

WORLD WAR II FILIPINO VETERANS EQUITY COMPENSATION (FVEC) FUND

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorized the release of a one-time, lump-sum payment to eligible World War II (WWII) Philippine Veterans. The deadline to apply for FVEC benefits was February 16, 2010.

Q: Who is eligible for the one-time payment?

Veterans 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.

Q: Where can I apply?

The deadline for applying has passed. VA is no longer accepting applications.

Q: How will I know if VA is still working on my application?

The VA periodically sends letters to all those with pending FVEC claims. Each claimant is informed in writing of VA's final decision.

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 died before the law authorizing the one-time payment benefit was passed. May I receive this benefit as his widow?

No. Only Veterans were eligible to apply.

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

No. Only living Veterans are eligible to apply.

Q: My husband filed a claim for this benefit but died before receiving payment. May I receive his benefit?

Yes. If an eligible Veteran filed a claim prior to the deadline, a surviving spouse can claim the benefit if the Veteran passes away before the benefit is paid.

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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: When will I receive the payment?

VA is reviewing and attempting to resolve all claims in the order received. Since each claim must be decided on its own merits, however, 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: What is VA doing to expedite FVEC claims processing, considering the advanced age of the applicants?

All FVEC claims are processed in one VA location, at the Regional Office in Manila, Philippines. VA regulations require all claims to VA from Filipino WW II Veterans be processed in its Manila office due to that office's expertise with Filipino WW II Veterans service, Filipino language skills, and its custodianship of historical WW II records needed for proper adjudication. The Manila Regional Office has a dedicated team of 19 employees working full time processing FVEC claims. These employees also assist with expediting all FVEC appeals. The Manila Office often supplements its team of 19 employees with additional employees as FVEC workload demands warrant. VA received over 42,000 claims for the FVEC benefit and has processed all but approximately 5,500 of those claims as of July 2010.

Q: I've heard the VA uses the "Missouri List" to determine eligibility for this benefit. How do I know if my name is on this list?

There is no master "list" of Veterans eligible for this or any other VA benefit. In fact, this "list" is often referred to a series of Recognized Guerilla Rosters containing the names of most Recognized Guerillas. The rosters contain no information about of United States Armed Forces Far East (USAFFE) or "Commonwealth Army" units, nor do the rosters contain information regarding New Philippine Scout units. VA's process for determining eligibility for Recognized Guerillas does not rely on the information found in its copy of the Guerilla Rosters. VA requests the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) to determine verified service whether the claimant's name appears on its copies of the rosters or not. VA has also heard from some stakeholders that many Filipino WW II Veterans were afraid to put their name on this "list" during WW II, or were discouraged

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by the U.S. out of fear the Japanese would obtain the list and retaliate against them. In fact the Recognized Guerrilla Rosters were not compiled until after WW II ended.

Q: The US has about 18,000 names in their list of Veterans eligible for the lump sum, did all 18,000 apply?

There is no master "list" of eligible Veterans. Several years prior to the passage of the FVEC provision into law the US Congress, the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. and others estimated there were approximately 18,000 living Filipino WW II Veterans, as defined by VA. The estimate was based on a number, not a list of names, and it therefore impossible to determine if all applied as all of the eligible persons were not known. VA received over 42,000 applications for the FVEC benefit and has found over 16,000 Veterans eligible to date.

Q: What is the loyalty process?

Every claim for benefits requires a loyalty clearance. This requirement has been in place since VA began administering certain benefits to Filipino WW II Veterans after WW II. This is not a new requirement imposed on FVEC claimants. In order to clear one's loyalty, VA must search its records to determine if the claimant collaborated with the enemy. If VA identifies an individual who may have assisted the Japanese in their war effort, VA is required to gather additional information to determine if this specific individual was or was not involved in assisting the Japanese.

To resolve any potential discrepancies, many Veterans are sent a letter asking to provide additional information. The Veteran is also required to complete VA Form 21-4169 (Supplement for Philippine Claims) in its entirety. VA uses this evidence to determine if Veteran's loyalty can be cleared.

Q: What if I disagree with your decision on my claim?

If an individual does not agree with the decision that has been made on his or her claim, he or she can file a Notice of Disagreement (NOD). A NOD is simply a letter stating disagreement with the decision. The NOD must be filed within one year of the date of our letter notifying you of our decision. Any VA Regional Office can assist you in preparing a Notice of Disagreement.

Q: What if my claim has been denied because the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has not been able to verify my military service?

You can reopen your claim by submitting additional evidence, or you can file a notice of disagreement.

Q: I've been told these records were burned in the 1973 fire, is this true?

There is great deal of misinformation about the 1973 fire at NPRC. The 1973 fire at NPRC did not affect the records of Commonwealth Army Veterans or Recognized Guerillas. Some records for New Philippine Scouts were damaged or destroyed in the fire, however, in most instances the service department can verify New Philippine Scout service using alternative methods.

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Q: Are there documents I can submit which will help VA verify my service?

If your claim was denied because NPRC could not verify your military service we will ask NPRC to review their determination if you submit any of the following documents:

For those claiming Guerilla service, submit a copy of AGO Form 23 (Affidavit for Philippine Army Personnel). You can obtain this document from:

The Adjutant General
Chief, Noncurrent Records Division
GHQ AFP Camp Aguinaldo
1110 Quezon City

For those claiming USAFEE service, the following documentation may help:

Troop rosters from 1941 or 1942
General or special orders dated 1941 or 1942 showing assignment, transfer or promotion
Record of enlistment in 1941 or 1942
Receipt of soldiers deposit in 1941 or 1942
Orders calling reservist to duty in 1941 or 1942
Original service records including medical records etc.
Guarantor's receipt for a released POW.

Q: Why can't VA simply use the records I've submitted to verify my service.

VA regulations permit us to accept evidence of service submitted by the claimant such as a DD214, WD AGO Form 53-55, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active duty or Original Certificate of Discharge **only** if the evidence is a document issued by the service department (National Personnel Records Center for Commonwealth Army and Recognized Guerillas). A copy is acceptable only if it is a copy issued by a custodian of public records who certifies that it is true and exact copy of the original service department (NPRC) document in their custody or, the copy is submitted by someone who has successfully completed VA prescribed training on military records that it is a true and exact copy or the original or copy issued by the service department; and; the document contains needed information as to length, time and character of service; and; in the opinion of the Department of Veterans Affairs the document is genuine and the information contained is accurate.

If the documentation submitted does not meet the requirements above, VA is required to request verification from the service department (NPRC).

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/>