



U.S. SENATOR TIM JOHNSON

Explains Developments Regarding Issuance Of

The Republic of Korea War Service Medal



BACKGROUND:

In 1951, the Republic of Korea offered a war service medal to all members of the United Nations forces serving in Korea or adjacent waters. However, at the time, United States soldiers were prohibited by law from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. By the time Congress changed that law in 1954, most U.S. soldiers had already returned home from Korea.

In 1998, the Republic of Korea renewed its original offer to issue the Republic of Korea War Service Medal to U.S. military personnel who had served in Korea during the Korean conflict. The U.S. Department of Defense approved the offer in 1999, and eligibility criteria were announced in June, 2000.

I have been working closely with the Korean government and the Department of Defense to coordinate distribution of the medals to South Dakota veterans of the Korean War, as well as their surviving family members. Furthermore, I asked the Korean government to provide these medals free of charge to our veterans, and I'm pleased to report that the Korean government has honored my request.

ABOUT THE MEDAL:

The medal, shown above, was created by the Republic of Korea. Only the ROK-provided medal has been approved by the United States government to meet the U.S. criteria for wear on military uniforms. Because the order of precedence for non-U.S. service medals and ribbons is determined by the date of approval, the Republic of Korea War Service Medal should be worn after the Kuwait Liberation Medal (which was the last foreign medal approved for wear by U.S. military personnel). For the majority of Korean War veterans, the medal will be worn after the United Nations medal (or the Republic of Vietnam Campaign medal, if they served during that conflict).

ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL:

Approximately 1.8 million U.S. veterans are eligible to receive the Republic of Korea War Service Medal. Next of kin are also eligible to apply for the medal on behalf of an eligible deceased relative.

The eligibility criteria are listed below. Please note that these conditions were specified by the Republic of Korea and cannot be waived.

Dates of eligibility:

Service must have taken place during the period June 25, 1950 (outbreak of hostilities) to July 27, 1953 (the date the armistice was signed).

Who is eligible:

- Military personnel, workers, and police officers who either served in or through some special duty deployed to and returned from the combat zone during the Korean War.
- Service members and employees who served in relation to the theater of war, even if not on duty in the theater of combat, through unit mobilization or integration into temporarily constituted units.
- Rail workers and mariners supporting military transportation.
- Employees who supported military communications.
- Combat theater nurses who served patients wounded in the theater of combat.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The United States Air Force has been assigned the task of distributing the medals to eligible veterans. Along with the veteran's full name and Social Security Number or Military Service Number, the Air Force requires one of following documents to verify service:

- DD Form 214, Certificate of Release/Discharge from Active Duty;
- DD Form 215, Correction to Certificate of Release/Discharge from Active Duty; or
- NGB Form 22, Release from Duty

Additionally, the Air Force requires a signed release from the veteran or next of kin. On the following page, I have included form letters which eligible veterans or surviving family members can complete and submit with their other application materials. Please note that the signed, completed form and all other application materials should be returned to my Sioux Falls office at the following address:

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson
715 S. Minnesota Ave.
PO Box 1424
Sioux Falls, SD 57101

DISTRIBUTION PROCESS:

As noted above, the Air Force is responsible for coordinating distribution of these medals. According to the Air Force, an estimated 20,000 medals will be available nationwide by the Korean government starting in July, and additional medals will be available later this year. I will submit completed requests to the Air Force as soon as I receive them, and I will attempt to obtain medals for as many eligible South Dakotans as possible during the first issuance. However, depending on the number of requests nationwide, it is likely that some eligible South Dakota Korean War veterans may not receive their medals during this first distribution. There will also be subsequent distributions, so please be assured that every deserving veteran will eventually receive their medal.

I will also be working with local veterans organizations throughout the state to plan ceremonies commemorating the efforts of Korean War veterans from that community. These ceremonies will be open to the public, and will be announced in advance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The United States Army has created a website with information concerning the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. This website contains information regarding the history of the conflict as well as commemoration activities which will be taking place through 2003. The address for this website is: <http://korea50.army.mil>.

My website provides additional information concerning the medal, as well as other information of interest to veterans, their families, and all South Dakotans. The address for my website is: <http://www.johnson.senate.gov>.

U.S. Senator Tim Johnson

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

e-mail: tim@johnson.senate.gov

Toll-free from anywhere in South Dakota:
1-800-537-0025

**TO BE COMPLETED BY KOREAN WAR VETERANS
WHO ARE APPLYING PERSONALLY**

Date

HQ AFPC/DPPPRK
550 C Street West, Suite 12
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714

I am applying for a Korean War Service Medal for my service as a member of the United States military during the authorized period of June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. I am providing you with a copy of a source document bearing my Social Security Number, Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, which verifies my service. I understand that the copy of my source document will not be returned by the Air Force. Additionally, since this is a foreign service award, I understand that this is a one-time issuance.

Senator Tim Johnson is coordinating the distribution of Korean War Service Medals for South Dakota Korean War veterans. Please mail my Korean War Service Medal to United States Senator Tim Johnson's office at the following address:

United States Senator Tim Johnson
715 South Minnesota Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Sincerely,

Veteran's Signature

PLEASE PRINT:

Full Name of Veteran: _____

Veteran's Complete Mailing Address: _____

Veteran's Daytime Telephone Number: (____) _____

Veteran's Service Number or Social Security Number: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY NEXT OF KIN
FOR A DECEASED KOREAN WAR VETERAN

Date

HQ AFPC/DPPPRK
550 C Street West, Suite 12
Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714

I am applying for a Korean War Service Medal on behalf of

(full name of veteran)

who served as a member of the United States military during the authorized period of June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. I am providing you with a copy of a source document bearing the veteran's Social Security Number, Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, and which verifies their service. I understand that the copy of my source document will not be returned by the Air Force. Additionally, since this is a foreign service award, I understand that this is a one-time issuance.

Senator Tim Johnson is coordinating the distribution of Korean War Service Medals for South Dakota Korean War veterans. Please mail the Korean War Service Medal to United States Senator Tim Johnson's office at the following address:

United States Senator Tim Johnson
715 South Minnesota Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Sincerely,

Signature of person requesting the medal

PLEASE PRINT:

Full name of person requesting medal: _____

Complete mailing address of person requesting medal: _____

Daytime telephone number of person requesting medal: () _____

Veteran's service number or Social Security number: _____