§ 2734. Property loss; personal injury or death: incident to noncombat activities of the armed forces; foreign countries

(a) To promote and to maintain friendly relations through the prompt settlement of meritorious claims, the Secretary concerned, or an officer or employee designated by the Secretary, may appoint, under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, one or more claims commissions, each composed of one or more officers or employees or combination of officers or employees of the armed forces. Such claims commissions may settle and pay in an amount not more than $100,000, a claim against the United States for—

(1) damage to, or loss of, real property of any foreign country or of any political subdivision or inhabitant of a foreign country, including damage or loss incident to use and occupancy; (2) damage to, or loss of, personal property of any foreign country or of any political subdivision or inhabitant of a foreign country, including property bailed to the United States; or

(3) personal injury to, or death of, any inhabitant of a foreign country;

if the damage, loss, personal injury, or death occurs outside the United States, or the Commonwealths or possessions, and is caused by, or is otherwise incident to noncombat activities of, the armed forces under his jurisdiction, or is caused by a member thereof or by a civilian employee of the military department concerned or the Coast Guard, as the case may be. The claim of an insured, but not that of a subrogee, may be considered under this subsection. In this section, “foreign country” includes any place under the jurisdiction of the United States in a foreign country. An officer or employee may serve on a claims commission under the jurisdiction of another armed force only with the consent of the Secretary of his department, or his designee, but shall perform his duties under regulations of the department appointing the commission.

(b) A claim may be allowed under subsection (a) only if—

(1) it is presented within two years after it accrues; (2) in the case of a national of a country at war with the United States, or of any ally of that country, the claimant is determined by the commission or by the local military commander to be friendly to the United States; and

(3) it did not arise from action by an enemy or result directly or indirectly from an act of the armed forces of the United States in combat, except that a claim may be allowed if it arises from an accident or malfunction incident to the operation of an aircraft of the armed forces of the United States, including its airborne ordnance, indirectly related to combat, and occurring while preparing for, going to, or returning from a combat mission.

(c) The Secretary concerned may appoint any officer or employee under the jurisdiction of the Secretary to act as an approval authority for claims determined to be allowable under subsection (a) in an amount in excess of $10,000.

(d) If the Secretary concerned considers that a claim in excess of $100,000 is meritorious, and the claim otherwise is payable under this section, the Secretary may pay the claimant $100,000 and report any meritorious amount in excess of $100,000 to the Secretary of the Treasury for payment under section 1904 of title 31.

(e) Except as provided in subsection (d), no claim may be paid under this section unless the amount tendered is accepted by the claimant in full satisfaction.

(f) Upon the request of the department concerned, a claim arising in that department and covered by subsection (a) may be settled and paid by a commission appointed under subsection (a) and composed of officers of an armed force under the jurisdiction of another department.
(g) Payment of claims against the Coast Guard arising while it is operating as a service in the Department of Homeland Security shall be made out of the appropriation for the operating expenses of the Coast Guard.

(h) The Secretary of Defense may designate any claims commission appointed under subsection (a) to settle and pay, as provided in this section, claims for damage caused by a civilian employee of the Department of Defense other than an employee of a military department.

Payments of claims under this subsection shall be made from appropriations as provided in section 2732 of this title.


HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

1956 ACT

Revised section Source (U.S. Code) Source (Statutes at Large)
2734(a) ..... 31:2244.
2734(b) ..... 31:2244.
2734(c) ..... 31:2244.
2734(d) ..... 31:2244.
2734(e) ..... 31:2244.
2734(f) ..... 31:2244.
2734(g) ..... 31:2244.

In subsection (a), the words “for such purposes”, “or destruction”, “public”, “private”, “Army * * * forces”, and “whether under a lease, express or implied” are omitted as surplusage. The words “armed forces under his jurisdiction” are substituted for the words “Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps”. The same words are substituted for the words “Army, Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps forces” to reflect the opinion of the Judge Advocate General of the Army (JAGD/D–55–5100, Sept. 1, 1959, 73 Stat. 453).

In subsection (b), the words “consider, ascertain, adjust, determine,” since the word “settle”, as defined in section 2731 of this title, are substituted for the words “service concerned” after the words “officers of the”. The words “by whom such claims may be settled” are inserted for clarity. The words “to be meritorious” and “character of such” are omitted as surplusage.

In subsection (f), the words “a military department” are substituted for the words “service concerned” after the words “shall have authority, if he deems”. The words “that would otherwise be covered by this section” are inserted for clarity. The words “and by whom such claims may be settled” are inserted for clarity. The words “‘$100,000’ are omitted as covered by subsection (a). The words “commanding officer or other” are omitted as surplusage. The word “commissioned” is inserted for clarity. The word “designated” is substituted for the words “may prescribe”.

In subsection (d), the word “may” is substituted for the words “shall have authority, if he deems”. The words “‘$100,000’ are omitted as covered by subsection (a). The words “commanding officer or other” are omitted as surplusage. The word “commissioned” is inserted for clarity. The words “to be meritorious” and “character of such” are omitted as surplusage. The words “an armed force under the jurisdiction of another military department” are substituted for the words “service concerned” after the words “officers of the”. 31:2244 (last 19 words) is omitted, since all claims are paid from one appropriation made to the Department of Defense.

In subsection (h), the word “settle” is substituted for the words “consider, ascertain, adjust, determine,” since the word “settle”, as defined in section 2731 of this title, includes those actions. The words “as provided in this section” are substituted for the words “as described in section 224d of this title” and 31:2241–1 (2d sentence).

AMENDMENTS


1990—Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 101–510 substituted “as provided in section 2732 of this title” for “available to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the payment of claims”.

1984—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 98–564, §2(1), substituted “$100,000” and inserted provisions whereby the Secretary may appoint officers and employees as well as officers of the Secretary may settle claims in text preceding par. (1).

Pub. L. 98–564, §2(2), inserted “employee” after “an officer” in last sentence.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 98–564, §2(3), substituted provisions whereby the Secretary may appoint officers and employees to act as approval authority for claims in excess of $10,000 for provisions which provided that allowance of a claim for more than $2,500 may be subject to the approval of any commissioned officer designated by the Secretary concerned.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 98–564, §2(4), substituted provisions providing that if the Secretary considers a claim in excess of $100,000 meritorious, the Secretary may pay $100,000 and report any excess amount to the Comptroller General for provisions which provided that the Secretary may pay $25,000 and certify any excess to Congress as a legal claim to be paid from appropriations.


\$5,000” are omitted as covered by subsection (a). The words “commanding officer or other” are omitted as surplusage. The word “commissioned” is inserted for clarity. The word “designated” is substituted for the words “may prescribe”.
§ 2734a. Property loss; personal injury or death:
incident to noncombat activities of armed forces in foreign countries; international agreements

(a) When the United States is a party to an international agreement which provides for the settlement or adjudication and cost sharing of claims against the United States arising out of the acts or omissions of a member or civilian employee of an armed force of the United States done in the performance of official duty, or arising out of any other act, omission, or occurrence for which an armed force of the United States is legally responsible under the law of another party to the international agreement, and causing damage in the territory of such party, the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Homeland Security or their designees may—

1. Reimburse the party to the agreement for the agreed pro rata share of amounts, including any authorized arbitration costs, paid by that party in satisfying awards or judgments on claims, in accordance with the agreement;
2. Pay the party to the agreement the agreed pro rata share of any claim, including any authorized arbitration costs, for damage to property owned by it, in accordance with the agreement.

(b) A claim arising out of an act of an enemy of the United States or arising, directly or indirectly, from an act of the armed forces, or a member thereof, while engaged in combat may not be considered or paid under this section.

(c) A reimbursement or payment under this section shall be made by the Secretary of Defense out of appropriations as provided in section 2732 of this title except that payment of claims against the Coast Guard arising while it is operating as a service of the Department of Homeland Security shall be made out of the appropriations for the operating expenses of the Coast Guard.

(d) Upon the request of the Secretary of Homeland Security or his designee, any payments made relating to claims arising from the activities of the Coast Guard and covered by subsection (a) may be reimbursed or paid to the foreign country concerned by the authorized representative of the Department of Defense out of appropriations as provided in section 2732 of this title, subject to reimbursement from the Department of Homeland Security.

Effective Date of 2002 Amendment
Amendment by Pub. L. 107–296 effective on the date of transfer of the Coast Guard to the Department of Homeland Security, see section 1704(g) of Pub. L. 107–296, set out as a note under section 101 of this title.

Effective Date of 1980 Amendment