above request the property, only one shall be entitled to possession thereof and in the order hereinbefore set forth, unless they otherwise agree in writing delivered to the Veterans’ Administration.”

Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(D), in fourth sentence substituted “the Administrator’s designee may in such case deliver the property either jointly or separately in equal values, to those equally entitled thereto” for “his designee may in such case select the one to receive such possession,” and “in the discretion of the Administrator or the Administrator’s designee” for “in his discretion”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 99-576, § 701(94)(E), substituted “the Administrator’s” for “his”.

1982—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 97-258 substituted “section 1321(a)(45) of title 31” for “section 725s(a)(45) of title 31”.

1976—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 94-581 inserted “or a dependent or survivor of a veteran receiving care under the last sentence of section 613(b) of this title,” after “(admitted as a veteran).”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-581 effective Oct. 21, 1976, see section 211 of Pub. L. 94-581, set out as a note under section 111 of this title.

§ 8503. Notice of provisions of this subchapter

All persons having or bringing personal property on the premises of a Department facility shall be given reasonable notice of the provisions of this subchapter. In case of a mentally incompetent person, notice hereof shall be given the guardian or other person having custody or control of such person or, if none, to such person's nearest relative if known. The admission to or continued maintenance in such facility after reasonable notice of the provisions of this subchapter shall constitute consent to the provisions hereof. The death of any person on any such facility or the leaving of property thereon shall be prima facie evidence of a valid agreement for the disposition of such property in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1258, §5203; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, §701(95), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3300; renumbered §8503, Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238; Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 5203 of this title as this section.

Pub. L. 102-83 substituted "Department" for "Veterans' Administration".

1986—Pub. L. 99-576 substituted "such person's" for "his" in second sentence.

§ 8504. Disposition of other unclaimed property

Any other unclaimed property found on the premises under the control of the Department shall be stored by the officer in charge of such premises and may be sold, used, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary if the owner thereof fails to claim same within ninety days. If undisposed of, the same may be reclaimed by the owner, such person's personal representative or next of kin, upon payment of reasonable storage charges prescribed by regulations. If sold, the net proceeds thereof shall be credited to said post fund to be expended as other assets of such fund. The person who was entitled to such property, or such person's legal representative, or assignee, shall be paid the proceeds of sale thereof, less expenses if claim therefor be made within five years from the date of finding. If the owner shall have died intestate without creditors or next of kin surviving, such proceeds shall not be paid to such person's legal representative.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1258, §5204; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, §701(96), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3300; renumbered §8504, Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238; Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), (b)(1), (2)(E), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404, 405.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 5204 of this title as this section.

Pub. L. 102-83 substituted "Secretary" for "Administrator" and "Department" for "Veterans' Administration".

1986—Pub. L. 99-576 substituted "such person's" for "his" in three places.

§ 8505. Sale or other disposition of property

Any unclaimed personal property as described in section 8502 of this title of veterans who have heretofore died or who may hereafter die while maintained as such in a Department facility, and also any unclaimed property heretofore or hereafter found or situated in such facility, may be sold, used, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of in accordance with this subchapter, and subject to regulations promulgated by the Secretary pursuant hereto; and the net proceeds of sale thereof shall be credited and be subject to disbursement as provided in this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1258, §5205; renumbered §8505 and amended Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), (d)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238, 239; Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), (b)(1), (2)(E), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404, 405.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 5205 of this title as this section and substituted "8502" for "5202".

Pub. L. 102-83 substituted "Secretary" for "Administrator" and "Department" for "Veterans' Administration".

§ 8506. Notice of sale

At least ninety days before any sale pursuant to this subchapter, written or printed notice thereof describing the property to be sold shall be mailed to the owner of the property or, if deceased, to the owner's executor or administrator, or to the nearest kin, if any such appear by the records of the Department. If none such appears from said records, similar notice shall be posted at the facility where the death occurred or property shall have been found (if in existence) and at the place where such property is situated at the time of such notice, and also at the place where probate notices are posted in the county wherein the sale is to be had. The person posting such notice shall make an affidavit setting forth the time and place of such posting and attaching thereto a copy of such notice, and such affidavit shall be prima facie evidence of such posting and admissible in evidence as proof of the same.

(Pub. L. 85-857, Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1258, §5206; Pub. L. 99-576, title VII, §701(97), Oct. 28, 1986, 100 Stat. 3300; renumbered §8506, Pub. L. 102-40, title IV, §402(b)(1), May 7, 1991, 105 Stat. 238; Pub. L. 102-83, §4(a)(3), (4), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 404.)

AMENDMENTS

1991—Pub. L. 102-40 renumbered section 5206 of this title as this section.

Pub. L. 102-83 substituted "Department" for "Veterans' Administration".

1986—Pub. L. 99-576 substituted "the owner's" for "his" before "executor".

§ 8507. Payment of small shipping charges

Upon receipt of a proper claim for such property under the provisions of this subchapter the Secretary is hereby authorized, in the Secretary's discretion and in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, to pay mailing or shipping charges not to exceed \$25 in the case of each deceased veteran as hereinabove defined.