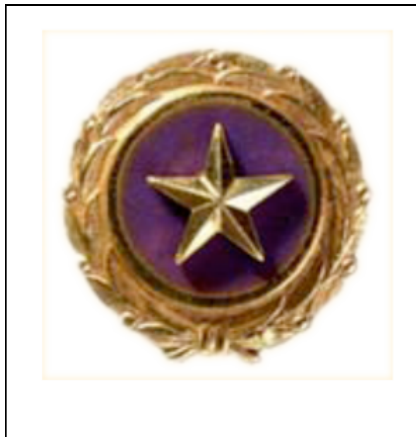


Lapel pins honor sacrifice of Gold Star, next of kin Families

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In 1947, Congress approved the use of the Gold Star Lapel Button as a way to recognize the families of service members who lose their lives while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States. In 1973, Congress added the Lapel Button for the Next of Kin of Deceased Personnel to honor those who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in a Reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status.

These small lapel buttons, or pins, as they are commonly called, are normally presented to eligible family members at the time of a military funeral service. Although they are less than an inch in size, they are packed with great meaning and emotion. They are not awards. They are symbols of honor. Here is how you can tell them apart.



Gold Star Lapel button

This symbol consists of a gold star on a purple background, bordered in gold and surrounded by gold laurel leaves. It is designated for eligible survivors of service members who lose their lives during any armed hostilities in which the United States is engaged, dating back to World War I. This includes service members who lose their lives while deployed in support of military operations against the enemy or during an international terrorist attack.

Next of kin lapel button

This symbol consists of a gold star within a circle that commemorates his or her honorable service. The gold star is also surrounded by sprigs of oak that represent the branches of the Armed Forces. It is designated for eligible survivors of service members who lose their lives while serving honorably under circumstances not defined above. This includes service members who lose their lives while assigned to a Reserve or National Guard unit in a drill status. It is authorized for issue retroactive to March 29, 1973.



Who can wear the pin?

The family members entitled to receive and wear these symbols are the widow or widower; each child, stepchild, and child through adoption; each brother, half brother, sister, and half sister; and each of the parents (this includes mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother through adoption, father through adoption, and foster parents in loco parentis).

I did not receive a pin, where do I get one?

If you are an eligible family member, but did not receive the lapel button to which you are entitled, you can request one through the National Archives, please [click here](#). You can also apply for a replacement should yours ever be lost or damaged. If you would like help applying for a new or replacement Lapel Button, contact [Army Survivor Outreach Services](#).