

The Use of Service Flags and Who Is Entitled to Their Use.

To the many questions asked concerning the service flags; the stars, gold, silver and blue, and those entitled to their use, information has been compiled, and sent out through the courtesy of the woman's committee, Council of Defense, Georgia division.

The service flag, its origin, design and proper display, has been dealt with by an official bulletin issued recently by the government and compiled by Brigadier General Nathan William MacChesney.

"The service flag," explains General MacChesney, "is not an official flag of the United States government, but is recognized by the government."

The flag was patented and designed by R. L. Queisser, formerly captain of the 145th division, United States infantry, retired, because of accident. Of the incident Captain Queisser himself relates:

"Shortly after April 6, 1917, when war with Germany was declared, the thought came to me that both of my sons 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 here sons were making. The inspiration of the service flag came to me in that manner."

The city council of Cleveland subsequently adopted the flag, presenting one to the family in that city of every soldier and sailor entering the service. Captain Queisser patented the flag 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. One-half of his royalties from the sale of the textile flags is given to the American Red Cross.

The Purpose.

The basic idea of the service flag is that there shall be a star to represent each person serving with the colors.

According to the congressional enactment, the terms "man" and "enlisted man" means "person," whether male or female, whether enlisted, enrolled or drafted into active service in the military or naval forces of the United States, and include non-commissioned and petty officers, and members of training camps authorized by law.

Those Eligible.

Those entitled to come under the representation of the service flag are described as: All officers and enlisted men of the regular army, the regular army reserve, the officers' 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 establishments of the United States," approved May 18, 1917 (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 reserve 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 with the army or navy; any of the personnel of the lighthouse service and of the coast and geodetic survey transferred by the president to the service and jurisdiction of the war department or 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.

Women Recognized.

Pertaining to women and the service flags, General MacChesney's bulletin states that a woman in active service in any department of military service is entitled to representation under the service flag. Members of the national guard, not federalized state militia or reserves, and home guards, are not entitled to representation under service flags.

Clearly persons in any of the reserve forces are not entitled to representation until they are called into and enter upon active duty.

People rendering patriotic service through organizations in war defense work are not entitled to representation under the service flag, as praiseworthy as such service is.

The use of the service flag is customarily limited to those who are in the military or the 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.

Non-Combatant Service.

Of those in non-combatant service General MacChesney justly decides: The army and navy are vast organizations and competent men in administrative, supply, medical and other non-combatant 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 in most cases is unjust. None appreciate this more fully than the man in non-combatant service, who understands how others in the military service regard it as a hardship and misfortune not to have the opportunity of distinguishing themselves at the front. It is believed that it would be unjust, even if practical, to determine who will protect 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.

Household Privileges.

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 the household directly to go into 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.

When flown from a house of a club or 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 or members merely because of such relationship.

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 the 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, or a professional concern its clients, or of a hotel its guests.

Schools and Colleges.

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

The Stars—Blue, Gold and Silver.
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 invalided wounded or killed in service. The following is believed to state the consensus of opinion and accepted usage:

For those killed in action a gold star will be substituted for the blue star or superimposed on it in such a 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.

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.

A Query.

Asked by a member of the council of Defense of the Minneapolis division about the custom governing the silver star in its relation to wounded and retired men. General MacChesney has answered:

"We understand that it has been customary to represent with a silver star men who have been wounded or invalided home but are still in the service, but do not know whether or not such has been practiced with reference to men who have been discharged from the service. However, it seems to me that your suggestion is a good one and I see no reason why the silver star should not be used for all those who have been in active

service and have been discharged because of disability acquired in the service of their country."

Gift of the Red Cross.

After a conference on the subject between the woman's committee, Council of National Defense, and the American Red Cross, indorsed by the president of the United States, it has been recommended to the people of the United States that the wearing of black brassard with a gold star, on the arm, be substituted for mourning by the relatives of those soldiers and sailors who have lost their lives in the service.

Accordingly, there has been published and widely circulated a statement signed by Dr. Anna Shaw, of the Woman's committee, Council of National Defense, and Henry P. Davison, of the American Red Cross, as follows:

"In order to facilitate the adoption of the brassard, it has seemed to the Woman's committee that the chapters of the Red Cross are especially well equipped to prepare them, and the committee has, therefore, requested these chapters, through the chairman of the war council of the American Red Cross to furnish the brassards to those who have the right to wear them, either of black broadcloth or of thin silk elastic, according to the texture of the garment with which it will be worn. To this band, the regulation military star, fifteen-sixteenths of an inch, embroidered in gold thread, shall be applied by hand. It is the understanding that the brassard and star will be furnished without charge to the widow and the parents of the soldier or sailor. To other members of the family, the brassard will be furnished at cost.

"This would not imply any exclusive right to prepare the brassard, but would merely be such a sympathetic service as the members of the Red Cross delight to render and it would be understood by the local units of the Woman's committee that this action is a joint one between their organization and the American Red Cross."

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