

Public Law 100-324  
100th Congress

An Act

May 30, 1988  
[H.R. 1430]

To authorize decorations, medals, and other recognition for service in the United States merchant marine, and for other purposes.

Merchant  
Marine  
Decorations and  
Medals Act.  
Maritime  
affairs.  
46 USC app.  
2001 note.  
46 USC app.  
2001.  
46 USC app.  
2002.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Merchant Marine Decorations and Medals Act".

SEC. 2. 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 United States merchant marine.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of Transportation 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 as would warrant the award of the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal;

(3) a decoration or medal to an individual for service in time of war or national emergency proclaimed by the President or Congress, or during operations by the Armed Forces of the United States 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 of the United States.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of Transportation may issue a Gallant Ship Award and a citation to a United States vessel or to a foreign-flag vessel participating in outstanding or gallant action in marine disasters or other emergencies for the purpose of saving life or property at sea. The Secretary may award a plaque to a vessel so cited, and a replica of the plaque may be preserved as a permanent historical record. The Secretary may also award an appropriate citation ribbon bar to the master and each individual serving on board the vessel at the time of the action for which the citation is made. The Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of State before giving an award or citation to a foreign-flag vessel or its crew under this section.

SEC. 5. (a) The Secretary of Transportation may not award more than one of any type of decoration or medal to an individual. 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 USC app.  
2003.

46 USC app.  
2004.

(b) When an individual scheduled to receive a decoration or medal under this Act is unable to accept it, the Secretary may make the award to an appropriate personal representative.

(c) The Secretary may provide at cost, or authorize for the manufacture and sale at reasonable prices by private persons—

(1) the decorations and medals authorized under section 2 of this Act and replacements for those decorations and medals; and

(2) replacements for decorations and medals issued under a prior law.

(d) Decorations and medals authorized under section 2 of this Act may be of similar design as are authorized for members of the Armed Forces of the United States for similar acts or service.

SEC. 6. 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 United States merchant marine in support of the Armed Forces of the United States or its allies in periods of war or national emergency.

46 USC app.  
2005.

SEC. 7. (a) The Maritime Administrator may issue a special certificate in recognition of service to an individual, or the personal representative of an individual, whose service in the United States merchant marine has been determined to be active duty under section 401 of Public Law 95-202 (38 U.S.C. 106, Note).

46 USC app.  
2006.

(b) Issuance of a certificate to any individual under subsection (a) of this section does not entitle that individual to any rights, privileges, or benefits under any law of the United States.

SEC. 8. Except as authorized by this Act, a person may not manufacture, sell, possess, or display a decoration or medal provided for in this Act. A person violating this section is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of \$2,000.

46 USC app.  
2007.

SEC. 9. The Act of July 24, 1956 (46 App. U.S.C. 249-249c) is repealed.

SEC. 10. (a) The Act entitled "An Act to set aside certain surplus vessels for use in the provision of health and other humanitarian services", as amended, approved October 22, 1982 (Public Law 97-360; 96 Stat. 1718), is amended—

(1) in section 6, by striking "United States Ship Colonial LSD-18", and substituting "United States Ship Sanctuary AH-20"; and

(2) in section 7, by striking "1989" and substituting "1992".  
(b) The United States Ship Sanctuary AH-20 shall be transferred to the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

Approved May 30, 1988.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1430:**

**HOUSE REPORTS:** No. 100-510 (Comm. on Merchant Marine and Fisheries).

**SENATE REPORTS:** No. 100-329 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).

**CONGRESSIONAL RECORD**, Vol. 134 (1988):

Mar. 8, considered and passed House.

May 13, considered and passed Senate.