

GOLD STAR PINS

The Gold Star first appeared on flags in 1918, when families would pin a gold star over the blue service star hanging in their window to indicate that their loved one had been killed overseas. At that time President Wilson also authorized mothers to wear a gilt gold star on the traditional black mourning arm band to signify they lost a child in the war.

In 1947, the Gold Star lapel pin was designed and created to be presented to eligible surviving family members of service members who died while deployed in support of Overseas Contingency Operations, or who died from wounds sustained in theater (Public Law 80-306). The Gold Star lapel pin consists of a gold star on a field of purple surrounded by laurel leaves.

The Next of Kin Deceased Personnel lapel pin consists of a gold star on a gold background surrounded by four oak sprigs. It was approved in 1973 for the primary next of kin of service members who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in an Army Reserve or Army National Guard unit in a drill status, and is authorized for issue retroactive to March 29, 1973. The widow or widower, each parent, each child, stepchild, child through adoption, brother, half-brother, sister, and half-sister are entitled to receive and wear these pins in recognition of their loss and the sacrifice of their loved one.

