



Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

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Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Re: Action taken by the Office of the White House and DOD withholds pension from WW II veteran members of the Alaska Territorial Guard.

Katy, Texas -- December 2, 2009 -- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9182 shares outrage about the travesty facing World War II members of the Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG) who have had their previously paid pensions taken away by the government.

In January 2009, the Department of Defense changed policy and denied the previously approved and previously paid pensions of WW2 veteran members of the Alaska Territorial Guard. Both Senators from Alaska (one Republican and one Democrat) then sponsored an amendment to the Senate Defense Appropriations bill this year which would re-instate the pension monies for these brave men for their service. Then the **White House issued a "Statement of Administration Policy," which stated that these men would not be receiving pension monies for that service.** Congress has funded it, but this SAP means that the executive branch will not spend that money and has directed DOD to not pay it.

During World War II the ATG were recruited by the US government through the Territorial government to help our "Fighting Fourth" US Army regiment to conduct operations against the Japanese carrier group and battalion of men at their base in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. The ATG conducted surveillance and assisted in locating and building a runway sufficient to sustain air operations for B-17's, B-24's, B-25's, P-38's and Chenault's P-40's. Most importantly, they trained our Army how to conduct military operations in weather extremes which included freezing fog, and blizzards with winds frequently exceeding 100 mph on a barren volcanic island. ATG members and their families were killed for their assistance to our Army until the Japanese were defeated, 15 months later. Until this year, they had been receiving pension monies for this brave action and they served their country valiantly. These men also served in other branches of our Armed Forces to complete 20 years of service. For our government to now deny them this pension in their old age is a travesty.

If these heroes can have their pensions docked against the wishes of Congress, it jeopardizes the retirement pay of many other service categories now being paid, perhaps when they are needing it the most. Just as importantly, it raises questions in the minds of those now serving during time of war. If this unmerited action on the part of the White House is allowed to continue unchallenged, more "cuts" may be forthcoming.

The Alaska VFW welcomes support from citizens. **You can help by contacting your local members of the US Congress.** Any support from individuals across the nation would be most appreciated. For those of us,

who have also served our country in foreign wars, it is imperative to stand together. As civilians, you also speak for men and women currently serving in all branches, including National Guard and Reserves who are encouraged not speak out against actions of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.

On behalf of VFW Post 9182, Jeb Strickland, former Vietnam Marine Corps aviator, has been serving as the main point of contact with comrades in Alaska and he outlined the following, which the veterans of the VFW Post 9182 passed by unanimous vote. "We support our combat brethren who have served valiantly in perilous weather, harsh terrain, against a hostile enemy on American soil, namely the Alaskan Territorial Guard. The Veterans of All American VFW Post 9182, hereby and en masse request that the pensions of the Alaskan Territorial Guardsmen be restored in full with back pay for any amounts which total less than the full pension as prescribed by US Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) and US Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). Any qualifications for retirement pay or pensions or benefits are to include all such duty and all additional previously recognized federally duty shall count toward pension or retirement purposes. All duty for the United States of America in a federally recognized unit, to include battle actions against the enemy, shall not go unrecognized by any elected or appointed official in the United States. Any attempt to diminish the pay or the dedication or service of men and women who have served with honor in the armed forces of the United States of America will not be accepted by our membership. Any elected official who does not do his or her utmost to enforce dedication to those armed forces members will not be treated favorably by the many members of VFW Post 9182."

For more information contact Colonel Peyton Lumpkin, Commander, VFW Post 9182 at 281-391-8387. Post meetings are held at the VFW Hall on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

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