

CHAPTER 154

AN ACT concerning the issuance of service medals to certain veterans and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares:
 - a. The year 1998 marks the 25th anniversary of the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the National Liberation Front's provisional revolutionary government signing an agreement to end the war in Vietnam;
 - b. The conflict that was declared over in 1973 was a uniquely important event in the political and domestic history of Southeast Asia and of this country;
 - c. The United States' involvement in that conflict resulted in great domestic turmoil and dispute in this nation, as well as over 50,000 American soldiers killed, including 1,515 from New Jersey; and
 - d. It is fitting and proper for this State to recognize and honor those among its residents who served proudly and those who died bravely in that conflict on the 25th anniversary of its ending, because in 1973 those same individuals were often ignored or scorned for their service to their country.

 2.
 - a. The Adjutant General is hereby authorized to issue a medal and ribbon to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam Conflict in January 1973.
 - b. The medal and ribbon shall be issued to: (1) all residents of the State who were on active duty in any branch of the armed forces of the United States in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos or Cambodia or the contiguous waters or airspace thereof on or after December 31, 1960 and on or before May 7, 1975, who have been given an honorable discharge from such service, if discharged or released therefrom, and:
 - (a) were attached to or served for one or more days with an organization participating in or directly supporting military operations;
 - (b) were attached to or served for one or more days aboard a United States Naval vessel directly supporting military operations;
 - (c) participated as a crew member in one or more aerial flights into airspace above Vietnam and contiguous waters directly supporting military operations; or
 - (d) served on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days in Vietnam or contiguous areas, except that this time limit may be waived for persons participating in actual combat operations; or
 - (2) the surviving spouse or immediate family member of any resident of the State meeting the requirements for a medal established by paragraph (1) of this subsection who was killed while on active duty or died after receiving an honorable discharge from the armed forces.
 - c. The Adjutant General shall select an appropriate design for the award no later than the fourth month following the enactment of this act and shall issue the award to qualified persons beginning no later than the eighth month following enactment.
 - d. No person shall be entitled to more than one award of the medal and ribbon authorized by subsection a. of this section.
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3. There is appropriated to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs from the General Fund \$5,000 to effectuate the purposes of this act.
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4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved November 13, 2000.