



## AFSA Retiree and Veteran Affairs Newsletter

### - AFSA POW-MIA Week and National POW-MIA Recognition Day

Many Americans across the United States pause to remember the sacrifices and service of those who were prisoners of war (POW), as well as those who are missing in action (MIA), and their families. All military installations fly the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag, which symbolizes the nation's remembrance of those who were imprisoned while serving in conflicts and those who remain missing.

AFSA's POW-MIA Week for 2019 is 15-21 September. AFSA is encouraging chapters to participate in local POW-MIA activities in your area or even host a POW-MIA event. In the United States, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday in September. It honors those who were prisoners of war (POWs) and those who are still missing in action (MIA) this year the National POW-MIA Recognition Day is Friday, 20 September. Please take time to remember those comrades in arms that are still unaccounted for or prisoners of war and their families.

### - House Democrats Unveil Bill to Ensure Citizenship for Children of Service Members: By Cristina Marcos, The Hill

A trio of House Democrats unveiled legislation on Tuesday that would reverse a new Trump administration policy that changes how some Americans serving abroad in the military or other postings pass U.S. citizenship to their children. The new policy issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) last week rescinds in certain cases guidance stating that children of U.S. service members and other federal workers abroad are automatically granted citizenship.

The new rule will affect children of non-U.S. citizens adopted by U.S. citizen government employees or service members, noncitizen government employees or service members naturalized after the child's birth, and citizens who do not meet residency requirements.

The legislation offered by Democratic Reps. Ruben Gallego (Ariz.), Ted Lieu (Calif.) and Lou Correa (Calif.) would preserve the citizenship rights of the children affected by the policy, which is set to take effect on Oct. 29. Gallego, a Marine combat veteran, warned that the policy change, which officials say will affect 20 to 25 people annually, could lead to a slippery slope.

"The people who sacrifice so much to serve our nation at home and overseas deserve certainty that their children's citizenship will not be in doubt. The Trump administration's cruel new policy is the first step in

President Trump's crusade to eliminate birthright citizenship and serves no purpose other than to play to his most xenophobic supporters," Gallego said in a statement.

The new policy will not affect children who acquire citizenship at birth or were born abroad to U.S. citizens who have resided in the U.S. for at least five years. Some children of U.S. citizens abroad who previously could acquire citizenship by virtue of a parent's nationality would have to seek citizenship through naturalization under the new rule. But experts say that the naturalization process would result in a complicated and expensive process for service members and federal workers stationed abroad.

Acting USCIS Director Ken Cuccinelli defended the change, arguing it doesn't prevent the affected children from gaining U.S. citizenship. "The only thing that has changed here is the forms they have to fill out, the process they have to go through, to get that child to be a U.S. citizen. That is it," Cuccinelli told "PBS NewsHour." But Cuccinelli acknowledged that the policy could have been communicated more clearly after initially sparking widespread confusion. "We obviously could have communicated this a lot better," Cuccinelli said. "But it is almost nothing. It affects, in paperwork only, about 20 to 25 people a year."

- **REAch Veteran Toolbox Program has shipped more than 8,000 Free Toolboxes:**

In 2012, WWII Veteran and former POW Clarence Robert "Bud" Shepherd created the REAch program to assist Post-9/11 combat wounded with the Veteran Toolbox Program. He provides Vets with free toolboxes filled with tools to assist with their transition into civilian life. Although Post-9/11 Purple Heart Veterans are priority for the program, all Veterans can apply. <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/65480/wwii-veteran-creates-program-post-911-purple-heart-recipients/>

- **Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?**

Did you know that VA offers same day services in Primary Care and Mental Health at 172 VA Medical Centers across the country? Make the Connection Resource Locator. Talk with other Veterans who have walked in your shoes on RallyPoint. Contact the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255.)

- **About GI Bill Benefits:**

GI Bill benefits help you pay for college, graduate school, and training programs. Since 1944, the GI Bill has helped qualifying Veterans and their family members get money to cover all or some of the costs for school or training. Learn more about GI Bill benefits below—and how to apply for them.

If you applied for and were awarded Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits, your GI Bill Statement of Benefits will show you how much of your benefits you've used and how much you have left to use. View your GI Bill Statement of Benefits.

<https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/>

- **Be Looking for the Retiree and Veteran's Affairs Link on AFSA's Website at:**  
[www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org)

## - **Get Veterans Burial Benefits:**

Eligibility: Find out if you qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery and for other burial honors.

Pre-need Burial Eligibility: Apply for a pre-need eligibility decision letter. This can help you pre-plan for burial in a VA national cemetery, and make the process easier for your family members in their time of need.

Veteran Burial Allowance: Learn how to apply for a burial allowance to help pay for a Veteran's funeral services, burial, and transportation costs.

Memorial Items: Find out how to apply for grave markers, headstones, Presidential Memorial Certificates, and other memorial items to honor a Veteran's service.

Compensation Benefits for Surviving Spouse and Dependents (VA DIC: Learn about getting VA disability benefits for a surviving spouse or a dependent child or parent.

Bereavement Counseling: See if you qualify for grief counseling and transition support after the loss of an active-duty Servicemember, Reservist, or National Guard Soldier.

[https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/?utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=VAntage#get](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VAntage#get)

## - **About Home Loans**

VA helps Servicemembers, Veterans, and eligible surviving spouses become homeowners. As part of our mission to serve you, we provide a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help you buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for your own personal occupancy.

Help you purchase a home at a competitive interest rate often without requiring a down payment or private mortgage insurance. Cash Out Refinance loans allow you to take cash out of your home equity to take care of concerns like paying off debt, funding school, or making home improvements

VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp>

## - **Your monthly electronic Retiree Account Statement (eRAS) is now available on myPay.**

<https://mypay.dfas.mil>

## - **Military Lodging: Armed Forces Recreation Centers:**

The Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRC) provide luxurious accommodations at very affordable prices in some of the world's top vacation destinations. Their central site offers descriptions, phone numbers, rate information and eligibility for use of the following AFRCs throughout the world:

*Shades of Green Resort — Orlando, Florida* - The Shades of Green Resort is a military-owned resort within Walt Disney World. On the Shades of Green website, you can find information on eligibility and reservation information.

Shades of Green makes the Central Florida vacation experience affordable for those who have stayed there. Shades of Green is within walking distance of two of Walt Disney World Resort PGA championship golf courses and a nine-hole executive course. Guests are provided transportation to all Walt Disney World attractions and early entry into select attractions.

*Hale Koa Hotel — Honolulu, Hawaii* - The Hale Koa Hotel, or "House of the Warrior," is an impressive resort destination situated on 72 tropical acres on the beach at Waikiki. It is located about 10 miles from the Honolulu International Airport.

*New Sanno Hotel — Tokyo, Japan* - The New Sanno Hotel, operated by the US Navy, is located in downtown Tokyo. It offers recently-upgraded amenities, such as a swimming pool, recreational facilities, a Navy Exchange, and other services designed for military travelers.

The New Sanno Hotel is regulated and controlled by the Status of Forces Agreement. Eligibility is limited to: Active duty U.S. military personnel and their dependents. DoD US civilian employees / dependents duty stationed in Japan or traveling to / via Japan on official DoD orders. US civilian employees / dependents stationed outside Japan and on EML orders to / thru Japan. Contractors / dependents on DoD orders to execute contracts for the US Armed Forces stationed in Japan. US military retirees and dependents when accompanied by retiree sponsor. Bona fide house guests of authorized patrons.

*Dragon Hill Lodge — Seoul, Korea* - Dragon Hill Lodge is operated by the US Army in support of personnel assigned or employed by the U.S. Forces Korea, their family members and guests.

Eligibility: Active duty, retired military, dependents, DOD civilians and all foreign non-Korean military with orders to USFK. All must present either DD Form 1173 or DD Form 2. Reservations are accepted 24 hours a day.

*Edelweiss Lodge and Resort — Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany* - The Edelweiss Lodge and Resort offers a vacation retreat designed exclusively for active duty military members, DoD civilians and retirees, complete with everything you would expect from a world-class resort. Long revered as one of the most desirable destinations in the Bavarian Alps and Germany's premiere winter and summer sports center, the Garmisch-Partenkirchen area is an idyllic location nestled at the foot of sweeping Alpine vistas.

Edelweiss Lodge and Resort authorized patrons include United States active-duty military members, military retirees, military reservists on active-duty, national guardsmen on active-duty, current Department of Defense civilian employees, foreign military currently on orders assigned to a U.S. military installation and the family members of authorized patrons.

- **RV Travel and Camping:** Looking for information on military campgrounds for your RV travels or campsites? Then visit: <http://www.militarycampgrounds.us/>