

person or persons causing such act may be proceeded against and brought to justice; or, if said explosion has been brought about by accidental means, that precautions may be taken to prevent similar accidents from occurring. In the prosecution of such investigations the employees of the Bureau of Mines are hereby granted the authority to enter the premises where such explosion or fire has occurred, to examine plans, books, and papers, to administer oaths to, and to examine all witnesses and persons concerned, without let or hindrance on the part of the owner, lessee, operator, or agent thereof.

Authority conferred on employees.

SEC. 21. That the Director of the Bureau of Mines, with the approval of the President, is hereby authorized to utilize such agents, agencies, and all officers of the United States and of the several States, Territories, dependencies, and municipalities thereof, and the District of Columbia, in the execution of this Act, and all agents, agencies, and all officers of the United States and of the several States and Territories, dependencies, and municipalities thereof, and the District of Columbia, shall hereby have full authority for all acts done by them in the execution of this Act when acting by the direction of the Bureau of Mines.

Utilization of Federal, State, etc., agencies.

Authority conferred for official acts.

SEC. 22. That for the enforcement of the provisions of this Act, including personal services in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, and including supplies, equipment, expenses of traveling and subsistence, and for the purchase and hire of animal-drawn or motor-propelled passenger-carrying vehicles, and upkeep of same, and for every other expense incident to the enforcement of the provisions of this Act, there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$300,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary: *Provided*, That not to exceed \$10,000 shall be expended in the purchase of motor-propelled passenger-carrying vehicles.

Appropriation for all expenses.

*Proviso.*  
Amount for motor vehicles.

Approved, October 6, 1917.

CHAP. 84.—An Act Extending the time for the construction of a bridge across Flint River, in the State of Georgia.

October 6, 1917.  
[H. R. 4232.]

[Public, No. 69.]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the times for commencing and completing the construction of a bridge authorized by Act of Congress approved April seventeenth, nineteen hundred and sixteen, to be built across the Flint River, Georgia, by Mitchell County, or by Baker County, Georgia, jointly or separately, are hereby extended one and three years, respectively, from the date hereof.

Flint River.  
Time extended for bridging, by Mitchell County or Baker County, Ga.  
Vol. 39, p. 52, amended.

SEC. 2. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved.

Amendment.

Approved, October 6, 1917.

CHAP. 85.—An Act To provide for the reimbursement of officers, enlisted men, and others in the naval service of the United States for property lost or destroyed in such service.

October 6, 1917.  
[H. R. 5647.]

[Public, No. 70.]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the Paymaster General of the Navy be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to reimburse such officers, enlisted men, and others in the naval service of the United States as may have suffered, or may hereafter suffer, loss or destruction of or damage to their personal property and effects in the naval service due to the operations of war or by shipwreck or other marine disaster when such loss, destruction, or damage was without

Navy.  
Reimbursement for losses of personal property.  
Applications.

fault or negligence on the part of the claimant, or where the private property so lost, destroyed, or damaged was shipped on board an unseaworthy vessel by order of an officer authorized to give such order or direct such shipment, or where it appears that the loss, destruction, or damage of or to the private property of the claimant was in consequence of his having given his attention to the saving of the lives of others or of property belonging to the United States which was in danger at the same time and under similar circumstances. And the liability of the Government under this Act shall be limited to such articles of personal property as the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation of the Navy Department, with reference to the personnel of the Navy, or the major general commandant of the Marine Corps, with reference to the personnel of that corps, in his discretion, shall decide to be reasonable, useful, and proper for such officer, enlisted man, or other person while engaged in the public service in line of duty, and the certificate of said chief of bureau or major general commandant, as the case may be, shall be sufficient voucher for and shall be final as to all matters necessary to the establishment and payment or settlement of any claim filed hereunder; and the action of the said chief of bureau or major general commandant, as the case may be, upon all claims arising under this Act shall be final, and no right to prosecute a claim or action in the Court of Claims or in any other court of the United States, or before any accounting officer of the United States, or elsewhere, except as herein provided, shall accrue to any person by virtue of this Act: *Provided*, That the liability of the Government under this Act shall be limited to such articles of personal property as are required by the United States Naval Regulations and in force at the time of loss or destruction for such officers, petty officers, seamen, or others engaged in the public service in the line of duty: *Provided further*, That with reference to claims of persons in the Marine Corps filed under the terms of this Act the paymaster of the Marine Corps shall make the reimbursement in money, and the quartermaster of the Marine Corps shall make the reimbursement in kind herein provided for: *And provided further*, That all claims now existing under this Act shall be presented within two years from the passage hereof and not thereafter; and all such claims hereafter arising shall be presented within two years from the occurrence of the loss, destruction, or damage: *And provided further*, That the term "in the naval service," as herein employed, shall be held to include service performed on board any vessel, whether of the Navy or not, provided the claimant is serving on such vessel pursuant to the orders of duly constituted naval authority: *And provided further*, That all claimants under this Act shall be required to submit their claims in writing and under oath to the said Chief of the Bureau of Navigation or major general commandant, as the case may be: *And provided further*, That claims arising in the manner indicated in this Act and which have been settled under the terms of previously existing law shall be regarded as finally determined and no other or further right of recovery under the provisions hereof shall accrue to persons who have submitted such claims as aforesaid: *And provided further*, That sections two hundred and eighty-eight, two hundred and eighty-nine, and two hundred and ninety, Revised Statutes, and the Act of March second, eighteen hundred and ninety-five (Twenty-eighth Statutes, page nine hundred and sixty-two), are hereby repealed: *And provided further*, That reimbursement for loss, destruction, or damage sustained and determined as herein provided shall be made in kind for such articles as are customarily issued to the service and shall be made in money for other articles at the valuation thereof at the time of their loss, destruction, or damage: *And provided further*, That in cases involving persons in the Navy reimbursement in money shall be made from the

Articles limited.

Official certificate.

Action of officer upon claims final.

Provisos.  
Application to Navy claims.

Marine Corps claims.

Limit for presenting claims.

Naval service recognized.

Submission of claims.

Determination of prior claims final.

Former laws repealed.  
R. S., secs. 288-290,  
p. 48, repealed.  
Vol. 28, p. 962,  
repealed.

Reimbursement in kind or money.

Specified appropriations chargeable therefor.

appropriation "Pay of the Navy," and reimbursement in kind shall be made from the appropriation "Outfits on first enlistment," and in cases involving persons in the Marine Corps reimbursement in money shall be made from the appropriation "Pay, Marine Corps," and reimbursement in kind shall be made from the appropriation "Clothing, Marine Corps," respectively, current at the time the claim covering such loss, damage, or destruction is paid: *And provided further*, That the provisions of this Act shall apply to the personnel of the Coast Guard in like manner as to the personnel of the Navy, whether the Coast Guard is operating under the Treasury Department or operating as a part of the Navy, and all of the duties, which, under this Act, devolve upon the major general commandant of the Marine Corps with reference to the personnel of that corps, shall devolve upon the captain commandant of the Coast Guard, and in cases involving persons in the Coast Guard reimbursement in money shall be made by a disbursing officer of the Coast Guard from the appropriation "Coast Guard" and reimbursement in kind shall be made by the captain commandant from the appropriation "Coast Guard."

Coast Guard.  
Provisions applicable  
to.

Authority of officers

Approved, October 6, 1917.

**CHAP. 86.**—An Act Providing for an amendment to section twenty-two hundred and ninety-three of the Revised Statutes, allowing homestead and other public land affidavits to be taken before the military commander of any person engaged in military or naval service of the United States.

October 6, 1917.  
[H. R. 5082.]

[Public, No. 71.]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That during the continuance of the present war with Germany, and until his discharge from service, any man serving in the armed forces of the United States, who, prior to the beginning of his services was a settler, an applicant, or entryman under the land laws of the United States, or who has, prior to enlistment, filed a contest, with the view of exercising preference right of entry therefor, may make any affidavit required by law or regulation of the department, affecting such application, entry, or contest, or necessary to the making of entry in the case of the successful termination of such contest awarding him preference right of entry, before his commanding officer as provided in section twenty-two hundred and ninety-three of the Revised Statutes of the United States, which affidavits shall be as binding in law and with like penalties as if taken before the Register of the United States Land Office.

Public lands.  
Affidavits of persons  
in service during the  
war may be made be-  
fore officer of armed  
force.

R. S., sec. 2293, p. 421.  
Legal effect, etc.

Approved, October 6, 1917.

**CHAP. 87.**—An Act Amending the Act to increase the limit of the cost of certain public buildings, and so forth.

October 6, 1917.  
[H. R. 6094.]

[Public, No. 72.]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the public buildings Act, approved March fourth, nineteen hundred and thirteen, entitled "An Act to increase the limit of cost of certain public buildings, to authorize the enlargement, extension, remodeling, or improvement of certain public buildings, to authorize the erection and completion of public buildings, to authorize the purchase of sites for public buildings, and for other purposes" (Public Numbered four hundred and thirty-two), and all other authorizations and appropriations passed in pursuance thereof for the construction of a post office at Durant, Oklahoma, be, and the same are hereby, amended so as to

Durant, Okla.  
Use of funds for pub-  
lic building at, ex-  
tended.  
Vol. 37, p. 876,  
amended.