

§ 1126. Gold star lapel button: eligibility and distribution

(a) A lapel button, to be known as the gold star lapel button, shall be designed, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, to identify next of kin of members of the armed forces—

(1) who lost their lives during World War I, World War II, or during any subsequent period of armed hostilities in which the United States was engaged before July 1, 1958;

(2) who lost or lose their lives after June 30, 1958—

(A) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;

(B) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or

(C) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party against an opposing armed force; or

(3) who lost or lose their lives after March 28, 1973, as a result of—

(A) an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the Secretary of Defense; or

(B) military operations while serving outside the United States (including the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States) as part of a peacekeeping force.

(b) Under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary concerned, upon application to him, shall furnish one gold star lapel button without cost to each next of kin of a member who lost or loses his or her life under any circumstances prescribed in subsection (a).

(c) Not more than one gold star lapel button may be furnished to any one individual except that, when a gold star lapel button furnished under this section has been lost, destroyed, or rendered unfit for use without fault or neglect on the part of the person to whom it was furnished, the button may be replaced upon application and without cost.

(d) In this section:

(1) The term “next of kin” means individuals standing in such relationship to members of the armed forces described in subsection (a) as the Secretaries concerned shall jointly specify in regulations for purposes of this section.

(2) The term “World War I” includes the period from April 6, 1917, to March 3, 1921.

(3) The term “World War II” includes the period from September 8, 1939, to July 25, 1947, at 12 o'clock noon.

(4) The term “military operations” includes those operations involving members of the armed forces assisting in United States Government sponsored training of military personnel of a foreign nation.

(5) The term “peacekeeping force” includes those personnel assigned to a force engaged in a peacekeeping operation authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

(Added Pub. L. 89-534, §1(1), Aug. 11, 1966, 80 Stat. 345, §1124; renumbered §1126, Pub. L. 89-718,

§9, Nov. 2, 1966, 80 Stat. 1117; amended Pub. L. 98-94, title XII, §1268(8), Sept. 24, 1983, 97 Stat. 706; Pub. L. 100-26, §7(k)(5), Apr. 21, 1987, 101 Stat. 284; Pub. L. 103-160, div. A, title XI, §1143, Nov. 30, 1993, 107 Stat. 1757; Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §581, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1411.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in sections 1 to 3 of act Aug. 1, 1947, ch. 426, 61 Stat. 710, which were classified to sections 182a to 182c of former Title 36, Patriotic Societies and Observances, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 89-534, §2, Aug. 11, 1966, 80 Stat. 345.

AMENDMENTS

2019—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 116-92, §581(a)(1), struck out “widows, parents, and” after “identify” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 116-92, §581(a)(2), substituted “each” for “the widow and to each parent and”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 116-92, §581(b), substituted “and without cost.” for “and payment of an amount sufficient to cover the cost of manufacture and distribution.”

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 116-92, §581(a)(3), added par. (1), redesignated pars. (5) to (8) as (2) to (5), respectively, and struck out former pars. (1), (2), (3), and (4) which defined “widow”, “parents”, “next of kin”, and “children”, respectively.

1993—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-160, §1143(a), struck out “of the United States” after “armed forces” in introductory provisions, redesignated cls. (i) to (iii) of par. (2) as subpars. (A) to (C), respectively, and added par. (3).

Subsec. (d)(7), (8). Pub. L. 103-160, §1143(b), added pars. (7) and (8).

1987—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 100-26 substituted colon for dash at end of introductory provisions, inserted “The term” in each par., and substituted periods for semicolons in pars. (1) to (4) and period for “; and” in par. (5).

1983—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 98-94 substituted “who” for “Who”.

§ 1127. Precedence of the award of the Purple Heart

In prescribing regulations establishing the order of precedence of awards and decorations authorized to be displayed on the uniforms of members of the armed forces, the Secretary of the military department concerned shall accord the Purple Heart a position of precedence, in relation to other awards and decorations authorized to be displayed, not lower than that immediately following the bronze star.

(Added Pub. L. 98-525, title V, §553(a), Oct. 19, 1984, 98 Stat. 2532; amended Pub. L. 99-145, title V, §533, Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 634.)

AMENDMENTS

1985—Pub. L. 99-145 substituted “the bronze star” for “the lowest position accorded any award or decoration for valor”.

§ 1128. Prisoner-of-war medal: issue

(a) The Secretary concerned shall issue a prisoner-of-war medal to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces, was taken prisoner and held captive—

(1) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;

(2) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or