

CHAPTER 376

AN ACT concerning service medals for members of the military and veterans and amending N.J.S.38A:15-2.

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

1. N.J.S.38A:15-2 is amended to read as follows:

Distinguished service, meritorious service medals.

38A:15-2. The Governor may present in the name of the State of New Jersey a distinguished service medal of appropriate design, and ribbon to be worn in lieu thereof, to

any person who is a member of the organized militia or the Armed Forces of the United States or a Reserve component thereof, or who was honorably discharged therefrom, if the person was a resident upon entry into service or has been a resident of this State for at least 20 years in the aggregate. To qualify for a distinguished service medal, the person, while serving in the organized militia, or while in federal service, shall have served in a combat theater of operations during a time of war or emergency as attested to by the awarding of an honorable discharge and DD 214 or WD 53 by the respective Armed Forces or shall have been officially listed as a prisoner of war or missing in action by the United States Department of Defense. The distinguished service medal may be awarded to a deceased person who would have qualified for the medal pursuant to this section.

The Governor may present in the name of the State of New Jersey a meritorious service medal of appropriate design, and ribbon to be worn in lieu thereof, to any person who is a member of the organized militia, or the Armed Forces of the United States, or a Reserve component thereof who was honorably discharged therefrom, if the person was a resident upon entry into service or if the person has been a resident of this State for at least five years in the aggregate. To qualify for a meritorious service medal, the person shall have served in the organized militia, or the Armed Forces of the United States or a Reserve component thereof. The meritorious service medal may be awarded to a deceased person who would have qualified for the medal pursuant to this section.

The meritorious service medal for a deceased person or a person absent as a prisoner of war or missing in action shall be issued to the parent, spouse, sibling or other relative who submits all of the required forms and documentation on behalf of that person.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 16, 2018.