

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MATTHEW DUNLAP  
SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE  
OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE

January 21, 2010

The Honorable Dennis Damon  
The Honorable Edward Mazurek  
Joint Standing Committee on Transportation  
State House Room 126  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Veterans Commemorative Decal Report  
C. 437, PL of 2009

Dear Senator Damon and Rep. Mazurek:

I am pleased to submit the following information and recommendations, relative to veterans special commemorative decals, as required by Public Law 2009, chapter 437 - *An Act To Add Combat Action Badges and Ribbons to the Special Commemorative Decals for Veterans License Plates*.

Public Law 2009, chapter 437 directed the Secretary of State to review the data on veterans commemorative decals and to report on the number of decals issued in 2007 and 2008, with a recommendation for minimum issuance thresholds that could result in a discontinuance of certain decals. The Secretary was further instructed to summarize the cost of acquiring and distributing decals and the revenue earned from the sale of decals.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) issues special veterans commemorative decals upon request to qualified veterans. In order to qualify, a veteran must be eligible for a special veterans registration plate, and must have documentation stating the veteran earned the award. Decals are available either from any BMV branch office in person, or from the main office by mail, fax, or in person. The decals are designed and intended to be placed on the left side of the special veterans or the disability special veterans registration plate by covering the red "V".

**Decal Counts.** Currently, the law authorizes commemorative decals for thirty-two different medals, badges, or ribbons. Included in this number are five new decals, which were authorized by Chapter 437, and are now available.

The following table summarizes the total number of veterans decals recorded in the BMV database by category.

The Bureau does not recommend the discontinuance of any decals at this time. For the most part, the most distinguished awards have the fewest total number issued.

**Table 1 Total Veteran Commemorative Decals by Type and Year**

Decal	Dec-09	Dec-07	Feb-06	Jul-04
VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL	3,116	2,759	2,411	2,071
UNITED STATES ARMY	2,549	2,247	1,864	1,407
UNITED STATES NAVY	2,014	1,762	1,483	1,192
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE	1,707	1,480	1,262	997
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS	1,449	1,235	979	759
KOREAN SERVICE MEDAL	884	845	807	725
BRONZE STAR MEDAL	873	758	643	533
ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL	742	661	578	458
SOUTH WEST ASIA SERVICE MEDAL	729	655	554	444
ASIA-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MEDAL	474	449	418	382
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD	371	321	262	197
EUROPE-AFRICAN-MIDDLE EAST CAMPAIGN MEDAL	340	319	301	271
IRAQ CAMPAIGN MEDAL	322	160	4	
GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL	266	178	47	
NAVY CROSS	224	220	232	235
AIR FORCE CROSS	128	119	101	58
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS	127	121	112	98
COAST GUARD MEDAL	85	73	62	54
AIRMAN'S MEDAL	79	55	30	26
KOSOVO MEDAL	78	63	42	26
SILVER STAR	76	68	53	42
NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL	60	47	34	29
AFGHANISTAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL	55	21	2	
KOREA DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL	52	31	15	
SOLDIER'S MEDAL	46	36	24	19
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS	11	9	11	11
ARMY COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE	7			
MARINE CORPS COMBAT ACTION RIBBON	5			
ARMY COMBAT ACTION BADGE	3			
NAVY COMBAT ACTION RIBBON	2			
ARMY COMBAT MEDIC BADGE	1			
AIR FORCE COMBAT ACTION MEDAL	0			
<b>Totals*</b>	<b>16,875</b>	<b>14,692</b>	<b>12,331</b>	<b>10,034</b>

\*The data on the total number of active decals almost certainly is somewhat undercounted due to registration renewal records being updated in different locations.

**Revenue and Costs.** Table 2 summarizes the number of decals issued and the revenue collected by fiscal year. Currently, the BMV charges two dollars per decal set, and occasionally issues replacement decals for free.

**Table 2 Veteran Decals Counts and Revenues (By Fiscal Year)**

Location	FY 07		FY 08		FY 09	
	Counts	Revenue	Counts	Revenue	Counts	Revenue
Branches	1,369	\$2,738	1,301	\$2,602	1,069	\$2,138
Main Office	204	\$408	168	\$336	125	\$250
Branches - No Fee	119	\$0	219	\$0	255	\$0
Main Office - No Fee	9	\$0	11	\$0	20	\$0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>\$3,146</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>\$2,938</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>\$2,388</b>

The BMV orders decals in bulk as needed. The current cost is approximately seventy-eight cents per decal set. The number of different types of decals does not affect the price per decal set significantly. Managing decal inventory, computer programming, and other administrative requirements result in minor additional costs which the BMV absorbs. When decals are mailed to recipients, there is an additional cost of approximately one dollar to one and one-half dollars per set.

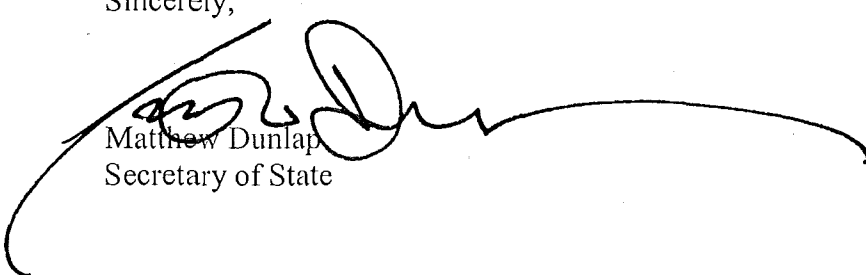
Current law authorizes the BMV to collect a fee of up to five dollars per decal set. At present, the BMV charges two dollars per decal set, which covers the cost of production, but probably not the entire cost of distribution and administration. The BMV generally charges for replacement sets, but does occasionally replace lost or faded decals for free.

The total cost of collecting the fee probably exceeds two dollars. We therefore recommend charging five dollars for the recipient's original set of decals, and then providing replacements for free for the same plate number. This would allow recipients to request replacements more easily by phone or email to the main office, and remove some of these transactions from the branch offices. The implementation of the BMV's new computer system will improve the accuracy of the veterans decal database, and make this process more efficient. If there is no objection, we believe the BMV has sufficient authority to make this policy change.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles is pleased to honor our veterans by managing the veterans plate and veterans commemorative decal programs. In our opinion, the decals currently offered provide the opportunity for recognition for the majority of veterans who have earned awards. The current offerings cover both the most common awards as well as the most distinguished.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available, as are BMV representatives, to discuss this report at the Committee's convenience.

Sincerely,



Matthew Dunlap  
Secretary of State