

CHAPTER 302

AN ACT establishing Operation Recognition in the Department of Education and supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

C.18A:7C-4.1 "Operation Recognition."

1. a. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, shall establish a program which shall be known as "Operation Recognition." The purpose of Operation Recognition is to award State-endorsed high school diplomas to World War I and World War II veterans who left high school prior to graduation to enter United States military service.

b. A person shall be eligible to receive a State-endorsed diploma under Operation Recognition if the person:

(1) is an honorably discharged World War I veteran who served between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918 or an honorably discharged World War II veteran who served between September 16, 1940 and December 31, 1946; and

(2) attended a high school in the State but left prior to graduation in order to serve in the armed forces of the United States, and did not receive a high school diploma as a consequence of such service.

A State-endorsed diploma may be issued under Operation Recognition posthumously. A veteran who meets the eligibility criteria set forth in this section and who passed the General Educational Development Test, GED, may also receive a State-endorsed diploma under Operation Recognition.

c. A veteran who meets the eligibility criteria set forth in subsection b. of this section may apply to the Department of Education to receive a State-endorsed high school diploma. In the case of a veteran who meets the eligibility criteria set forth in subsection b. of this section but who is deceased, the family of the veteran may apply to the department to receive a State-endorsed high school diploma on behalf of the veteran. Upon approval of an application, the department shall issue a State-endorsed high school diploma to the veteran or the veteran's family, as appropriate. The diploma shall indicate the veteran's high school of attendance.

d. The Department of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, shall:

(1) develop an application procedure for obtaining a State-endorsed high school diploma under Operation Recognition, including a method for verifying military service and the high school which the veteran attended prior to military service;

(2) distribute applications for participation by veterans in Operation Recognition to school districts and to local veterans' organizations throughout the State; and

(3) provide information to any school district that is interested in hosting a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans' Day for veterans who received State-endorsed high school diplomas pursuant to Operation Recognition and attended a high school within the district.

e. For the purposes of this section, "veteran" means an honorably discharged officer, soldier, sailor, marine, airman, nurse or army field clerk who served in the active military or naval service of the United States in the wars listed in subsection b. of this section. A "veteran" also means any honorably discharged member of the American Merchant Marine or the United States Coast Guard who served during World War I or World War II.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 2, 2002.