

§ 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

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

(b) Under uniform regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary concerned may issue a prisoner-of-war medal to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces, was held captive under circumstances not covered by paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection (a), but which the Secretary concerned finds were comparable to those circumstances under which persons have generally been held captive by enemy armed forces during periods of armed conflict.

(c) The prisoner-of-war medal shall be of appropriate design, with ribbons and appurtenances.

(d) 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 concerned shall accord the prisoner-of-war medal a position of precedence, in relation to other awards and decorations authorized to be displayed—

(1) immediately following decorations awarded for individual heroism, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service, and

(2) before any other service medal, campaign medal, or service ribbon authorized to be displayed.

(e) Not more than one prisoner-of-war medal may be issued to a person. However, for each succeeding service that would otherwise justify the issuance of such a medal, the Secretary concerned may issue a suitable device to be worn as the Secretary determines.

(f) For a person to be eligible for issuance of a prisoner-of-war medal, the person's conduct must have been honorable for the period of captivity which serves as the basis for the issuance.

(g) If a person dies before the issuance of a prisoner-of-war medal to which he is entitled, the medal may be issued to the person's representative, as designated by the Secretary concerned.

(h) Under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary concerned, a prisoner-of-war medal that is lost, destroyed, or rendered unfit for use without fault or neglect on the part of the person to whom it was issued may be replaced without charge.

(i) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that regulations prescribed by the Secretaries of the military departments under this section are uniform so far as practicable.

(Added Pub. L. 99-145, title V, § 532(a)(1), Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 633; amended Pub. L. 101-189, div. A, title V, § 516(a), Nov. 29, 1989, 103 Stat. 1441; Pub. L. 112-239, div. A, title V, § 584, Jan. 2, 2013, 126 Stat. 1767.)

AMENDMENTS

2013—Subsec. (a)(2) to (4). Pub. L. 112-239, § 584(1), inserted “or” at end of par. (2), substituted period at end for “; or” in par. (3), and struck out par. (4) which read as follows: “by foreign armed forces that are hostile to the United States, under circumstances which the Secretary concerned finds to have been comparable to

those under which persons have generally been held captive by enemy armed forces during periods of armed conflict.”

Subsecs. (b) to (i). Pub. L. 112-239, § 584(2), (3), added subsec. (b) and redesignated former subsecs. (b) to (h) as (c) to (i), respectively.

1989—Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 101-189 added par. (4).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1989 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 101-189, div. A, title V, § 516(b), Nov. 29, 1989, 103 Stat. 1442, provided that: “Paragraph (4) of section 1128(a) of title 10, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), applies with respect to periods of captivity after April 5, 1917.”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 99-145, title V, § 532(b), Nov. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 634, provided that: “Section 1128 of title 10, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), applies with respect to any person taken prisoner and held captive after April 5, 1917.”

§ 1129. Purple Heart: members killed or wounded in action by friendly fire

(a) For purposes of the award of the Purple Heart, the Secretary concerned shall treat a member of the armed forces described in subsection (b) in the same manner as a member who is killed or wounded in action as the result of an act of an enemy of the United States.

(b) A member described in this subsection is a member who is killed or wounded in action by weapon fire while directly engaged in armed conflict, other than as the result of an act of an enemy of the United States, unless (in the case of a wound) the wound is the result of willful misconduct of the member.

(c) This section applies to members of the armed forces who are killed or wounded on or after December 7, 1941. In the case of a member killed or wounded as described in subsection (b) on or after December 7, 1941, and before November 30, 1993, the Secretary concerned shall award the Purple Heart under subsection (a) in each case which is known to the Secretary before such date or for which an application is made to the Secretary in such manner as the Secretary requires.

(Added Pub. L. 103-160, div. A, title XI, § 1141(a), Nov. 30, 1993, 107 Stat. 1756; amended Pub. L. 105-85, div. A, title X, § 1073(a)(18), Nov. 18, 1997, 111 Stat. 1901.)

AMENDMENTS

1997—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-85 substituted “November 30, 1993,” for “the date of the enactment of this section,” and “before such date or” for “before the date of the enactment of this section or”.

AWARD OF PURPLE HEART TO PERSONS WOUNDED WHILE HELD AS PRISONERS OF WAR BEFORE APRIL 25, 1962

Pub. L. 104-106, div. A, title V, § 521, Feb. 10, 1996, 110 Stat. 309, as amended by Pub. L. 108-136, div. A, title V, § 544, Nov. 24, 2003, 117 Stat. 1478, provided that:

“(a) AWARD OF PURPLE HEART.—For purposes of the award of the Purple Heart, the Secretary concerned (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code) shall treat a former prisoner of war who was wounded before April 25, 1962, while held as a prisoner of war (or while being taken captive) in the same manner as a former prisoner of war who is wounded on or after that date while held as a prisoner of war (or while being taken captive).