

CHAPTER 519—MERCHANT MARINE AWARDS.

46 U.S.C. 51901 (2007). Awards for individual acts or service.

(a) General authority. The Secretary of Transportation may award decorations and medals of appropriate design (including ribbons, ribbon bars, emblems, rosettes, miniature facsimiles, plaques, citations, or other suitable devices or insignia) for individual acts or service in the merchant marine of the United States. The design may be similar to the design of a decoration or medal authorized for members of the armed forces for similar acts or service.

(b) Specific authority. The Secretary may award--

- (1) a Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal to an individual for outstanding acts, conduct, or valor beyond the line of duty;
- (2) a Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal to an individual for meritorious acts, conduct, or valor in the line of duty, but not of the outstanding character that would warrant the award of the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal;
- (3) a decoration or medal to an individual for service during a war, national emergency proclaimed by the President or Congress, or operations by the armed forces outside the continental United States under conditions of danger to life and property; and
- (4) a decoration or medal to an individual for other acts or service of conspicuous gallantry, intrepidity, and extraordinary heroism under conditions of danger to life and property that would warrant a similar decoration or medal for a member of the armed forces.

46 U.S.C. 51902 (2007). Gallant Ship Award.

(a) Awards to vessels. The Secretary of Transportation may award a Gallant Ship Award and a citation to a vessel (including a foreign vessel) participating in outstanding or gallant action in a marine disaster or other emergency to save life or property at sea. The Secretary may award a plaque to the vessel, and a replica of the plaque may be preserved as a permanent historical record.

(b) Awards to crews. The Secretary of Transportation may award an appropriate citation ribbon bar to the master and each individual serving, at the time of the action, on a vessel issued an award under subsection (a).

(c) Consultation. The Secretary of Transportation shall consult with the Secretary of State before awarding an award or citation to a foreign vessel or its crew under this section.

46 U.S.C. 51903 (2007). Multiple awards. An individual may not be awarded more than one of any type of decoration or medal under this chapter. For each succeeding act or service justifying the same decoration or medal, a suitable device may be awarded to be worn with the decoration or medal.

46 U.S.C. 51904 (2007). Presentation to representatives. If an individual to be issued an award under this chapter is unable to accept the award personally, the Secretary of Transportation may present the award to an appropriate representative.

46 U.S.C. 51905 (2007). Flags and grave markers. Except as authorized under another law, the Secretary of Transportation may issue, at no cost, a flag of the United States and a grave marker to the family or personal representative of a deceased individual who served in the merchant marine of the United States in support of the armed forces of the United States or its allies during a war or national emergency.

46 U.S.C. 51906 (2007). Special certificates for civilian service to armed forces.

(a) General authority. The Maritime Administrator may issue a special certificate to an individual, or the personal representative of an individual, in recognition of service of that individual in the merchant marine of the United States, if the service has been determined to be active duty under section 401 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202; 38 U.S.C. 106 note).

(b) Relationship to other laws. Issuance of a certificate under subsection (a) does not entitle an individual to any rights, privileges, or benefits under a law of the United States.

46 U.S.C. 51907 (2007). Provision of decorations, medals, and replacements.

The Secretary of Transportation may provide-

- (1) the decorations and medals authorized by this chapter and replacements for those decorations and medals; and
- (2) replacements for decorations and medals issued under a prior law.

46 U.S.C. 51908 (2007). Prohibition against unauthorized manufacture, sale, possession, or display of awards.

(a) Prohibition. Except as authorized under this chapter or the Secretary of Transportation, a person may not manufacture, sell, possess, or display a decoration or medal provided for in this chapter.

(b) Civil penalty. A person violating this section is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$2,000.

³⁷ Note that this amount may have been changed pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended, set forth at page 87.