

surplusage. The word “award” is inserted for clarity, since the President determines the recipient of the medal in addition to presenting it.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283 inserted “or the Space Force” after “the Air Force” in introductory provisions.

2018—Pub. L. 115-232 renumbered section 8741 of this title as this section.

1963—Pub. L. 88-77 enlarged the authority to award the medal of honor, which was limited to those cases in which persons distinguished themselves in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, to permit its award for distinguished service 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.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

§ 9272. Air Force cross: award

The President may award an Air Force cross of appropriate design, with ribbons and appurtenances, to a person who, while serving in any capacity with the Air Force or the Space Force, distinguishes himself by extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a medal of honor—

- (1) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;
- (2) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
- (3) 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.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 540, §8742; Pub. L. 86-593, §1(1), July 6, 1960, 74 Stat. 331; Pub. L. 88-77, §3(2), July 25, 1963, 77 Stat. 94; renumbered §9272, Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §806(b)(11), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1833; Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §923(c)(12)(A)(ii), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3811.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
8742	10:1406.	July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (9th par. under “Ordnance Department”), 40 Stat. 870.

The words “but not in the name of Congress” are omitted as surplusage, since a medal is presented in the name of Congress only if the law so directs. The words “since the 6th day of April, 1917” are omitted as executed. The word “award” is substituted for the word “present” to cover the determination of the recipients as well as the actual presentation of the medal, and to conform to other sections of this chapter. The words “or herself” are omitted, since, under section 1 of title 1, words importing the masculine gender include the feminine. The words “or who shall hereafter distinguish” are omitted as surplusage.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283 inserted “or the Space Force” after “the Air Force” in introductory provisions.

2018—Pub. L. 115-232 renumbered section 8742 of this title as this section.

1963—Pub. L. 88-77 enlarged the authority to award the Air Force cross, which was limited to those cases in which persons distinguished themselves in connection with military operations against an armed enemy, to permit its award for extraordinary heroism not justifying the award of a medal of honor, 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.

1960—Pub. L. 86-593 substituted “Air Force cross” for “Distinguished-service cross” in section catchline, and substituted “an Air Force cross” for “a distinguished-service cross” in text.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

REFERENCES TO DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS AND SOLDIER’S MEDAL CONSIDERED MADE TO AIR FORCE CROSS AND AIRMAN’S MEDAL

Pub. L. 86-593, §3, July 6, 1960, 74 Stat. 332, provided that: “References that other laws, regulations, and orders make, with respect to the Air Force, to the distinguished-service cross and the Soldier’s Medal shall be considered to be made to the Air Force cross and the Airman’s Medal, respectively.”

§ 9273. Distinguished-service medal: award

The President may award a distinguished-service medal of appropriate design and a ribbon, together with a rosette or other device to be worn in place thereof, to a person who, while serving in any capacity with the Air Force or the Space Force, distinguishes himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the United States in a duty of great responsibility.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 540, §8743; renumbered §9273, Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §806(b)(11), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1833; amended Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §923(c)(12)(A)(iii), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3811.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
8743	10:1407.	July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (10th par., less words after 1st semicolon, under “Ordnance Department”), 40 Stat. 870.

The words “but not in the name of Congress” are omitted as surplusage, since a medal is presented in the name of Congress only if the law so directs. The words “since the 6th day of April, 1917” are omitted as executed. The word “award” is substituted for the word “present” to cover the determination of the recipients as well as the actual presentation of the medal, and to conform to other sections of this chapter. The words “or herself” are omitted, since, under section 1 of title 1, words importing the masculine gender include the

feminine. The words “or who shall distinguish” are omitted as surplusage.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2021—Pub. L. 116-283 inserted “or the Space Force” after “the Air Force”.

2018—Pub. L. 115-232 renumbered section 8743 of this title as this section.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

§ 9274. Medal of honor; Air Force cross; distinguished-service medal: limitations on award

(a) No more than one Air Force Cross or distinguished-service medal may be awarded to a person. However, for each succeeding act that would otherwise justify the award of such a medal or cross, the President may award a suitable bar or other device to be worn as he directs.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c), no medal of honor, Air Force cross, distinguished-service medal, or device in place thereof, may be awarded to a person unless—

(1) the award is made within five years after the date of the act justifying the award;

(2) a statement setting forth the distinguished service and recommending official recognition of it was made within three years after the distinguished service; and

(3) it appears from records of the Department of the Air Force that the person is entitled to the award.

(c) If the Secretary of the Air Force determines that—

(1) a statement setting forth the distinguished service and recommending official recognition of it was made and supported by sufficient evidence within three years after the distinguished service; and

(2) no award was made, because the statement was lost or through inadvertence the recommendation was not acted on;

a medal of honor, Air Force cross, distinguished-service medal, or device in place thereof, as the case may be, may be awarded to the person concerned within two years after the date of that determination.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 540, §8744; Pub. L. 86-582, §1(3), July 5, 1960, 74 Stat. 320; Pub. L. 86-593, §1(2), July 6, 1960, 74 Stat. 331; Pub. L. 113-66, div. A, title V, §§561(c), 562(b), Dec. 26, 2013, 127 Stat. 766; renumbered §9274, Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §806(b)(11), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1833; Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §582(b)(3), Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1412.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
8744(a)	10:1411.	July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (12th par., less words after 2d semicolon, under “Ordnance Department”); restated Jan. 24, 1920, ch. 55, §1 (less last sentence), 41 Stat. 398.
8744(b)	10:1409 (words before 1st semicolon).	July 9, 1918, ch. 143 (less words between 1st and 2d semicolons of 15th par. under “Ordnance Department”), 40 Stat. 871.
8744(c)	10:1409 (words after 2d semicolon).	

In subsection (a), the words “may be awarded to a person” are substituted for the words “shall be issued to any one person” to conform to the other subsections of the revised section.

In subsection (b), the word “thereof” is substituted for the words “of either of said medal or of said cross”. The words “Except as otherwise prescribed in this section”, “at the time of”, “specific”, “official”, and “has so distinguished himself as” are omitted as surplusage.

In subsection (c), 10:1409 (words after 3d semicolon) is omitted as executed. The words “hereinbefore authorized” are omitted as surplusage.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2019—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 116-92, §582(b)(3)(A), substituted “subsection (c)” for “subsection (d)” in introductory provisions.

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 116-92, §582(b)(3)(B), (C), redesignated subsec. (d) as (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows: “No medal of honor, Air Force cross, distinguished-service medal, or device in place thereof, may be awarded or presented to a person whose service after he distinguished himself has not been honorable.”

2018—Pub. L. 115-232 renumbered section 8744 of this title as this section.

2013—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 113-66, §561(c), substituted “Air Force Cross” for “medal of honor, Air Force cross,”.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 113-66, §562(b)(1)(A), substituted “five years” for “three years”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 113-66, §562(b)(1)(B), substituted “three years” for “two years”.

Subsec. (d)(1). Pub. L. 113-66, §562(b)(2), substituted “three years” for “two years”.

1960—Pub. L. 86-593 substituted “Air Force cross” for “distinguished-service cross” in section catchline and wherever appearing in subsecs. (a) to (d).

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 86-582, §1(3)(A), substituted “Except as provided in subsection (d), no” for “No”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 86-582, §1(3)(B), added subsec. (d).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2018 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 115-232 effective Feb. 1, 2019, with provision for the coordination of amendments and special rule for certain redesignations, see section 800 of Pub. L. 115-232, set out as a note preceding section 3001 of this title.

PERSONS AWARDED DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS OR SOLDIER’S MEDAL BEFORE JULY 6, 1960

Pub. L. 86-593, §2, July 6, 1960, 74 Stat. 332, as amended by Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title VIII, §809(b)(12), Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1841, provided that: “For the purposes of sections 9274(a) and 9280(b) of title 10, United States Code, a person who was awarded a distinguished-service cross or Soldier’s Medal before the date of enactment of this Act [July 6, 1960] shall be treated as if he had not been awarded an Air Force cross or Airman’s Medal, as the case may be.”