

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 732; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(E), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2146.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on section 246 of title 22, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Foreign Relations and Intercourse (July 8, 1918, ch. 138, 40 Stat. 821).

Words “upon conviction” were deleted as surplusage, since punishment cannot be imposed until a conviction is secured.

Reference to territories or places subject to jurisdiction of the United States was omitted in view of section 5 of this title defining the term “United States.”

Fine of “\$250” was substituted for “\$300” as being more consonant with the penalties provided for similar offenses in this chapter.

Words “unless such wearing thereof be authorized by such state, nation, or government” were deleted as unnecessary and undesirable since it is unthinkable that a friendly power would authorize such deceit.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$250”.

§ 704. Military medals or decorations

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever knowingly purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations made pursuant to law, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

(b) FRAUDULENT REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT RECEIPT OF MILITARY DECORATIONS OR MEDALS.—Whoever, with intent to obtain money, property, or other tangible benefit, fraudulently holds oneself out to be a recipient of a decoration or medal described in subsection (c)(2) or (d) shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(c) ENHANCED PENALTY FOR OFFENSES INVOLVING CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a decoration or medal involved in an offense under subsection (a) is a Congressional Medal of Honor, in lieu of the punishment provided in that subsection, the offender shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

(2) CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “Congressional Medal of Honor” means—

(A) a medal of honor awarded under section 7271, 8291, or 9271 of title 10 or section 491¹ of title 14;

(B) a duplicate medal of honor issued under section 7284, 8306, or 9284 of title 10 or section 504¹ of title 14; or

(C) a replacement of a medal of honor provided under section 7277, 8303, or 9277 of title 10 or section 501¹ of title 14.

(d) ENHANCED PENALTY FOR OFFENSES INVOLVING CERTAIN OTHER MEDALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsection (a) is a distinguished-service cross awarded under section 7272 of title 10, a Navy cross awarded under section 8292 of title 10, an Air Force cross awarded under section 9272 of title 10, a silver star awarded under section 7276, 8294, or 9276 of title 10, a Purple Heart awarded under section 1129 of title 10, a combat badge, or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, in lieu of the punishment provided in the applicable subsection, the offender shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

(2) COMBAT BADGE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “combat badge” means a Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon, or Combat Action Medal.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 732; May 24, 1949, ch. 139, § 16, 63 Stat. 92; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXII, § 320109, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(E), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2113, 2146; Pub. L. 103-442, Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4630; Pub. L. 104-294, title VI, § 604(b)(16), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3507; Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title V, § 553(e), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1117; Pub. L. 109-437, § 3, Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3266; Pub. L. 113-12, § 2, June 3, 2013, 127 Stat. 448; Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, § 809(e)(1), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1841.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

1948 ACT

Based on section 1425 of title 10, U.S.C., 1940 ed., Army and Air Force (Feb. 24, 1923, ch. 110, 42 Stat. 1286; Apr. 21, 1928, ch. 392, 45 Stat. 437).

Section was made to cover the decorations and medals of the Navy Department as well as the War Department.

Minor changes were made in phraseology.

1949 ACT

This section [section 16] clarifies the wording of section 704 of title 18, U.S.C., to embrace all service decorations awarded to members of the armed forces whether by the Army, Navy, Air Force, or other branch of such forces. (See note to sec. 5 [of 1949 Act, set out in Legislative History note under section 244 of title 18].)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Sections 491, 501, and 504 of title 14, referred to in subsec. (c)(2), were redesignated sections 2732, 2745, and 2733, respectively, of title 14 by Pub. L. 115-282, title I, § 116(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4226, and references to sections 491, 501, and 504 of title 14 deemed to refer to such redesignated sections, see section 123(b)(1) of Pub. L. 115-282, set out as a References to Sections of Title 14 as Redesignated by Pub. L. 115-282 note preceding section 101 of Title 14, Coast Guard.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (c)(2)(A). Pub. L. 115-232, § 809(e)(1)(A)(i), substituted “section 7271, 8291, or 9271 of title 10” for “section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10”.

Subsec. (c)(2)(B). Pub. L. 115-232, § 809(e)(1)(A)(ii), substituted “section 7284, 8306, or 9284 of title 10” for “section 3754, 6256, or 8754 of title 10”.

¹ See References in Text note below.

Subsec. (c)(2)(C). Pub. L. 115-232, § 809(e)(1)(A)(iii), substituted “section 7277, 8303, or 9277 of title 10” for “section 3747, 6253, or 8747 of title 10”.

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 115-232, § 809(e)(1)(B), substituted “section 7272 of title 10” for “section 3742 of title 10”, “section 8292 of title 10” for “section 6242 of title 10”, “section 9272 of title 10” for “section 8742 of title 10”, and “section 7276, 8294, or 9276 of title 10” for “section 3746, 6244, or 8746 of title 10”.

2013—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 113-12, § 2(a)(1), struck out “wears,” after “Whoever knowingly”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 113-12, § 2(a)(2), amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Whoever falsely represents himself or herself, verbally or in writing, to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation of such item shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than six months, or both.”

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 113-12, § 2(c), struck out “or (b)” after “subsection (a)”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 113-12, § 2(b), designated existing provisions as par. (1), inserted heading, inserted “a combat badge,” after “1129 of title 10,” and added par. (2).

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 113-12, § 2(c), struck out “or (b)” after “subsection (a)”.

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(a), substituted “purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value” for “manufactures, or sells”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(b)(2), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (c).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(b)(1), (d)(1), redesignated subsec. (b) as (c) and inserted “Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving” before “Congressional Medal of Honor” in heading.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(b)(3), inserted “or (b)” after “subsection (a)”.

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(d)(2), added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which defined “sells” and “Congressional Medal of Honor”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 109-437, § 3(c), added subsec. (d).

2001—Subsec. (b)(2)(B). Pub. L. 107-107 amended subpar. (B) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (B) read as follows: “As used in this subsection, ‘Congressional Medal of Honor’ means a medal awarded under section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10.”

1996—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-294 amended Pub. L. 103-322, § 320109(1). See 1994 Amendment note below.

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-322, §§ 320109(2), 330016(1)(E), amended subsec. (a) identically, substituting “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$250”.

Pub. L. 103-322, § 320109(1), as amended by Pub. L. 104-294, § 604(b)(16), designated existing provisions as subsec. (a) and inserted heading.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103-322, § 320109(3), added subsec. (b).

Subsec. (b)(2)(B). Pub. L. 103-442 inserted “, 6241, or 8741” after “3741”.

1949—Act May 24, 1949, covered all service decorations awarded members of the armed forces by any of the armed services.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

REFERENCES TO SECTIONS OF TITLE 14 AS REDESIGNATED BY PUB. L. 115-282

Sections 491, 501, and 504 of title 14 redesignated sections 2732, 2745, and 2733, respectively, of title 14 by Pub. L. 115-282, title I, § 116(b), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4226, and references to sections 491, 501, and 504 of title 14 deemed to refer to such redesignated sections, see

section 123(b)(1) of Pub. L. 115-282, set out as a note preceding section 101 of Title 14, Coast Guard.

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 Title 10, Armed Forces.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-294 effective Sept. 13, 1994, see section 604(d) of Pub. L. 104-294, set out as a note under section 13 of this title.

FINDINGS

Pub. L. 109-437, § 2, Dec. 20, 2006, 120 Stat. 3266, provided that: “Congress makes the following findings:

“(1) Fraudulent claims surrounding the receipt of the Medal of Honor, the distinguished-service cross, the Navy cross, the Air Force cross, the Purple Heart, and other decorations and medals awarded by the President or the Armed Forces of the United States damage the reputation and meaning of such decorations and medals.

“(2) Federal law enforcement officers have limited ability to prosecute fraudulent claims of receipt of military decorations and medals.

“(3) Legislative action is necessary to permit law enforcement officers to protect the reputation and meaning of military decorations and medals.”

§ 705. Badge or medal of veterans’ organizations

Whoever knowingly manufactures, reproduces, sells or purchases for resale, either separately or on or appended to, any article of merchandise manufactured or sold, any badge, medal, emblem, or other insignia or any colorable imitation thereof, of any veterans’ organization incorporated by enactment of Congress, or of any organization formally recognized by any such veterans’ organization as an auxiliary of such veterans’ organization, or knowingly prints, lithographs, engraves or otherwise reproduces on any poster, circular, periodical, magazine, newspaper, or other publication, or circulates or distributes any such printed matter bearing a reproduction of such badge, medal, emblem, or other insignia or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under rules and regulations prescribed by any such organization, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

(June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 732; Aug. 4, 1950, ch. 578, 64 Stat. 413; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXIII, § 330016(1)(E), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2146.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Based on title 18, U.S.C., 1940 ed., § 76e (June 25, 1940, ch. 426, 54 Stat. 571).

Words beginning the section are from the punishment provision of last sentence which was itself rewritten without surplusage.

Changes were made in phraseology.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-322 substituted “fined under this title” for “fined not more than \$250”.

1950—Act Aug. 4, 1950, brought within the protection of this section emblems, badges, or insignia of auxiliary organizations of veteran’s organizations incorporated by an act of Congress.