



# LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

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## Research Brief

TO: Representative Les Gara  
FROM: Jake Quarstad, Legislative Research Assistant  
DATE: August 14, 2014  
RE: Motor Vehicle Specialty License Plates for Bronze Star Recipients  
*LRS Report 15.023*

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***You wished to know which states offer Bronze Star motor vehicle license plates to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have been awarded the medal, and whether such license plates could be obtained in Alaska.***

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Briefly, at least 26 states have laws with provisions for special license plates for Bronze Star recipients.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the specific state of issuance, these plates can be held by the awardee or a surviving spouse. A table on the following page lists these states and the relevant statutory citation for each. We also attach a varied sampling of statutes from Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Although Alaska does not offer a license plate for Bronze Star recipients, it does have several special license plates recognizing current military service members, veterans, and recipients of other military decorations.<sup>2</sup> Some specific license plate options include a designation for an Ex-Prisoner of War, Gold Star Family, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Lao Veteran, Purple Heart recipient, and 62 unit-specific Veteran options.

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

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<sup>1</sup> We obtained this information by querying state laws on LEXIS. Additional states may have laws with similar practical application using wording that our query did not identify. In addition to the states cited, the U.S. Territory of Guam offers Bronze Star recipients a special license plate.

<sup>2</sup> More information on special issue license plates in the State of Alaska can be found on the Division of Motor Vehicles webpage at <http://doa.alaska.gov/dmv/plates/index.htm>.

## Specialty License Plates for Bronze Star Recipients

State	Statute
Colorado	C.R.S. 42-3-213
Delaware	21 Del. C. § 2139D
Georgia	O.C.G.A. § 40-2-85.1
Illinois	625 ILCS 5/3-628
Iowa	Iowa Code § 321.34
Kansas	K.S.A. § 8-1,156
Kentucky	KRS § 186.166
Maine	29-A M.R.S. § 523
Maryland	COMAR 11.15.23.01
Massachusetts	ALM GL ch. 90, § 2
Minnesota	Minn. Stat. § 168.123
Mississippi	Miss. Code Ann. § 27-19-56.62
Missouri	Mo R.S. § 301.3075
New Mexico	N.M. Stat. Ann. § 66-3-419
North Carolina	N.C. Gen. Stat. § 20-79.4
Ohio	ORC Ann. 4503.432
Oklahoma	47 Okl. St. § 1135.2
Pennsylvania	75 Pa.C.S. § 1367
South Carolina	S.C. Code Ann. § 56-3-10710
South Dakota	S.D. Codified Laws § 32-5-109.7
Tennessee	Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-4-231
Texas	Tex. Transp. Code § 504.315
Virginia	Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-742.1
Washington	Rev. Code Wash. § 46.18.295
West Virginia	W. Va. Code § 17A-3-14
Wisconsin	Wis. Stat. § 341.14

**Source:** LEXIS state statutes.



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ILLINOIS COMPILED STATUTES ANNOTATED  
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\*\*\* Statutes current through Public Act 98-650 of the 2014 Legislative Session \*\*\*  
\*\*\* Annotations current to State Cases through June 19, 2014 \*\*\*

CHAPTER 625. VEHICLES  
ILLINOIS VEHICLE CODE  
CHAPTER 3. CERTIFICATES OF TITLE AND REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES  
ARTICLE VI. SPECIAL PLATES AND SPECIAL LICENSE PLATE STICKERS

**GO TO THE ILLINOIS STATUTES ARCHIVE DIRECTORY**

*625 ILCS 5/3-628 (2014)*

§ 625 ILCS 5/3-628. Bronze Star plates

Sec. 3-628. Bronze Star plates. (a) Beginning January 1, 1996, in addition to any other special license plate, the Secretary, upon receipt of all applicable fees and applications made in the form prescribed by the Secretary of State, may issue special registration plates to residents of Illinois who have been awarded the Bronze Star by the United States Armed Forces. The Secretary, upon receipt of the proper applications and fees, may also issue these special registration plates to an Illinois resident who is the surviving spouse of a person who was awarded the Bronze Star by a branch of the armed forces of the United States. The special plate issued under this Section shall be affixed only to passenger vehicles of the first division, motorcycles, or motor vehicles of the second division weighing not more than 8,000 pounds. Plates issued under this Section shall expire according to the staggered multi-year procedure established by Section 3-414.1 of this Code [625 ILCS 5/3-414.1].

(b) The design, color, and format of the plates shall be wholly within the discretion of the Secretary of State. The Secretary may, in his or her discretion, allow the plates to be issued as vanity plates or personalized in accordance with Section 3-405.1 of this Code [625 ILCS 5/3-405.1]. The plates are not required to designate "Land Of Lincoln", as prescribed in subsection (b) of Section 3-412 of this Code [625 ILCS 5/3-412]. The Secretary shall prescribe the eligibility requirements and, in his or her discretion, shall approve and prescribe stickers or decals as provided under Section 3-412 [625 ILCS 5/3-412].

(c) (Blank).

**HISTORY:** Source: P.A. 88-589, § 10; 89-282, § 10; 92-545, § 5; 93-140, § 5; 93-937, § 5; 94-343, § 5.

**NOTES:**

**EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Section 99 of P.A. 88-589 made this section effective upon becoming law. The Act was approved August 14, 1994.

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENTS.**

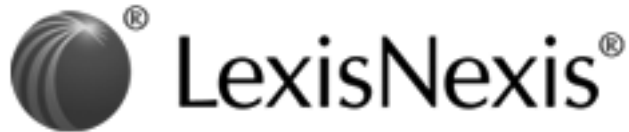
The 1995 amendment by P.A. 89-282, effective August 10, 1995, in subsection (c), in the second paragraph in the first and second sentences, substituted "Secretary of State Special" for "Bronze Star".

The 2002 amendment by P.A. 92-545, effective June 12, 2002, inserted "motorcycles" in the second sentence of subsection (a).

The 2003 amendment by P.A. 93-140, effective January 1, 2004, deleted the last sentence which read, "For each registration renewal period, a \$2 fee, in addition to the appropriate registration fee, shall be charged and shall be deposited into the Secretary of State Special License Plate Fund".

The 2004 amendment by P.A. 93-937, effective January 1, 2005, deleted subsection (c).

The 2005 amendment by P.A. 94-343, effective January 1, 2006, added the second sentence in (a).



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\*\*\* CURRENT THROUGH ACTS APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR AS OF JUNE 27, 2014, 97TH GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY, 2ND SESSION, 2014 \*\*\*  
\*\*\* MOST CURRENT ANNOTATION FEBRUARY 25, 2014. \*\*\*

TITLE 19. MOTOR VEHICLES, WATERCRAFT AND AVIATION (Chs. 300-307)  
CHAPTER 301. REGISTRATION AND LICENSING OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES

**GO TO CODE ARCHIVE DIRECTORY FOR THIS JURISDICTION**

§ 301.3075 R.S.Mo. (2014)

§ 301.3075. Bronze Star military service award, special license plates -- application procedure, fees -- no additional personalization fee -- design

1. Any person who has been awarded the military service award known as the "bronze star" may apply for bronze star motor vehicle license plates for any motor vehicle such person owns, either solely or jointly, other than an apportioned motor vehicle or a commercial motor vehicle licensed in excess of eighteen thousand pounds gross weight.

2. Any such person shall make application for the bronze star license plates on a form provided by the director of revenue and furnish such proof as a recipient of the bronze star as the director may require. The director shall then issue license plates bearing letters or numbers or a combination thereof as determined by the director with the words "BRONZE STAR" in place of the words "SHOW-ME STATE". Such license plates shall be made with fully reflective material with a common color scheme and design, shall be clearly visible at night, and shall be aesthetically attractive, as prescribed by *section 301.130*. Such plates shall also bear an image of the bronze star.

3. If the person has been awarded a bronze star with a "V" for valor device on the medal, then the director of revenue shall issue plates bearing the letter "V" in addition to the words and images required by this section. Such letter "V" shall be placed on the plate in a conspicuous manner as determined by the director.

4. There shall be a fifteen-dollar fee in addition to the regular registration fees charged for each set of bronze star license plates issued pursuant to this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of *section 301.144*, no additional fee shall be charged for the personalization of license plates issued pursuant to this section. There shall be no limit on the number of license plates any person qualified pursuant to this section may obtain so long as each set of license plates issued pursuant to this section is issued for vehicles owned solely or jointly by such person. License plates issued pursuant to the provisions of this section shall not be transferable to any other person except that any registered co-owner of the

motor vehicle shall be entitled to operate the motor vehicle with such plates for the duration of the year licensed in the event of the death of the qualified person.

**HISTORY:** L. 2000 H.B. 1797 § 301.474



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\*\*\* This document is current through all 2013 legislation passed at the \*\*\*  
88th Regular Session, including Supreme Court Rule 14-10,  
and November 2012 ballot measures  
Annotations current through February 19, 2014

TITLE 32. MOTOR VEHICLES  
CHAPTER 32-5. ANNUAL REGISTRATION AND LICENSE PLATES

**GO TO SOUTH DAKOTA STATUTES ARCHIVE DIRECTORY**

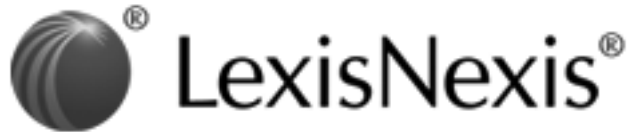
*S.D. Codified Laws § 32-5-109.7 (2014)*

**Legislative Alert:** LEXSEE 2014 S.D. HB 1060 -- See section 33.

§ 32-5-109.7. Special license plates for recipients of bronze star medal

Any resident owner of a motor vehicle who has received the bronze star medal with valor device or the bronze star medal and has a valid South Dakota driver license may apply to the secretary to receive special license plates which honor the person as a recipient of the bronze star medal. Each application shall be on a form prescribed by the secretary and shall include the certification from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The special plates shall be numbered and contain a symbol to be determined by the secretary indicating that the owner is a recipient of the bronze star medal with valor device or the bronze star medal. The special plates shall be displayed as set forth in § 32-5-98. The special license plate shall be reflectorized and validated each year with a sticker in the same manner as a noncommercial license plate. In addition to the noncommercial license plate fees, an additional fee of ten dollars shall be charged for the initial issuance of the special license plates. If it is determined that the owner does not qualify for the special plates, the plates shall be surrendered to the county treasurer of the applicant's residence. The treasurer shall notify the secretary who shall make the necessary changes in the registration file. The special plates may be retained by the owner's family upon the owner's death, but may not be displayed on the vehicle beyond the expiration of the plates or renewal stickers. Failure to surrender the special license plates as required by this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

**HISTORY:** Source: SL 2012, ch 163, § 2, eff. July 1, 2012.



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TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED

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\*\*\* Current through the 2014 Regular Session \*\*\*

Annotations current through May 23, 2014 for the Tennessee Supreme Court

Title 55 Motor and Other Vehicles

Chapter 4 Registration and Licensing of Motor Vehicles

Part 2 Special License Plates

**GO TO THE TENNESSEE ANNOTATED STATUTES ARCHIVE DIRECTORY**

*Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-4-231 (2014)*

**55-4-231. Bronze Star (Meritorious) and Air Medal (Meritorious) recipients.**

(a) A recipient of the Bronze Star (Meritorious) or the Air Medal (Meritorious) who is a resident of this state and who is an owner or lessee of a motor vehicle, upon complying with state motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles and upon paying the regular registration fee for plates, as prescribed under § 55-4-111, and the fee provided for in § 55-4-203(c)(1), shall be issued a distinctive Air Medal (Meritorious) or Bronze Star (Meritorious) motor vehicle registration plate, as appropriate, for a motor vehicle authorized by § 55-4-210(c).

(b) (1) The Bronze Star (Meritorious) plates provided for in this section shall include an identification legend distinctive to recipients of the Bronze Star (Meritorious). The legend shall read "Bronze Star -- Meritorious". The registration number of the plate shall include the letters "BSM" and a unique identifying number.

(2) The Air Medal (Meritorious) plates provided for in this section shall include an identification legend distinctive to recipients of the Air Medal (Meritorious). The legend shall read "Air Medal -- Meritorious". The registration number of the plate shall include the letters "REM" and a unique identifying number.

(c) Eligibility for Air Medal (Meritorious) plates and Bronze Star (Meritorious) plates shall be determined by the department by consulting the appropriate information on the DD214 form, or in a case of military service predating 1950, in consultation with appropriate information on the equivalent form or on other official documentation, or a written communication from the department of veterans affairs, the form, documentation or communication certifying that the application for the plate is submitted by a recipient of the Bronze Star (Meritorious) or the Air Medal (Meritorious), as appropriate.

(d) (1) Any Air Medal (Meritorious or Valor) license plate issued to any recipient of the Air Medal prior to May 13, 2013, shall not be subject to the regular registration fee and shall be free of charge pursuant to § 55-4-203(b).

(2) Any Air Medal license plate initially issued to any recipient of the Air Medal (Meritorious) on or after May



13, 2013, shall be military cultural plates on and after such date; provided, that the plate shall be subject to the regular registration fee for plates, as prescribed under § 55-4-111, and the fee provided for in § 55-4-203(c)(1).

(3) (A) Any Air Medal license plates initially issued to any recipient of the Air Medal (Valor) on or after May 13, 2013, and prior to May 19, 2014, shall be memorial plates upon their first renewal on or after May 13, 2013; provided, that the plates shall not be subject to the regular registration fee and shall be free of charge pursuant to § 55-4-203(b).

(B) Any Air Medal license plates initially issued to any recipient of the Air Medal (Valor) on or after May 19, 2014, shall be memorial plates on and after May 19, 2014; provided, that the plates shall not be subject to the regular registration fee and shall be free of charge pursuant to § 55-4-203(b).

(4) Any Silver Star or Bronze Star (Valor) plates issued prior to May 19, 2014, shall be considered memorial plates upon their first renewal on or after May 19, 2014; provided, that such plates shall not be subject to the regular registration fee and shall be free of charge pursuant to § 55-4-203(b).

**HISTORY:** Acts 2002, ch. 876, § 6; 2007, ch. 484, § 51; 2013, ch. 318, §§ 10-12; 2014, ch. 966, §§ 1, 8, 9.

**NOTES: Compiler's Notes.**

Former part 2 of this chapter, concerning special plates, was repealed and reenacted by Acts 1998, ch. 1063, § 1, effective July 1, 1998. The former provisions, excluding those previously repealed by other acts, were §§ 55-4-201 -- 55-4-272 and 55-4-275 (Acts 1984, ch. 966, §§ 1, 9; 1985, ch. 56, §§ 1, 2; 1985, ch. 95, § 1; 1985, ch. 402, §§ 1-11; 1987, ch. 172, §§ 1-5; 1987, ch. 228, §§ 1-11; 1987, ch. 336, §§ 1-3, 5; 1987, ch. 434, § 2; 1988, ch. 575, § 1; 1988, ch. 618, §§ 1, 2; 1988, ch. 687, §§ 1-4; 1988, ch. 781, §§ 1-3; 1988, ch. 810, §§ 1-4; 1988, ch. 864, §§ 1-4; 1989, ch. 16, §§ 3, 4; 1989, ch. 136, § 1; 1989, ch. 158, § 1; 1989, ch. 501, § 1; 1989, ch. 591, § 6; 1990, ch. 871, § 1; 1990, ch. 897, § 1; 1990, ch. 925, §§ 1-4; 1991, ch. 209, §§ 1, 2; 1991, ch. 244, §§ 1, 2; 1991, ch. 450, §§ 1-3; 1991, ch. 482, §§ 1-12; 1992, ch. 543, §§ 1, 2; 1992, ch. 737, §§ 1-3; 1992, ch. 846, §§ 1-3; 1992, ch. 1008, §§ 1, 2; 1993, ch. 66, § 72; 1993, ch. 105, §§ 1-4; 1993, ch. 106, § 1; 1993, ch. 128, § 1; 1993, ch. 145, § 1; 1993, ch. 236, §§ 1-6; 1993, ch. 314, § 1; 1993, ch. 446, §§ 1-3; 1993, ch. 529, § 6; 1994, ch. 624, §§ 1-3; 1994, ch. 637, §§ 1-4; 1994, ch. 665, §§ 1-3; 1994, ch. 879, §§ 1-19; 1994, ch. 930, §§ 1-3; 1994, ch. 959, § 1; 1994, ch. 999, §§ 1-5; 1995, ch. 56, § 1; 1995, ch. 82, §§ 1, 2; 1995, ch. 84, §§ 1, 2; 1995, ch. 122, §§ 1-3; 1995, ch. 132, § 2; 1995, ch. 173, §§ 1, 2; 1995, ch. 195, § 1; 1995, ch. 199, § 1; 1995, ch. 335, §§ 1, 2; 1995, ch. 399, §§ 1-3; 1996, ch. 615, §§ 1-3; 1996, ch. 658, §§ 1-3; 1996, ch. 672, §§ 1-5; 1996, ch. 673, §§ 1-3; 1996, ch. 759, § 1; 1996, ch. 854, §§ 1-5; 1996, ch. 914, §§ 1-5; 1996, ch. 963, §§ 1-4; 1996, ch. 965, §§ 1-4; 1996, ch. 971, §§ 1-4; 1996, ch. 994, §§ 1-4; 1996, ch. 1024, §§ 1-4; 1996, ch. 1030, §§ 1-5; 1996, ch. 1047, §§ 1-4).

In view of § 55-4-201(c)(1), former § 55-4-231 (Acts 1998, ch. 1063, § 1) was deleted as obsolete and invalid by the Code Commission in 2000, as the Shriners plates named in this section continued to fail to meet the minimum requirements for existence.

Acts 2002, ch. 876, § 64 provided that the provisions of § 55-4-201(f) shall not apply to that act.

Acts 2002, ch. 876, § 65 provided that the commissioner of safety is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the provisions of that act. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

Acts 2013, ch. 318, § 13, as amended by Acts 2014, ch. 966, § 28, provided that notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any person issued an Air Medal memorial license plate prior to June 21, 2013, shall be entitled to retain the plate for vehicular use upon compliance with all motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles. Any Air Medal military cultural plates initially issued to any recipient of the Air Medal (Meritorious) on or after May 13, 2013, shall be subject to the regular registration fee for plates, as prescribed under § 55-4-111, and the fee

provided for in § 55-4-203(c)(1). Any Air Medal military cultural plates initially issued to any recipient of the Air Medal (Valor) on or after May 13, 2013, and prior to May 19, 2014, shall be memorial plates upon their first renewal on or after May 13, 2013; provided, that the plates shall not be subject to the regular registration fee and shall be free of charge pursuant to § 55-4-203(b).

Acts 2014, ch. 966, § 29 provided that notwithstanding title 55, chapter 4, any person issued a Handicapped Veteran, Legion of Valor, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, or Air Medal license plate prior to May 19, 2014, shall be entitled to retain the license plate for vehicular use upon compliance with all motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles.

#### **Amendments.**

The 2013 amendment inserted references to the Air Medal and to Air Medal plates throughout (a) and (c); and added (b)(3).

The 2014 amendment rewrote this section which read: "(a) A recipient of the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, or the Air Medal who is a resident of this state and who is an owner or lessee of a motor vehicle, upon complying with state motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles and upon paying the regular fee applicable to the motor vehicle and the fee provided in § 55-4-203, shall be issued a distinctive Air Medal, Silver Star, or Bronze Star motor vehicle registration plate, as appropriate, for a motor vehicle authorized by § 55-4-210(c).

"(b)(1) The Silver Star plates provided for in this section shall include an identification legend distinctive to recipients of the Silver Star. The legend shall read 'Silver Star.' The registration number of the plate shall include the letters 'SS' and a unique identifying number.

"(2) The Bronze Star plates provided for in this section shall include an identification legend distinctive to recipients of the Bronze Star. The legend shall read 'Bronze Star.' The registration number of the plate shall include the letters 'BS' and a unique identifying number.

"(3) The Air Medal plates provided for in this section shall include an identification legend distinctive to recipients of the Air Medal. The legend shall read 'Air Medal.' The registration number of the plate shall include the letters 'RE' and a unique identifying number.

"(c) Eligibility for Air Medal plates, Silver Star plates, and Bronze Star plates shall be determined by the department by consulting the appropriate information on the DD214 form, or in a case of military service predating 1950, in consultation with appropriate information on the equivalent form or on other official documentation, or a written communication from the department of veterans affairs, the form, documentation or communication certifying that the application for the plate is submitted by a recipient of the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, or the Air Medal, as appropriate."

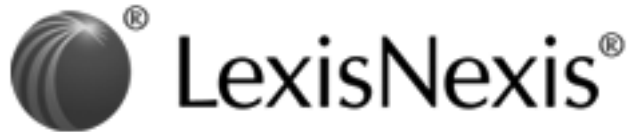
#### **Effective Dates.**

Acts 2013, ch. 318, § 14. June 21, 2013.

Acts 2014, ch. 966, § 32. May 19, 2014.

#### **Section to Section References.**

This section is referred to in § 55-4-278.



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CODE OF VIRGINIA  
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\*\*\* Current through the 2014 Regular Session and Acts 2014, Sp. Sess. I, c. 2, of the General Assembly. \*\*\*  
\*\*\* Annotations current through June 20, 2014. \*\*\*

TITLE 46.2. MOTOR VEHICLES  
SUBTITLE II. TITLING, REGISTRATION AND LICENSURE  
CHAPTER 6. TITLING AND REGISTRATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
ARTICLE 10. SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES

**GO TO CODE OF VIRGINIA ARCHIVE DIRECTORY**

*Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-742.1 (2014)*

§ 46.2-742.1. Special license plates for persons awarded the Bronze Star, Bronze Star with a "V" for valor, or the Silver Star; fee

On receipt of an application and written evidence that the applicant has been awarded a Bronze Star, Bronze Star with a "V" for valor, or Silver Star Medal, the Commissioner shall issue to the applicant special license plates.

For each set of license plates issued under this section, the Commissioner shall charge, in addition to the prescribed cost of state license plates, a one-time fee of \$ 10 at the time the plates are issued.

The provisions of subdivisions 1 and 2 of subsection B of § 46.2-725 shall not apply to license plates issued under this section.

The design of license plates issued under this section to persons who have been awarded multiple decorations shall reflect the number of such decorations.

Unremarried surviving spouses of persons eligible to receive special license plates under this section may also be issued special license plates under this section.

**HISTORY:** 1992, c. 577; 1995, c. 747; 1996, c. 1026; 1999, c. 907; 2002, c. 864; 2004, c. 747.

**NOTES:** THE 1999 AMENDMENT inserted "Bronze Star with a 'V' for valor" in the first paragraph.

THE 2002 AMENDMENTS. --The 2002 amendment by c. 864 added the last paragraph.

THE 2004 AMENDMENTS. --The 2004 amendment by c. 747 substituted "\$10" for "ten dollars" in the second paragraph; and added the last paragraph.

**LexisNexis 50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations**

Motor Vehicle Registration

USER NOTE: For more generally applicable notes, see notes under the first section of this part, article, chapter, subtitle or title.