

HB

61

<TARGET><BILL>HB 61</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
61</SUBJECT><COMM>HSTA29</COMM></TARGET>

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 61(STA)

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GARA, GRUENBERG, VAZQUEZ, LYNN, AND LEDOUX, Tuck

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to special motor vehicle registration plates for recipients of the Bronze**
2 **Star awarded for valor, Silver Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force**
3 **Cross, Coast Guard Cross, and other awards reflecting valor; and providing for an**
4 **effective date."**

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 *** Section 1.** AS 28.10.181 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

7 (ii) Vehicles owned by recipients of a Bronze Star awarded for valor, Silver
8 Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast Guard
9 Cross. The department, upon receipt of written proof that the person is the sole or joint
10 owner of a motor vehicle, shall issue special registration plates for the motor vehicle to
11 a requesting person who has received the Bronze Star Medal awarded for valor, Silver
12 Star Medal, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast
13 Guard Cross. The commissioner, after consulting with the person in the Department of
14 Military and Veterans' Affairs in charge of veterans' affairs, shall determine the design

1 and color of the Bronze Star awarded for valor recipient plates, Silver Star recipient
2 plates, Navy Cross recipient plates, Distinguished Service Cross recipient plates, Air
3 Force Cross recipient plates, and Coast Guard Cross recipient plates.

4 (jj) Vehicles owned by recipients of awards reflecting valor issued by the
5 armed forces of the United States. The department, upon written proof that the person
6 is the sole or joint owner of a motor vehicle, may issue special registration plates for
7 the motor vehicle to a requesting person who has received an award reflecting valor
8 issued by the armed forces of the United States other than a Purple Heart, Bronze Star
9 awarded for valor, Silver Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force
10 Cross, or Coast Guard Cross. The commissioner, after consulting with the person in
11 the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs in charge of veterans' affairs, shall
12 determine the design and color of the award recipient plates.

13 * Sec. 2. AS 28.10.421(d)(2) is amended to read:

14 (2) special request plates for

15 (A) Alaska National Guard personnel \$30;

16 (B) veterans, retired veterans, or Lao veterans \$30;

17 (C) recipients of the Purple Heart none;

18 (D) recipients of the Bronze Star awarded for valor, Silver
19 Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, Coast
20 Guard Cross, or other award reflecting valor..... \$30;

21 (E) owners of custom collector vehicles \$50;

22 (F) [(E)] Iditarod race finishers \$50;

23 (G) [(F)] other special request plates \$30;

24 plus the fee required for that vehicle under (b) of this section; the fee required by this
25 paragraph shall be collected only on the first issuance and on the replacement of
26 special request plates;

27 * Sec. 3. This Act takes effect January 1, 2016.

v

CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG

To: CSHB 61(STA)

- 1 Page 2, lines 4 and 5, following “reflecting”
- 2 Remove “meritorious service and”
- 3 Page 2, line 8, following “reflecting:
- 4 Remove “meritorious service and”

Not drafted
by legal

passed

3/26/15
9:50 am

CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT #1

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG

To: CSHB 61(STA)

Lynn objects
removes object

- 1 Page 2, lines 4 and 5, following "reflecting"
- 2 Remove "meritorious service and"
- 3 Page 2, line 8, following "reflecting:
- 4 Remove "meritorious service and"

L

CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG

To: CSHB 61(STA)

- 1 Page 2, lines 4 and 5, following “reflecting”
- 2 Remove “meritorious service and”
- 3 Page 2, line 8, following “reflecting:
- 4 Remove “meritorious service and”

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG
REPRESENTATIVE LIZ VAZQUEZ
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
REPRESENTATIVE GABRIELLE LEDOUX

Sponsor Statement for CSHB 61

Honoring Veterans Who Have Earned Medals for Valor in Combat by Creating License Plates
Reflecting Those Medals

This bill is the result of veterans expressing concern that current law does not allow combat veterans to receive license plates for medals they have received for many of the highest orders of sacrifice. The bill adds a number of medals that shall be reflected in specialty plates, and, in the event award names change or are added, prevents the need for future license plate bills by authorizing the Division of Motor Vehicles to add license plates for a medal of valor at the request of a medal recipient. That way, by statute, veterans may be honored for any medal for valor they receive.

The Division of Motor Vehicles currently provides a license plate for the military's highest honor, the Medal of Honor. The Department of Motor Vehicles also recognizes veterans with a veteran's plate, and honors veterans who qualify for a Purple Heart, Gold Star Family, POW, Pearl Harbor survivor, and unit-specific specialty license plates.

But the Division does not allow recipients of medals reflecting their sacrifice for other high honors demonstrating valor. These honors include the Navy Cross (also awarded to Marines), the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Coast Guard Cross, the Silver Star and the Bronze Star for Valor. The department testified they have the power to add plates for those who have received "unit" honors - like the Presidential Unit - which is earned when a whole unit engages in valor in combat. This bill allows honors like the Presidential Unit and any newly created combat valor awards to be issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles.

With this bill we recognize the sacrifice and heroism of these individuals.

Nancy Manly

From: Nancy Manly
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 11:13 AM
To: LAA Legal
Subject: CSHB61 (MLV) Version P Amended in Committee - Need a Final CS

3/26/2015

CSHB61 (MLV) Version P MILITARY MERITORIOUS AWARD LICENSE PLATES moved from committee amended. Please draft a final CS with the following changes:

Conceptual Amendment #1 (Gruenberg)

Page 2, lines 4 and 5 following "reflecting" Remove "meritorious service and"

Page 2, line 8, following "reflecting": Remove "meritorious service and "

Nancy Manly, Chief of Staff and
House State Affairs Committee Aide *for*
Representative Bob Lynn
House District 26
907-465-2794 Fax: 907-465-4316

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG
REPRESENTATIVE LIZ VAZQUEZ
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
REPRESENTATIVE GABRIELLE LEDOUX

Sponsor Statement for House Bill 61

Creating Bronze and Silver Star License Plates and Authorizing The Creation Of Other License Plates For Awards Reflecting Meritorious Service And Bravery

Currently the Department of Motor Vehicles provides Purple Heart, Gold Star Family, POW, Pearl Harbor survivor, and unit-specific specialty license plates. It does not currently produce license plates for recipients of the Bronze Star, Silver Star, among other meritorious military awards.

The Silver Star medal is awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves with extraordinary heroism while engaged in combat. It is usually awarded in situations in which the recipient has repeatedly risked his or her life and emerged victorious.

The Bronze Star medal is awarded to individuals who have demonstrated bravery, performed acts of merit, or provided meritorious service while in combat. General George Marshall endorsed the creation of the Bronze Star to President Roosevelt in 1943:

The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their morale of great importance.

With this bill we recognize Alaska's recipients of Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, and Coast Guard Cross. We also allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to produce license plates for the various other branch-specific meritorious awards, such as the Distinguished Service Cross, without the need for future legislation.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
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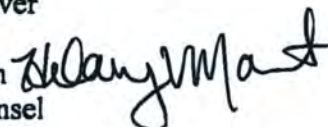
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

March 6, 2015

SUBJECT: Sectional Summary of CSHB 61(MLV)
(Work Order No. 29-LS0287P)

TO: Representative Les Gara
Attn: Molly Carver

FROM: Hilary V. Martin 
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill. As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill -- the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

Section 1. Authorizes the Department of Administration to issue special registration plates to recipients of the Bronze Star Medal awarded for valor, Silver Star Medal, Navy Cross, Distinguished Services Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast Guard Cross. Requires the commissioner to consult with the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs before determining the design for the plates.

Section 2. Allows the Department of Administration to issue a special registration plate to a person who has received an award reflecting meritorious service and value issued by the armed forces of the United States, other than a Purple Heart, Bronze Star for valor, Silver Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast Guard Cross.

Section 3. Sets the fee for the special plates at \$30.

Section 4. Makes the Act effective on January 1, 2016.

HVM:lem
15-152.lem

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 61
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB061CS(MLV)-DOA-DMV-02-20-15
Title: MILITARY MERITORIOUS AWARD LICENSE
PLATES
Sponsor: ** GARA, GRUENBERG
Requester: House Spec. Comm. on Military & Veterans' Affairs

Department: Department of Administration
Appropriation: Motor Vehicles
Allocation: Motor Vehicles
OMB Component Number: 2348

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2016	FY 2016					
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

This fiscal note lists the special license plates DMV is required to issue and identifies how the plate design costs will be covered.

Prepared By: Amy Erickson, Director
Division: Motor Vehicles
Approved By: Sheldon Fisher, Commissioner
Agency: Department of Administration

Phone: (907)269-5574
Date: 02/25/2015 04:00 PM
Date: 02/25/15

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB 61 (MLV)

Analysis

If enacted, HB 61 will amend AS 28.10.181 and require DMV to create special motor vehicle registration plates for recipients of a Bronze Star, Silver Star, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast Guard Cross.

DMV may also issue a special license plate to recipients of awards reflecting meritorious service or bravery issued by the United States military.

The Department of Administration will consult with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) to design the new special registration plates.

Associated costs to DMV:

DMVA will collect donations for the license plate processing fee of \$250 per plate design and will pass the funds to DMV.

HB 61 takes effect January 1, 2016.



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

Alaska State Legislature
Division of Legal and Research Services
State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 465-3991 phone
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research@akleg.gov

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

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.

Briefly, at least 26 states have laws with provisions for special license plates for Bronze Star recipients.¹ 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.² 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.

¹ 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.

² 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

§ 301.3075 R.S.Mo.

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.



Military Awards for Valor - Top 3 U.S. Department of Defense

DESCRIPTION OF MEDALS

MEDAL OF HONOR



The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty:

- While engaged in 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.

There are three distinct versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard).

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS



The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Army (and previously, the United States Army Air Forces). It is awarded for extraordinary heroism:

- While engaged in 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.

Actions that merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor. The Distinguished Service Cross

is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps, and Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

NAVY CROSS



The Navy Cross is the second highest military decoration that may be awarded to a member of the United States Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, (and to members of the Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy). It is awarded for extraordinary heroism:

- While engaged in 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.

Actions that merit the Navy Cross must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor. The Navy Cross is equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross (Army) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

AIR FORCE CROSS



The Air Force Cross is the second highest military decoration that may be awarded to a member of the United States Air Force. It is awarded for extraordinary heroism:

- While engaged in 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.

Actions that merit the Air Force Cross must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor. The Air Force Cross is equivalent to the Distinguished Service Cross (Army) and the Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps, and Coast Guard when operating under the authority of the Department of the Navy).

SILVER STAR



The Silver Star is the third-highest military combat decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Armed Forces. It is awarded for gallantry in action:

- While engaged in 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.

Actions that merit the Silver Star must be of such a high degree that they are above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but do not merit award of the Medal of Honor or a Service Cross (Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, or the Air Force Cross).



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An Array of the Medals

Hierarchy of Military Medals and Awards:

Our thanks to Joseph Brocato for his efforts to organize this hierarchy of military medals/awards:



Military Medals:



Compiled by: Joseph E. Brocato
 March 2011
Military Order of World Wars
 General Hoyt S. Vandenberg Chapter 213
 San Luis Obispo, California

Hierarchy of Medals

To honor the sacrifices and deeds of our men and women, our Military has developed a hierarchy of medals to reward all according to the heroic nature of their actions under extraordinary circumstances.

At the very top is the *Medal of Honor*.

Second in precedence to the *Medal of Honor*, the Armed Services awards the *Distinguished Service Cross (Army)*, the *Navy Cross (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard)*, and the *Air Force Cross* to individuals who distinguish themselves by extraordinary heroism rising to a level below that required for the Medal of Honor.

The *Presidential Unit Citation* is awarded to Units that display the degree of heroism that would warrant award of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, or Air Force Cross to an individual. Below that level in descending order are: *Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Valorous Unit Award, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Soldiers Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Medal, Airman's Medal, Coast Guard Medal, Bronze Star* and *Purple Heart*.

The Defense Superior Service Medal and *The Legion of Merit* are typically awarded to Senior Military Officers. *The Legion of Merit* is also awarded to Military and Political figures of Foreign Governments.

Medal of Honor



Army



Navy
 Marine Corps
 Coast Guard



Air Force

Virtually every ethnic group is represented on the *Medal of Honor Recipients Rolls*.



In total, 3,471 *Medals of Honor* have been awarded to 3,452 different individuals. Nineteen men received a second award: 14 of these received two separate medals for two separate actions, and In WW I, five Marines received both the Navy and the Army *Medals of Honor* for the same action. 3,443 recipients are identified by name and 9 medals were awarded to unknown soldiers, all Army. The remains of the "Unknowns" interred in the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* have been awarded the *Medal of Honor*.

In total, since 1862, 621 had their medals presented posthumously. Since the beginning of World War II, 856 Medals have been awarded, 529 posthumously. Standards have been significantly tightened as a result of the 1916 review by the Military when 910 medals were rescinded; most awarded during the Civil War.

Medals of Honor have been awarded to individuals in virtually every military action since the Civil War; from the World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam, to relatively minor campaigns in Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. By Branch of Service, the figures (as of March 2011) are as follows:

Recipients by Branch of Service	
Army	2408
Navy	746
Marines	297
Air Force	17
Coast Guard	1



The correct title for the award often called the "Congressional Medal of Honor" is simply "*MEDAL OF HONOR*" and the men who have received it prefer to be called "*RECIPIENTS*" (of the award), not "winners". It is the only United States Military Award that is worn from a ribbon hung around the neck, and the only award presented "By the President in the Name of the Congress".



Arlington National Normandy, France
Medal of Honor Grave Markers

As each recipient is honored in life
the final resting place of *Medal of Honor*
Recipients is also honored with distinction.

Summary:

The *Medal of Honor* is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is bestowed by the President in the name of Congress on members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States." Due to the nature of its criteria, it is often awarded posthumously (more than half have been since 1941).

Members of all branches of the armed forces are eligible to receive the medal, and there are three versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard).

The *Medal of Honor* is bestowed upon an individual by the passing of a Joint Resolution in the Congress; and is then personally presented to the recipient or, in the case of posthumous awards, to next of kin, by the President of the United States, on behalf of the Congress, representing and recognizing the gratitude of the American people as a whole. Due to its honored status, the medal is afforded special protection under U.S. law.

The *Medal of Honor* is one of two military neck order awards issued by the United States and is the sole neck order awarded to members of the armed forces. (The *Commander's Degree of the Legion of Merit* is also a neck order but it is only authorized for issue to foreign dignitaries).

As the award citation includes the phrase "in the name of Congress", it is sometimes erroneously called the Congressional Medal of Honor; however, the official title is simply the *Medal of Honor*.

The great diversity you find in the ranks of *Medal of Honor Recipients* occurred only with the invisible hand of Lady Liberty; without the help of government, or diversity panels; it just happened, ordinary people exercising their free will and guided by our Founding Fathers' legacy of sacrifice, duty and honor.



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Distinguished Service Cross (DSC)

The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Army, for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force. Actions that merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree to be above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Honor.

The Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force). The Distinguished Service Cross was first awarded during World War I. In many cases, these were to soldiers who had received a Certificate of Merit for gallantry which, at the time, was the only other honor besides the Medal of Honor the Army could award. Others were belated recognition of actions in the Philippines, on the Mexican Border and during the Boxer Rebellion.

The Distinguished Service Cross is awarded to a person who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguishes himself or herself by extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a Medal of Honor, 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.

Awarded for extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a Medal of Honor; The act or acts of heroism must have been so notable and have involved risk of life so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his or her comrades.

Navy Cross

The Navy Cross is the highest medal that can be awarded by the United States Department of the Navy and the second highest award given for valor. It is normally only awarded to members of the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps and United States Coast Guard, but could be awarded to all branches of United States military as well as members of foreign militaries. It was established by Act of Congress (Pub.L. 65-253) and approved on February 4, 1919. The Navy Cross is equivalent to the *Distinguished Service Cross* (Army) and the *Air Force Cross*.

Awarded for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force and going beyond the call of duty. The Navy Cross was instituted in part due to the entrance of the United States into World War I.



Many European nations had the custom of decorating heroes from other nations, but the *Medal of Honor* was the sole American award for valor at the time. The Army instituted the *Distinguished Service Cross* and *Distinguished Service Medal* in 1918, while the Navy followed suit in 1919, retroactive to 6 April 1917. Originally, the Navy Cross was lower in precedence than the Navy *Distinguished Service Medal*, because it was awarded for both combat heroism and for "other distinguished service." Congress revised this on 7 August 1942, making the Navy Cross a combat-only award and second only to the *Medal of Honor*. Since its creation, it has been awarded more than 6,300 times.

Air Force Cross:



The *Air Force Cross* is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the United States Air Force. The *Air Force Cross* is the Air Force decoration equivalent to the *Distinguished Service Cross* (Army) and the *Navy Cross* (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard).

The *Air Force Cross* is awarded for extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of the *Medal of Honor*. It may be awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S Air Force, distinguishes him or herself by extraordinary heroism in combat.

Awarded for Extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a *Medal of Honor* 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.


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Presidential Unit Citation:



The *Presidential Unit Citation (PUC)*, originally called the *Distinguished Unit Citation*, is awarded to units of the Armed Forces of the United States and allies for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy on or after 7 December 1941 (the date of the Attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of American involvement in World War II). The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions so as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same campaign.

Since its inception by Executive Order on 26 February 1942, retroactive to 7 December 1941, to 2008, the *Presidential Unit Citation* has been awarded in such conflicts as World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Iraq War, Afghanistan War and the Cold War.

The degree of heroism required is the same as that which would warrant award of the *Distinguished Service Cross*, *Air Force Cross* or *Navy Cross* to an individual. In some cases, one or more individuals

within the unit may have also been awarded personal recognitions for their contribution to the actions for which their entire unit was awarded a *Presidential Unit Citation*.

Army and Air Force

The Army citation was established as the *Distinguished Unit Citation* by Executive Order No. 9075 on 26 February 1942, and received its present name on 3 November 1966. As with other Army unit citations, the *PUC* is in a larger frame that is worn above the right pocket. All members of the unit may wear the decoration, whether or not they personally participated in the acts for which the unit was cited. Only those assigned to the unit at the time of the action cited may wear the decoration as a permanent award. For the Army and Air Force, the emblem itself is a solid blue ribbon enclosed in a gold frame. The Air Force *PUC* was adopted from the Army *Distinguished Unit Citation*, after they were made into a separate military branch in 1947. They also renamed the unit citation

to its present name on 3 November 1966. The Air Force wears its unit citation on the left pocket below all personal awards, unlike the Army not every unit award is enclosed in a gold frame. The Citation is carried on the unit's regimental colors in the form of a blue streamer, 4 ft (1.2 m) long and 2.75 in (7.0 cm) wide. For the Army, only on rare occasions will a unit larger than battalion qualify for award of this decoration.

Navy and Marine Corps

The Navy citation is the unit equivalent of a *Navy Cross* and was established by Executive Order No. 9050 on 6 February 1942. The Navy version has blue, yellow, and red horizontal stripes. To distinguish between the two versions of the *Presidential Unit Citation*, the Navy version is typically referred to as the *Navy and Marine Corps Presidential Unit Citation* while the Army and Air Force refer to the decoration simply as the *Presidential Unit Citation*. These are only worn by persons who meet the criteria at the time it is awarded to the unit. Unlike the Army, in the Navy and Marine Corps, those who later join the unit do not wear it on a temporary basis.

Distinguished Service Medal



The *Distinguished Service Medal (DSM)* is a military award of the United States Army that is presented to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the United States military, has distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility. The performance must be such as to merit recognition for service that is clearly exceptional. Exceptional performance of normal duty will not alone justify an award of this decoration.

Separate *Distinguished Service Medals* exist for the different branches of the military as well as a fifth version of the medal which is a senior award of the United States Department of Defense. The Army version of the *Distinguished Service Medal* is typically referred to simply as the "*Distinguished Service Medal*" while the other branches of service use the service name as a prefix.

For service not related to actual war, the term "duty of a great responsibility" applies to a narrower range of positions than in time of war, and requires evidence of conspicuously significant achievement. However, justification of the award may accrue by virtue of exceptionally meritorious service in a succession of high positions of great importance.

Awards may be made to persons other than members of the Armed Forces of the United States for wartime services only, and then only under exceptional circumstances, with the express approval of the President in each case. Awards may be made to persons other than members of the Armed Forces of the United States for wartime services only, and then only under exceptional circumstances, with the express approval of the President in each case. It is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the United States Army, has distinguished himself or herself by exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility. The performance must be such as to merit recognition for service which is clearly exceptional. Exceptional performance of normal duty will not alone justify an award of this decoration.

For service not related to actual war, the term "duty of a great responsibility" applies to a narrower range of positions, than in time of war, and requires evidence of conspicuously significant achievement. However, justification of the award may accrue by virtue of exceptionally meritorious service in a succession of high positions of great importance.

Awards may be made to other than members of the Armed Forces of the United States for wartime services only, and then only under exceptional circumstances, with the express approval of the President in each case.



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Silver Star

The *Silver Star* is the third-highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of any branch of the United States armed forces for valor in the face of the enemy.



The *Silver Star* is awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States not justifying one of the two higher awards - the service crosses (*Distinguished Service Cross*, the *Navy Cross*, or the *Air Force Cross*), the second-highest military decoration, or the *Medal of Honor*, the highest decoration. The *Silver Star* may be awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the armed forces, distinguishes himself or herself by extraordinary heroism involving one of the following actions:

In action against an enemy of the United States

While engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force

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

The *Silver Star* differs from the service crosses in that it requires a lesser degree of gallantry and need not be earned while in a position of great responsibility.

Air Force pilots are often considered eligible to receive a *Silver Star* upon becoming an ace (having five or more confirmed kills), which entails the pilot intentionally and successfully risking his life multiple times under combat conditions and emerging victorious.

Soldiers who received a *Citation Star* for gallantry in action during World War I were eligible to apply to have the citation converted to the *Silver Star*. The *Valorous Unit Award* is considered the unit level equivalent of a *Silver Star*.

Distinguished Flying Cross



The *Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)* is given for single acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement during aerial flight in combat.

The *Air Medal* is given to persons performing exceptionally while in aerial flight, which does not measure up to the level of the *Distinguished Flying Cross*, or is not during combat. For example, the *Air Medal* may be given for "sustained distinction in the performance of duties involving regular and frequent participation in aerial flight for a period of at least 6 months."

The *Distinguished Flying Cross* is a medal awarded to any officer or enlisted member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight, subsequent to November 11, 1918." The decoration may also be given for an act performed prior to that date when the individual has been recommended for, but has not received the *Medal of Honor*, *Distinguished Service Cross*, *Navy Cross*, *Air Force Cross* or *Distinguished Service Medal*.

The *Distinguished Flying Cross* was authorized by Section 12 of the Air Corps Act enacted by the United States Congress on July 2, 1926, as amended by Executive Order 7786 on January 8, 1938.

The first award of the *Distinguished Flying Cross* was made by President Calvin Coolidge on May 2, 1927, to ten aviators of the Air Corps who had participated in the Pan American Good Will Flight, which took place from December 21, 1926 to May 2, 1927. Two of the airmen died in a mid-air collision trying to land at Buenos Aires in March 1927, and received their awards posthumously. Since the award had only been authorized by Congress the previous year, no medals had yet been struck, and the Pan American airmen initially received only certificates. Among the ten airmen were Major Herbert A. Dargue, Captains Ira C. Eaker and Muir S. Fairchild, and 1st Lt. Ennis C. Whitehead.

Charles Lindbergh received the first presentation of the medal little more than a month later, from Coolidge during the Washington, DC homecoming reception on June 11, 1927, from his trans-Atlantic flight. The medal had hurriedly been struck and readied just for that occasion. Interestingly, the 1927 War Department General Order (G.O. 8), authorizing Lindbergh's *DFC* states that it was awarded by the President, while the General Order (G.O. 6) for the Pan American Flyers' *DFC* citation notes that the War Department awarded it "by direction of the President." The first *Distinguished Flying Cross* to be awarded to a Naval Aviator was received by then-Commander Richard E. Byrd, for his flight on May 9, 1926, to and from the North Pole. Both Lindbergh and Byrd also received the *Medal of Honor* for their feats.

Numerous military recipients of the medal would later earn greater fame in other occupations—several astronauts, actors and politicians (including former President George H. W. Bush) are *Distinguished Flying Cross* holders. *DFC* awards could be retroactive to cover notable achievements back until the beginning of World War I. On February 23, 1929, Congress passed special legislation to allow the award of the *DFC* to the Wright brothers for their December 17, 1903 flight.

Other civilians who have received the award include Wiley Post, Jacqueline Cochran, Roscoe Turner, Amelia Earhart, and Eugene Ely. Eventually, it was limited to military personnel by an Executive Order issued by President Coolidge. During World War II the medal's award criteria varied widely depending on the theater of operations, aerial combat, and the missions accomplished. In Europe some bomber crewmembers received it for completing a tour of duty of twenty-five sorties; elsewhere much higher criteria were used. During wartime, members of the Armed Forces of friendly foreign nations serving with the United States are eligible for the *Distinguished Flying Cross*. It is also given to those who display heroism while working as instructors or students at flying schools.

Bronze Star



The *Bronze Star Medal* (or *BSM*) is a United States Armed Forces individual military decoration that may be awarded for bravery, acts of merit, or meritorious service. When awarded for bravery, it is the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. Armed Forces and the ninth highest military award (including both combat and non-combat awards) in the order of precedence of U.S. military decorations. Officers from the other federal uniformed services are also eligible to receive the award if they are militarized or detailed to serve with a service branch of the armed forces.

The *Bronze Star Medal* was established by Executive Order 9419, 4 February 1944 (superseded by Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962, as amended by Executive Order 13286, 28 February 2003).

The *Bronze Star Medal* may be awarded by the Secretary of a military department or the Secretary of Homeland Security with regard to the Coast Guard when not operating as a service in the Navy, or by such military commanders, or other appropriate officers as the Secretary concerned may designate, to any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, after December 6, 1941, distinguishes, or has distinguished, himself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight:

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.

The acts of heroism are of a lesser degree than required for the award of the *Silver Star*. The acts of merit or acts of valor must be less than that required for the *Legion of Merit* but must nevertheless have been meritorious and accomplished with distinction. The *Bronze Star Medal* is awarded only to service members in combat who are receiving imminent danger pay.

The award may be made to each member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, after 6 December 1941, was cited in orders or awarded a certificate for exemplary conduct in ground combat against an armed enemy after 7 December 1941. For this purpose, an award of the *Combat Infantryman Badge* or *Combat Medical Badge* is considered as a citation in orders. Documents executed since 4 August 1944 in connection with recommendations for the award of decorations of higher degree than the *Bronze Star Medal* cannot be used as the basis for an award under this paragraph.

The award that eventually became the *Bronze Star Medal* was conceived by Colonel Russell P. "Red" Reeder in 1943, who believed it would aid morale if there was a medal which could be awarded by captains of companies or batteries to deserving people serving under them. Reeder felt the medal should be a ground equivalent of the *Air Medal*, and proposed that the new award be called the "Ground Medal."

The idea eventually rose through the military bureaucracy and gained supporters. General George C. Marshall, in a memorandum to President Franklin D. Roosevelt dated 3 February 1944, wrote:

"The fact that the ground troops, Infantry in particular, lead miserable lives of extreme discomfort and are the ones who must close in personal combat with the enemy, makes the maintenance of their morale of great importance. The award of the Air Medal has had an adverse reaction on the ground troops, particularly the Infantry Riflemen who are now suffering the heaviest losses, air or ground, in the Army, and enduring the greatest hardships."

The *Air Medal* had been adopted two years earlier to raise airmen's morale. President Roosevelt authorized the *Bronze Star Medal* by Executive Order 9419 dated 4 February 1944, retroactive to 7 December 1941. This authorization was announced in War Department Bulletin No. 3, dated 10 February 1944.

The Executive Order was amended by President John F. Kennedy, per Executive Order 11046 dated 24 August 1962, to expand the authorization to include those serving with friendly forces. This allowed for awards where U.S. service members might be involved in an armed conflict where the United States was not a belligerent. At the time of the Executive Order, for example, the U.S. was not a belligerent in Vietnam, so U.S. advisers serving with the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces would not have been eligible for the award.

Since the award criteria state that the *Bronze Star Medal* may be awarded to "any person...while serving in any capacity in or with" the U.S. Armed Forces, awards to members of foreign armed services serving with the United States are permitted. Thus, a number of Allied soldiers received the *Bronze Star Medal* in World War II, as well as U.N. soldiers in the Korean War, Vietnamese and allied forces in the Vietnam War, and coalition forces in recent military operations such as the Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom and the Iraq War.

A number of *Bronze Stars* with *Valor Device* were awarded to veterans of the Battle of Mogadishu.



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Purple Heart



The *Purple Heart* is a United States military decoration awarded in the name of the President to those who have been wounded or killed while serving on or after April 5, 1917 with the U.S. military. The *National Purple Heart Hall of Honor* is located in New Windsor, New York. With its forerunner, the *Badge of Military Merit*, which took the form of a heart made of purple cloth, the *Purple Heart* is the oldest award that is still given to members of the U.S. military, the only earlier award being the obsolete *Fidelity Medallion*.

The original *Purple Heart*, designated as the *Badge of Military Merit*, was established by George Washington, then the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, by order from his Newburgh, New York headquarters on August 7, 1782. The actual order includes the phrase, "Let it be known that he who wears the *Military Order of the Purple Heart* has given of his blood in the defense of his homeland and shall forever be revered by his fellow countrymen." The *Badge of Military Merit* was only awarded to three Revolutionary War soldiers and from then on as its legend grew, so did its appearance. Although never abolished, the award of the badge was not proposed again officially until after World War I.

On October 10, 1927, Army Chief of Staff General Charles Pelot Summerall directed that a draft bill be sent to Congress "to revive the *Badge of Military Merit*". The bill was withdrawn and action on the case ceased on January 3, 1928, but the office of the Adjutant General was instructed to file all materials collected for possible future use. A number of private interests sought to have the medal reinstated in the Army. One of these was the board of directors of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum in Ticonderoga, New York.

On January 7, 1931, Summerall's successor, General Douglas MacArthur, confidentially reopened work on a new design, involving the Washington Commission of Fine Arts. This new design was issued on the bicentennial of George Washington's birth. Elizabeth Will, an Army heraldic specialist in the Office of the Quartermaster General, was named to redesign the newly revived medal, which became known as the *Purple Heart*. Using general specifications provided to her, Will created the design sketch for the present medal of the *Purple Heart*. Her obituary, in the February 8, 1975 edition of the

Washington Post newspaper, reflects her many contributions to military heraldry.

The Commission of Fine Arts solicited plaster models from three leading sculptors for the medal, selecting that of John R. Sinnock of the Philadelphia Mint in May 1931. By Executive Order of the President of the United States, the *Purple Heart* was revived on the 200th Anniversary of George Washington's birth, out of respect to his memory and military achievements, by War Department General Orders No. 3, dated February 22, 1932. The *Purple Heart* award is a heart-shaped medal within a gold border, 1 ¼ inches (35 mm) wide, containing a profile of General George Washington. Above the heart appears a shield of the coat of arms of George Washington (a white shield with two red bars and three red stars in chief) between sprays of green leaves. The reverse consists of a raised bronze heart with the words FOR MILITARY MERIT below the coat of arms and leaves. The ribbon is 1 and ⅝ inches (35 mm) wide and consists of the following stripes: ⅓ inch (3 mm) white 67101; 1 ¼ inches (29 mm) purple 67115; and ¼ inch (3 mm) white 67101. As with other combat medals, multiple awards are denoted by *Award Stars* for the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, or *Oak Leaf Clusters* for the Army and Air Force.

The criteria were announced in a War Department circular dated February 22, 1932 and authorized award to soldiers, upon their request, who had been awarded the *Meritorious Service Citation Certificate*, *Army Wound Ribbon*, or were authorized to wear *Wound Chevrons* subsequent to April 5, 1917, the day before the United States entered World War I. The first *Purple Heart* was awarded to MacArthur. During the early period of American involvement in World War II (December 7, 1941 – September 22, 1943), the *Purple Heart* was awarded both for wounds received in action against the enemy and for meritorious performance of duty. With the establishment of the *Legion of Merit*, by an Act of Congress, the practice of awarding the *Purple Heart* for meritorious service was discontinued. By Executive Order 9277, dated December 3, 1942, the decoration was extended to be applicable to all services and the order required that regulations of the Services be uniform in application as far as practicable. This executive order also authorized the award only for wounds received. AR 600-45, dated September 22, 1943, and May 3, 1944 identify circumstances required to meet in order to be eligible for the *Purple Heart* for military and civilian personnel during World War II era.

Executive Order 10409, dated February 12, 1952, revised authorizations to include the Service Secretaries subject to approval of the Secretary of Defense. Executive Order 11016, dated April 25, 1962, included provisions for posthumous award of the *Purple Heart*. Executive Order 12464, dated February 23, 1984, authorized award of the *Purple Heart* as a result of terrorist attacks or while serving as part of a peacekeeping force subsequent to March 28, 1973.

The Senate approved an amendment to the 1985 Defense Authorization Bill on June 13, 1985 which changed the precedence from immediately above the *Good Conduct Medal* to immediately above the *Meritorious Service Medals*. Public Law 99-145 authorized the award for wounds received as a result of friendly fire. Public Law 104-106 expanded the eligibility date, authorizing award of the *Purple Heart* to a former prisoner of war who was wounded before April 25, 1962. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85) changed the criteria to delete authorization for award of the *Purple Heart Medal* to any civilian national of the United States while serving under competent authority in any capacity with the Armed Forces. This change was effective May 18, 1998.

During World War II, nearly 500,000 *Purple Heart Medals* were manufactured in anticipation of the estimated casualties resulting from the planned Allied invasion of Japan. To the present date, total combined American military casualties of the sixty-five years following the end of World War II, including the Korean and Vietnam Wars, have not exceeded that number. In 2003, there were still 120,000 of these *Purple Heart Medals* in stock. There are so many in surplus that combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan are able to keep *Purple Heart Medals* on-hand for immediate award to wounded soldiers in the field.

The "History" section of the November 2009 edition of *National Geographic* estimated the number of *Purple Heart Medals* given as below. Above the estimates, the text reads, "Any tally of *Purple Heart Medals* is an estimate. Awards are often given during conflict; records aren't always exact."

World War I: 320,518
 World War II: 1,076,245
 Korean War: 118,650
 Vietnam War: 351,794
 Persian Gulf War: 607
 Afghanistan War: 7,027 (as of 5 June 2010)
 Iraq War: 35,321 (as of 5 June 2010)

Enemy-related injuries which justify the award of the *Purple Heart* include injury caused by enemy bullet, shrapnel, or other projectile created by enemy action; injury caused by enemy placed land mine, naval mine, or trap; injury caused by enemy released chemical, biological, or nuclear agent; injury caused by vehicle or aircraft accident resulting from enemy fire; concussion injuries caused as a result of enemy generated explosions.

Injuries or wounds which do not qualify for award of the *Purple Heart* include frostbite or trench foot injuries; heat stroke; food poisoning not caused by enemy agents; chemical, biological, or nuclear agents not released by the enemy; battle fatigue; disease not directly caused by enemy agents; accidents, to include explosive, aircraft, vehicular, and other accidental wounding not related to or caused by enemy action; self-inflicted wounds (e.g., a soldier accidentally fires their own gun and the bullet strikes their leg), except when in the heat of battle, and not involving gross negligence; post-traumatic stress disorders; and jump injuries not caused by enemy action.

It is not intended that such a strict interpretation of the requirement for the wound or injury to be caused by direct result of hostile action be taken that it would preclude the award being made to deserving personnel. Commanders must also take into consideration the circumstances surrounding an injury, even if it appears to meet the criteria. In the case of an individual injured while making a parachute landing from an aircraft that had been brought down by enemy fire; or, an individual injured as a result of a vehicle accident caused by enemy fire, the decision will be made in favor of the individual and the award will be made. As well, individuals wounded or killed as a result of "friendly fire" in the "heat of battle" will be awarded the *Purple Heart* as long as the "friendly" projectile or agent was released with the full intent of inflicting damage or destroying enemy troops or equipment. Individuals injured as a result of their own negligence, such as by driving or walking through an unauthorized area known to have been mined or placed off limits or searching for or picking up unexploded munitions as war souvenirs, will not be awarded the *Purple Heart* as they clearly were not injured as a result of

enemy action, but rather by their own negligence.

From 1942 to 1997, civilians serving or closely affiliated with the armed forces, as government employees, Red Cross workers, war correspondents and the like, were eligible to receive the *Purple Heart*. About 100 men and women received the award, the most famous being newspaperman Ernie Pyle, who was awarded a posthumous *Army Purple Heart* after being killed by Japanese machine gun fire in 1945.

The most recent *Purple Heart Medals* presented to civilians occurred after the terrorist attacks at Khobar Towers, Saudi Arabia, in 1996, about 40 U.S. civil service employees received the award for their injuries.

In 1997, however, at the urging of the *Military Order of the Purple Heart*, Congress passed legislation prohibiting future awards of the Purple Heart to civilians. Today, the *Purple Heart* is only for those men and women in uniform. Civilians who are killed or wounded as a result of hostile action now receive the new *Defense of Freedom Medal*, created shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The Defense Superior Service Medal and *The Legion of Merit* are typically awarded to Senior Military Officers. *The Legion of Merit* is also awarded to Military and Political figures of Foreign Governments.



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(From left to right) Army Medal of Honor, Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard Medal of Honor, Air Force Medal of Honor



Army Distinguished Service Cross



Navy Cross



Air Force Cross



Defense Distinguished Service Medal



Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal



Silver Star Medal



Defense Superior Service Medal



Legion of Merit Medal



Distinguished Flying Cross



Navy and Marine Corps Medal



Army Soldier's Medal



Airman's Medal



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG
REPRESENTATIVE LIZ VAZQUEZ
REPRESENTATIVE GABRIELLE LEDOUX

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 6, 2016
TO: Representative Bob Lynn
FROM: Representative Les Gara
RE: Hearing Request for HB 61: Military Meritorious Award License Plates

On behalf of six co-sponsors, I respectfully request that House Bill 61, relating to Bronze Star license plates be scheduled for a hearing in the State Affairs Committee. Please feel free to contact me, or my aide Molly Carver, with questions or thoughts at 465-2647.

Attached you will find a background packet for HB 61. This includes the current version of the bill, a sponsor statement, a sectional analysis, and supporting documents.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Gara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Representative Les Gara