

WORLD WAR II FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY COMPENSATION FUND

The President of the United States signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 on February 17, 2009, authorizing the release of a one-time, lump-sum payment to eligible World War II (WWII) Philippine Veterans. These payments are to be made through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from a \$198 million appropriation established for this purpose. Applying for this benefit will not affect other existing Veterans benefits.

Q: Who is eligible for the new benefit, a one-time payment authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009?

- Persons who served before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States;
- Members of the organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States;
- Persons who served in the Philippine Scouts under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945.
- To be eligible for the new benefit, service members in each of the three categories above must have been discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Q: How can I find out if my name is on the list of Veterans eligible to receive this benefit?

- There is no "list" of Veterans who are eligible to receive this benefit. The VA's Manila Regional Office determines eligibility on a case-by-case basis for each applicant using a variety of records sources. Any individual with service in the above categories should submit an application and allow VA to determine whether the records support an eligibility determination.

Q: How do I apply for this benefit?

- VA is accepting claims from Filipino WWII Veterans until February 16, 2010. The claim form, VA Form 21-4138(CF) Statement in Support of Claim (Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund) can be obtained by calling or visiting your nearest VA Regional Office. In the Philippines the VA Regional Office is located at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The forms are also available at the VA website, <http://www.va.gov> or at the U.S. Embassy Manila website at <http://manila.usembassy.gov>

Q: Where do I apply for this benefit?

- Veterans can submit a claim by mail or in person to any VA Regional Office. All claims will be processed at the Manila VA Regional Office. Veterans can also mail the application directly to the Manila VA Regional

Office using the address at the top of the application form. The application form must be signed by the applicant for processing to commence.

Q: How long do I have to file a claim?

- The United States Department of Veterans Affairs must receive all claims no later than February 16, 2010, which is one year from the date of enactment of the legislation, which is February 17, 2009.

Q: How will I know if VA has received my application?

- The Manila Regional Office will issue confirmation of receipt of all applications. Applicants appearing in person at any VA Regional Office will be given a receipt upon submission of their application. If you mail in your application, you should expect to receive written confirmation within 30 days from the time you mail the application to VA. If you have not received confirmation that your application was received within 30 days from the time you mailed it, please contact VA. See "How do I contact VA?" for information on calling or e-mailing VA.

Q: How much will I receive?

- Eligible Veterans who are not United States citizens will receive a one-time payment of \$9,000.
- Eligible Veterans who are United States citizens will receive a one-time payment of \$15,000.

Q: I am a U.S. citizen, but reside in the Philippines. Will that affect the amount of my payment?

- No. The payment amount for eligible Veterans is determined by citizenship, not by residence.

Q: My late husband was a Veteran who served during WWII. May I receive this benefit as his widow?

- Once an eligible Veteran files a claim before February 17, 2010, a surviving spouse can claim the benefit if the Veteran passes away before the benefit is paid.

Q: My husband was a U.S. citizen who filed a claim for this benefit but died before receiving payment. I am not a U.S. citizen. Will I receive the \$15,000 he was eligible to receive?

- Yes. The amount of the payment is determined by the citizenship of the eligible Veteran, not by the citizenship of the surviving spouse.

Q: Will receipt of this benefit impact or reduce any other U.S. Government assistance or benefits I receive?

- No. This is an additional benefit for those eligible and qualified WWII Veterans. It will not change or affect benefits an individual may be receiving under any other Federal or federally assisted program.

Q: May I apply for or continue to receive other U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits?

- Yes. This is an additional benefit for those eligible and qualified Filipino WWII Veterans.

Q: What information or evidence do I need to submit with my application?

- Filipino WW II Veterans wishing to submit a claim for this benefit should provide the following items to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (if applicable):
 - Two forms of identification such as a driver's license, birth certificate, Senior Citizen ID, Bureau of Post ID, Voter ID Card;
 - Copies of any military discharge documents showing service in one of the three qualifying types of service mentioned in question #1 above.
 - Your U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs claim number (if applicable); and
 - U.S. citizens should submit copies of pages 2 and 3 of your U.S. passport.
 - (Note: Persons who served in the Philippine Scouts under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945 should submit the original or a certified copy of Enlisted Record and Report of Separation, WD AGO FORM 53. All original documents will be returned.

Q: When will I receive the payment?

- VA is reviewing and attempting to resolve all claims in the order received. However, because each claim must be decided on its own merits and the need for supporting evidence varies, the actual resolution of each claim is not always in the order in which the claims are received. Decisions are reached and if appropriate, payments are processed, as quickly as all the necessary evidence to establish entitlement is received. Each claimant is informed in writing of VA's decision.

Q: How do I contact VA?

- Veterans residing in the Philippines can contact the Manila VA Regional Office at (632) 528-2500 or toll free at 1-800-1888-5252. Veterans living in the United States can contact the VA by dialing 1-800-827-1000. All Veterans, regardless of where they reside, can contact VA via e-mail by going to: <https://iris.va.gov/>