

## *The Origin, Design and Proper Display of Service Flag; Persons Entitled to Representation and Meaning of Stars*

The following article has been prepared for the OFFICIAL BULLETIN by Brig. Gen. Nathan William MacChesney, formerly of the Illinois National Guard, who has been assigned as a lieutenant colonel judge advocate, National Army, to the Headquarters Central Department, United States Army, Chicago:

### THE SERVICE FLAG.

In response to many inquiries with reference to the service flag, its origin and established usage, the following memorandum has been prepared from the best available information—not as an official, authoritative statement, but to answer such inquiries and for the information and guidance of those who may desire to follow it.

#### I. Origin.

(a) The service flag is not an official flag of the United States Government. The idea was, so far as we are advised, an entirely novel one, the credit for the conception of which appears to be due to R. L. Queisser, of Cleveland, Ohio, who designed and patented the present flag. It has, however, taken such firm root in popular sentiment and has been of such beneficial influence that it is officially recognized, and everyone who is entitled to fly it is encouraged and urged to do so.

(b) Mr. Queisser was formerly captain of the machine gun company, 5th Ohio Infantry (now 145th United States Infantry), from which he was retired because of an accident. He thus states the origin of the flag:

"Shortly after April 6, 1917, when war with Germany was declared, the thought came to me that both of my sons, who were still officers in the guard, would again be called out, and I wondered if I could not evolve some sign or symbol by which it might be known that they were away in their country's service, and one which would be to their mother a visible sign of the sacrifice her sons were making. The inspiration of the service flag came to me in that manner."

#### Patented By Designer.

(c) He then designed this flag. The city council of East Cleveland adopted an ordinance providing that one be presented to the family of every soldier and sailor entering the service, and it soon received favorable recognition elsewhere, so that it was suggested to him that he patent it, which he did, design patent No. 51464 being issued to him November 6, 1917.

(d) The propriety of a former Army officer patenting the flag and profiting from its sale has been the subject of some discussion in the press and in Congress, resulting in agitation in favor of the adoption by the Government of an official service flag not subject to private control, which, however, has not been done. In answer to this criticism, Capt. Queisser states that his original thought was to present the flag to the Government, and that he endeavored to do so, and only entered upon its private manufacture and popularization when it became apparent that there was no chance of its being made official, and then did so for the sake

of personal pride rather than with any idea of profiting from it. He further states that he was led to take out a patent in order that the distribution and quality of the flag might be properly controlled and to keep it out of the hands of irresponsible parties, and that one-half of his royalties from the sale of the textile flags is given to the American Red Cross.

#### II. Who Are Entitled to Representation.

(a) The basic idea of the service flag is that there shall be a star to represent each person serving with the colors. Perhaps the best guide as to what persons shall be entitled to this honor is the legislation enacted by Congress for the benefit of those in the military service. Those whom Congress has thus recognized may properly, it would seem, be accepted as entitled to representation on the service flag, since they are "persons in military service," as defined by the highest legislative body of the Nation; and conversely those to whom Congress has not seen fit to extend such recognition ought not to be represented on the service flag, which is limited, both in its conception and by common usage, to those in the military service. This legislation is found in the war-risk insurance act and the soldiers' and sailors' civil relief act.

The war-risk insurance act states (Art. I, sec. 22):

"(7) The terms 'man' and 'enlisted man' means a person, whether male or female, and whether enlisted, enrolled, or drafted into active service in the military or naval forces of the United States, and include noncommissioned and petty officers and members of training camps authorized by law.

"(12) The term 'military or naval forces' means the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, the Naval Reserves, the National Naval Volunteers, and any other branch of the United States service while serving pursuant to law with the Army or the Navy."

The soldiers' and sailors' civil relief act provides:

"Sec. 101. (1) That the term 'persons in military service,' as used in this act, shall include the following persons and no others: All officers and enlisted men of the Regular Army, the Regular Army Reserve, the Officers' Reserve Corps, and the Enlisted Reserve Corps; all officers and enlisted men of the National Guard and National Guard Reserve recognized by the Militia Bureau of the War Department; all forces raised under the act entitled 'An act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States,' approved May 18, 1917 (the selective service act); all officers and enlisted men of the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard; all officers and enlisted men of the Naval Militia, Naval Reserve Force, Marine Corps Reserve, and National Naval Volunteers recognized by the Navy Department; all officers of the Public Health Service detailed by the Secretary of the Treasury for duty either with the Army or the Navy; any of the personnel of the Lighthouse Service and of the Coast and Geodetic Survey transferred by the Presi-

dent to the service and jurisdiction of the War Department or of the Navy Department; members of the Nurse Corps, Army field clerks, field clerks Quartermaster Corps, civilian clerks and employees on duty with the military forces detailed for service abroad in accordance with the provisions of existing law; and members of any other body who have heretofore or may hereafter become a part of the military or naval forces of the United States. The term 'military service,' as used in this definition, shall signify active service in any branch of service heretofore mentioned or referred to, but reserves and persons on the retired list shall not be included in the term 'persons in military service' until ordered to active service. The term 'active service' shall include the period during which a person in military service is absent from duty on account of sickness, wounds, leave, or other lawful cause."

#### Recognition of Women.

(b) Women.—As will be noted, all persons included in the several military forces above enumerated are, without regard to their sex, deemed to be "persons in military service," and no good reason is perceived why a woman performing active service in any of the foregoing branches should not be accorded the honor of representation on the service flag.

(c) Reserves.—Clearly, persons in any of the reserve forces are not entitled to representation until they are called into and enter upon active duty.

(d) State forces.—Members of the National Guard not federalized, State militia or reserves, and home guards are not entitled to representation on the service flag by reason of such service. If and when called into the Federal military or naval service for active duty, they then properly may be represented. The United States Guards are not a State force, but are a part of the Federal Military Establishment, organized under the selective service act of May 18, 1917, and are entitled to representation.

(e) Men in training.—Men attending the officers' training camps of the United States Army or Navy at cantonments, camps, or forts are in the active military service and entitled to representation. Students taking military instruction at colleges and universities may have either a civilian or a reserve military status. If they are members of training units organized by the War Department in institutions maintaining prescribed course of military instruction, and have taken the oath of enlistment, they are in the reserve forces of the Army of the United States and liable to active duty at the call of the President, but until such call to active duty they are not entitled to representation on the service flag, having only a reserve status. Students under 18, and therefore not legally eligible for such enlistment, who have enrolled in training units, and all members of training organizations not recognized by the War Department or who have not taken the oath of enlistment, have only a civilian status and are not entitled to representation on the service flag.



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(f) Other patriotic service.—It is recognized that members of the reserves, State forces, training corps, and like organizations are performing service which is or may become very valuable to the country at this time. Many others, such as members of the local and district boards of the Selective Service System, and of the medical and legal advisory boards attached thereto, of the Red Cross, of the various official war boards and commissions, Y. M. C. A., K. C., and Jewish Welfare Board secretaries and clergy, aid societies, etc., are doing most necessary and helpful work. There should be no desire anywhere to minimize its importance and value or to detract in any wise from the credit they should be given therefor; but, the service flag being limited to persons in the military service, it is believed that persons rendering service collaterally connected with, or of assistance to, the military or naval service, but not a part of it, should not be represented on the service flag, either by the regulation star or by any distinguishing symbol in lieu thereof, such as a red cross, Y. M. C. A. triangle, etc. Undoubtedly such persons are performing a splendid service, for which they should receive full recognition and appreciation, but such representation would be contrary to the spirit and purpose of the service flag, which was designed to be, and has been accepted by the people of this country as, a means of showing our homage to those who have entered the military and naval service in this crisis, our appreciation of the sacrifice they are making and the pride taken therein by members of their families and organizations with which they are affiliated, and a visible token to them and to us that while away in their country's service they are not forgotten by their loved ones at home. Representation of others thereon, however worthy the work they are performing, would be deemed by many as in some measure detracting from or lessening the honor designed to be accorded to those engaged in the military or naval service. The addition of anything except the authorized stars is also discountenanced as being apt to confuse and as militating against the basic purpose of the service flag.

(g) There has also been some indication of a desire to adapt the service-flag idea by transposition of the colors, use of different symbols, change of form or design, etc., to purposes and uses other than the original one—for instance, for service in the missionary field, charitable and social welfare work, etc. This also is deemed very inadvisable, at least until after the termination of the war, for like reasons. Appropriation of this idea to any other purpose than that for which it was designed and to which it is limited by established popular sentiment can not have other than a harmful effect and must be condemned. The good effect of the service flag must be conserved by strict observance of its proper use and preservation of its special significance.

### Men in Allies' Service.

(h) Men in allies' service.—The use of the service flag is customarily limited

to those in the military or naval service of the United States, but no objection is seen to extending the honor of representation thereon to those in the service of our allies, at least where they enlisted before our entrance into the war or were so situated that they could not enter the military service of their own country.

(i) Noncombatant service.—It is believed that to limit representation on the service flag to those in combatant organizations is impractical and undesirable. It is exceedingly difficult to define with accuracy the "fighting" personnel and to draw the line of demarcation between those "who must face danger for their country" and those who may not be called upon to do so. The essence of military service is that those who enter it subject themselves to orders to perform any duty, combatant or otherwise, wherever directed, whether in the front line or elsewhere. Men in noncombatant branches are frequently called upon for combatant service or for duty which exposes them to danger, and men in combatant branches are not infrequently assigned to noncombatant duty. Further, all are subject to transfer from one branch to another, if deemed for the best interests of the service, and such transfers are often made, especially in the case of officers. The great majority in noncombatant service are there because their training, education, experience, or other circumstances make them more valuable there. The Army and Navy are vast organizations and competent men in administrative, supply, medical, and other noncombatant services are no less essential than in the combatant service, the efficiency of which in large measure depends upon the adequacy and efficiency of the former. To draw invidious distinctions between them is in most instances unjust. None appreciate this more fully than the men in combatant service, who understand how others in the military service regard it as a hardship and misfortune not to have their opportunity of distinguishing themselves at the front.—It is believed that it would be unjust, even if practical, to determine who will be protected from danger throughout the war, to disregard the sacrifice they are making and their willingness for any service, and to penalize them by such visible stigma as omission from the service flag. All those who serve in the zone of the advance in the war will receive the war-service chevrons as the official distinction for undergoing such hazards, and those not called upon to perform service there should, it would seem, at least receive such recognition as is given by representation on the service flag.

### Members of the Household.

(j) When flown from a home a husband, son, father, or brother may properly be represented on the service flag, even though he did not actually leave from that household directly to go into the service, but in case of any more distant relatives they should actually be members of the household where the flag is displayed and have left for the service directly from such household. Domestic employees, roomers, or boarders should not be represented.

(k) When flown by a club or other society only those who are actually members, active or honorary, of such club or society should be represented. Stars should not be placed thereon for husbands, sons, fathers, or brothers, or other relatives of members merely because of such relationship.

(l) When flown by a business concern it should represent only members of the firm and employees going directly to the service from such place of business, with some continuous relation existing and where there is an expectation of return to the employment. Since the stars should represent only those who are an integral part of the business or organization which flies the flag, the service flag of a building should not contain stars to represent tenants who have gone into the service, from such building any more than the service flag of a mercantile concern should represent its customers, of a professional concern its clients, or of a hotel its guests.

### Schools and Colleges.

(m) Schools and colleges may properly represent trustees, members of the faculty, graduates, and undergraduates.

(n) Organization flags.—There is some sentiment in favor of distinguishing flags representing members of a family from those representing members of organizations by limiting the individual stars to the family flags, the organizations to use a single star with a numeral to indicate the number who have gone and to represent individually, by silver and gold stars as hereinafter indicated, only those who are invalidated, wounded, or killed. This would enable anyone clearly to determine in any doubtful case whether the persons represented are members of the family or employees, and, in cases where there are a large number, would show more distinctly how many have gone from such organizations.

### III. Manner of Representation.

(a) A blue star is used to represent each person, man or woman, in the military or naval service of the United States.

Several methods have been suggested for representation of those invalidated, wounded, or killed in the service. The following is believed to state the consensus of opinion and accepted usage:

(b) For those killed in action a gold star will be substituted for the blue star or superimposed on it in such manner as to entirely cover it. The idea of the gold star is that of the honor and glory accorded the person for his supreme sacrifice in offering up for his country his "last full measure of devotion," and the pride of the family in it, rather than the sense of personal loss, which would be represented by a mourning symbol, even though white were to be used instead of black.

(c) For those wounded in action a silver star will be substituted for the blue star or superimposed on it in such manner as to entirely cover it. Use of the star in this manner would be limited to those entitled to the official wound chevron, which is awarded to those receiving wounds in action with the enemy or disabled by a gas attack, necessitating treatment by a medical officer.



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(d) For those who subsequently die from such wounds or gas disablement, the gold star will be superimposed on the silver in such manner as to leave a margin of silver around the gold.

(e) For those disabled or invalidated home by injury or disease incurred in line of duty in the military or naval service, a silver star will be superimposed on the blue star in such manner as to leave a margin of blue around the silver. While there is some sentiment in favor of limiting this to those who are thus injured or disabled overseas in the zone of the advance, it is believed it may properly be extended to those who are so injured or diseased at a training camp or before reaching France. However, those rejected at a training camp as physically unfit, before any substantial service, and those incurring injury or disease otherwise than in line of duty, and especially if the result of their own misconduct, clearly are not entitled to this additional distinction.

(f) For those who subsequently die as the result of such accident or disease contracted in line of duty, and who were thus previously represented by a silver star superimposed on the blue with a blue margin, a gold star will be substituted for this silver star or superimposed in such manner as to entirely cover it, leaving, however, the margin of blue.

(g) The width of the silver or blue margin will depend upon the size of the star. It should be sufficient to be visible from the beholder's usual distance, if possible; and hence should be more than a mere thin edge, if practicable.

It is believed that the foregoing will enable anyone observing it to read the message of the flag, which, without being unduly complicated, will show clearly whether the person represented was wounded or killed in action, died of wounds or of disease or injury.

(h) Missing.—Where men are reported missing, the presumption is that they have been taken prisoner, unless the circumstances clearly indicate the contrary, and unless authentic information is received that they have been wounded or killed they should continue to be represented by the blue service star.

(i) Men discharged.—Where discharged not for the good of the service, or upon request or resignation, but from wounds or physical incapacity contracted in line of duty, entitling them to representation by the silver star, they will continue to be represented by the silver star for the duration of the war even though discharged, as the least tribute we can give in appreciation of their sacrifice. Where discharged for other causes, such as good of the service, dependency, request or resignation, physical incapacity not acquired in the service or in line of duty, they would appear thereafter no more entitled to representation than other persons not in the military service.

### THE ROLL OF HONOR.

The rules with reference to the roll of honor are essentially the same as those with reference to the service flag, since both have the same object in view.

It should properly be limited to those entitled to representation on the service

flag. It should be headed by those who have made the supreme sacrifice, under the designation "In memoriam," or in gold lettering, if desired, with a statement of the date, place, and manner of death. The names of the others in service may be subdivided under the various branches of the service, such as Army, Navy, Marine Corps, etc., or followed by the name of the organization in which serving and place where located.

Persons serving in civilian capacities in connection with the war, but not entitled to representation on the service flag, should be carried under a separate list, wholly distinct from those serving with the colors, under some distinctive appropriate title, such as "Patriotic service," "Government Service," "State service," if such is the fact, or under the particular work in which they are engaged, as Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., K. C., War Boards, etc.

### THE UNIFORM.

A great many inquiries are also received with reference to the right to wear the uniform. This is covered by the national-defense act of June 3, 1916 (39 Stat., 216), which provides:

"Sec. 125. Protection of the uniform.—It shall be unlawful for any person not an officer or enlisted man of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps to wear the duly prescribed uniform of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, or any distinctive part of such uniform, or a uniform any part of which is similar to a distinctive part of the duly prescribed uniform of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps: *Provided*, That the foregoing provision shall not be construed so as to prevent officers and enlisted men of the National Guard from wearing, in pursuance of law and regulations, the uniform lawfully prescribed to be worn by such officers or enlisted men of the National Guard; nor to prevent members of the organization known as the Boy Scouts of America, or the Naval Militia, or such other organizations as the Secretary of War may designate, from wearing their prescribed uniforms; nor to prevent persons who in time of war have served honorably as officers of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, Regular or Volunteer, and whose recent service was terminated by an honorable discharge, muster out, or resignation, from wearing, upon occasions of ceremony, the uniform of the highest grade they have held by brevet or other commission in such Regular or Volunteer service; nor to prevent any person who has been honorably discharged from the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, Regular or Volunteer, from wearing his uniform from the place of his discharge to his home, within three months after the date of such discharge; nor to prevent the members of military societies composed entirely of honorably discharged officers or enlisted men, or both, of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, Regular or Volunteer, from wearing, upon occasions of ceremony, the uniform duly prescribed by such societies to be worn by the members thereof; nor to prevent the instructors and mem-

bers of the duly organized cadet corps of a State university, State college, or public high school offering a regular course in military instruction from wearing the uniform duly prescribed by the authorities of such university, college, or public high school for wear by the instructors and members of such cadet corps; nor to prevent the instructors and members of the duly organized cadet corps of any other institution of learning offering a regular course in military instruction, and at which an officer or enlisted man of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps is lawfully detailed for duty as instructor in military science and tactics, from wearing the uniform duly prescribed by the authorities of such institution of learning for wear by the instructors and members of such cadet corps; nor to prevent civilians attendant upon a course of military or naval instruction, authorized and conducted by the military or naval authorities of the United States, from wearing, while in attendance upon such course of instruction, the uniform authorized and prescribed by such military or naval authorities for wear during such course of instruction; nor to prevent any person from wearing the uniform of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps in any playhouse or theater or in moving-picture films while actually engaged in representing therein a military or naval character not tending to bring discredit or reproach upon the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps: *Provided further*, That the uniforms worn by officers or enlisted men of the National Guard, or by the members of the military societies, or the instructors and members of the cadet corps referred to in the preceding proviso, shall include some distinctive mark or insignia to be prescribed by the Secretary of War to distinguish such uniforms from the uniforms of the United States Army, Navy, and Marine Corps: *And provided further*, That the members of the military societies and the instructors and members of the cadet corps hereinbefore mentioned shall not wear the insignia of rank prescribed to be worn by officers of the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, or any insignia of rank similar thereto.

"Any person who offends against the provisions of this section shall, on conviction, be punished by a fine not exceeding \$300, or by imprisonment not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

The constant attempt to imitate the uniform of the Army of the United States by persons doing work helpful in the war, but which does not constitute them a part of the military service, is a direct violation of law and is punishable in the manner stated.

It has been held by some of the authorities that the use of khaki or olive-drab cloth is within the inhibition of this statute when made up in the style of a uniform. In any event it should be discouraged as particularly reprehensible at this time.

Members of the Officers' Reserve Corps and of the Enlisted Reserve Corps are held not to be entitled to wear the uniform during the period of the war until they are called into active service.