

CHAPTER 737—DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

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AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §808(e)(2)(A), (f)(1), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1839, redesignated chapter 357 of this title as this chapter and items 3741 to 3756 as 7271 to 7286, respectively.

2004—Pub. L. 108-375, div. A, title X, §1084(d)(28), Oct. 28, 2004, 118 Stat. 2063, renumbered item 3755 “Korea Defense Service Medal” as 3756.

2002—Pub. L. 107-314, div. A, title V, §543(b)(2), Dec. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 2549, added item 3755 “Korea Defense Service Medal”.

Pub. L. 107-248, title VIII, §8143(c)(1)(B), Oct. 23, 2002, 116 Stat. 1570, added item 3755 “Medal of honor: presentation of Medal of Honor Flag”.

2001—Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title V, §553(a)(1)(B), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1116, added item 3754.

§ 7271. Medal of honor: award

The President may award, and present in the name of Congress, a medal of honor of appropriate design, with ribbons and appurtenances, to a person who while a member of the Army, distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty—

- (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 foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 215, §3741; Pub. L. 88-77, §1(1), July 25, 1963, 77 Stat. 93; renumbered §7271, Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §808(b)(11), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1838.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
3741	10:1403.	July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (8th par. under “Ordnance Department”), 40 Stat. 870.

The words “That the provisions of existing law relating to the award of medals of honor to officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the Army be, and they hereby are, amended so that”, in the Act of July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (8th par. under “Ordnance Department”), 40 Stat. 870, are not contained in 10:1403. They are also omitted from the revised section as surplusage. The word “member” is substituted for the words “officer or enlisted man”. The word “only” is omitted as surplusage. The word “award” is inserted for clarity, since the President determines the recipient of the medal in addition to presenting it.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-232 renumbered section 3741 of this title as this section.

1963—Pub. L. 88-77 enlarged authority to award medal of honor, which was limited to those cases in which persons distinguished themselves in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, to permit its award for distinguished service while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

REVIEW OF WORLD WAR I VALOR MEDALS

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §584, Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1412, as amended by Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title V, §561(a), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3639, provided that:

“(a) REVIEW REQUIRED.—Each Secretary concerned shall review the service records of World War I veterans described in subsection (b) under the jurisdiction of such Secretary in order to determine whether any such veteran should be awarded the Medal of Honor for valor during World War I.

“(b) COVERED WORLD WAR I VETERANS.—The World War I veterans whose service records may be reviewed under subsection (a) are the following:

“(1) African American war veterans, Asian American war veterans, Hispanic American war veterans, Jewish American war veterans, and Native American war veterans who were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross or the Navy Cross for an action that occurred between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918.

“(2) African American war veterans, Asian American war veterans, Hispanic American war veterans, Jewish American war veterans, and Native American war veterans who were awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palm (that is, awarded at the Army level or above) by the Government of France for an action that occurred between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918.

“(3) African American war veterans, Asian American war veterans, Hispanic American war veterans, Jewish American war veterans, and Native American war veterans who were recommended for a Medal of Honor for actions that occurred from April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, if the Department of Defense possesses or receives records relating to such recommendation.

“(c) RECOMMENDATION BASED ON REVIEW.—If a Secretary concerned determines, based upon the review under subsection (a), that the award of the Medal of Honor to a covered World War I veteran is warranted, such Secretary shall submit to the President a recommendation that the President award the Medal of Honor to that veteran.

“(d) AUTHORITY TO AWARD MEDAL OF HONOR.—The Medal of Honor may be awarded to a World War I vet-