

Department of the Army
Headquarters, U.S. Army Garrison
462 Hamilton Road, Suite 120
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503
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Fort Sill Circular 608-15-01

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Personal Affairs

FORT SILL VOTING ASSISTANCE PLAN (2016-2017)

Summary. This circular establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities concerning the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Applicability. This circular is applicable to all Fort Sill organizations and tenants.

Suggested Improvements. The proponent of this circular is the Directorate of Human Resources (DHR). Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to DHR, Administrative Services Division (ASD), 4700 Mow-Way Road, Fort Sill, OK 73503.

Distribution. This circular is distributed solely through the DHR, ASD Homepage at http://sill-www.army.mil/dhr/Admin_Svcs_Div/Index.html.

1. Purpose. This circular provides instructions for implementing the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for all Fort Sill assigned and tenant organizations. The principle purpose for the implementation of the program is to make voting registration, information, material, and assistance readily available to all eligible Army voters; and, to provide service members every opportunity and encouragement to register and cast a ballot in elections conducted within their home state. The FVAP operates in 2-year cycles starting in even numbered years when elections for federal offices are held and concluding in odd numbered years.

2. References. Required and related publications; and, prescribed and referenced forms are listed in appendix A.

3. Explanation of Abbreviations and Terms. Abbreviations and terms used in this circular are explained in the glossary.

4. Responsibilities. Commanders at all levels are responsible for providing voting assistance to their Soldiers and voting age dependents.

a. The Garrison Commander (GC) will—

(1) Ensure the Voting Assistance Program is conducted within the legal limits discussed in paragraph 4 of these guidelines as well as the limits imposed by the referenced publications. The GC will ensure that the Installation Voting Assistance Officer coordinates closely with the SJA throughout the tenure of the program.

(2) Appoint, in writing, an Installation Voting Assistance Officer (IVAO) to manage the voting assistance program throughout the election year. The IVAO will be either a Soldier in the rank of Major/Master Sergeant or above or a Civilian employee in the grade of GS11 or above. An alternate IVAO should also be appointed.

(3) Ensure both the primary and alternate IVAOs attend a FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop during years with elections for Federal offices.

(4) Provide an active command information program concerning voting. To accomplish this requirement, the GC will—

(a) Direct the PAO to publicize all aspects of the current voting information program in a timely and effective manner.

(b) Designate 27 June 2016 – 5 July 2016 as “Armed Forces Voters Week”. The IVAO, in coordination with the Senior Voting Assistance Officers (SVAOs), plans installation-level voting assistance activities to raise voter awareness. Each command is required to appoint a SVAO for their command (i.e., TRADOC, FORSCOM, MEDDAC, etc.).

(c) Designate 26 September 2016 – 3 October 2016 as “Absentee Voting Week”. The IVAO, in coordination with the SVAOs, uses media to inform voters that they should return the voted ballot immediately and to notify those who have not received their ballot to use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot.

(5) Provide orientation training for garrison UVAOs appointed after the 2016 FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop was conducted.

(6) Ensure adequate blank voting assistance forms are available for all garrison units on the installation. As a minimum, each garrison UVAO must have—

(a) A copy of the 2016-2017 Voting Assistance Guide. This guide is available and may be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.fvap.gov/vao/index.html>

(b) Paper versions of Federal Post Card Applications (FPCAs) to provide to all requesting Soldiers within their

(c) Paper versions of Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots (FWABs) to provide to all requesting Soldiers within their unit.

(d) Other promotional material as desired.

(7) Prepare and submit required status reports on planning efforts, successes, problems, and recommendations. **The report dates to be determined.**

(8) Designate at least one well-advertised fixed location on the installation where absentee voting material and assistance are available to all military personnel and their Family members no later than (NLT) 1 June 2016.

(9) Notify SVAOs of the deadline for mailing absentee ballots for a general Federal election in order to allow for a reasonable amount of time for the receipt of ballots to State and local election offices. Normally, absentee ballots should be mailed no later than 14 days prior to the election if mailed in CONUS and 14-30 days prior to the election if mailed from OCONUS.

b. The Fort Sill IVAO is the principal assistant to the Garrison Commander and will—

(1) Be included in the pre-existing processing activities of reporting personnel.

(2) Provide written information on voter registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures to include: absentee voting material and voting assistance to all Soldiers, eligible Family members, and DA Civilian employees to include internet access where practicable.

(3) Provide the opportunity and assistance to request voter registration and the updating of the individual's voter registration information by completing an FPCA and request absentee ballots.

(4) Provide the FPCA to all garrison Soldiers and their eligible Family members (within the U.S.) who request voting assistance. DA Civilian employees within the U.S. will be provided the National Voter Registration Form. The form can be downloaded via www.eac.gov.

(5) Provide assistance in completing the provided forms to these citizens.

(6) Mail the completed form to the appropriate State office if requested by the citizen.

(7) Publish the location, address, hours of operation, phone number, and e-mail address for the IVAO on the installation internet/intranet home pages.

(8) Coordinate and lead all installation-level voting matters including but not limited to setting up voting workshops, special emphasis weeks, displaying banners and other promotional material.

(9) Incorporate the services of the Public Affairs Office (PAO), SJA, publications account manager, and the communications and message centers to publicize the opportunity to register to vote.

(10) Provide voting assistance to eligible garrison Family members on the installation by leveraging the Army Community Service (ACS) Office and garrison Family Readiness Groups (FRGs).

(11) Advertise and publicize FVAP voting workshops on the installation and as widely as possible to ensure maximum participation.

(12) Conduct local voting workshops and program orientations to train garrison UVAOs if the garrison UVAOs cannot attend FVAP workshops.

(13) Ensure contact information is listed with military installation operators.

(14) Maintain and keep current a listing of all SVAOs.

(15) Ensure adequate voting supplies are available to the garrison UVAOs.

(16) Prepare required reports.

c. TRADOC, FORSCOM, MEDDAC, and tenant commanders will appoint a SVAO, who will be the principal assistant to their senior commanders and will—

(1) As prescribed by AR 608-20, manage the voting assistance program within their respective command and ensure that voting continuity folders are maintained by their UVAOs.

(2) As the lead, provide advice and direct voting support within his/her command and support major events that their command. SAVOs may consult the Army Voting Action Officer for voting guidance or information as needed.

(3) Conduct voting workshops and program orientations in order to train internal UVAOs if UVAOs cannot attend the FVAP workshops.

(4) Submit, through their respective commands, a consolidated monthly “Measures of Success” report for their respective command. Contact your Command’s SVAO for reporting procedures.

(5) Conduct an Army Voter Registration Month in June 2016 as prescribed by AR 608-20.

(6) Establish, within the command, a UVAO network and communications capability to quickly disseminate voting information throughout the command as prescribed by AR 608-20.

(7) Administer the Army Voting Assistance Program on a nonpartisan basis.

UVAOs should contact the local SJA for advice on compliance with the Army Voting Assistance Program.

(8) Encourage subordinate UVAOs to advise voters to electronically transmit voting materials to their local election officials (state dependent).

(9) Ensure contact information is listed with military installation operators.

(10) Attend the annual FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop. SVAOs will ensure all their subordinate UVAOs attend this workshop.

(11) Ensure that all internal UVAOs have adequate supplies of voting assistance material. The UVAOs should obtain blank forms and voting posters from their normal publication supply channels or from their SVAO. The SVAO will ensure that their UVAOs have created their continuity folders and that they are complete and up-to-date. See paragraph e(8) below.

d. Brigade, battalion, and battery/company commanders will appoint a UVAO, as prescribed in AR 608-20, paragraph 2-14, who will—

(1) As prescribed by AR 608-20, attend a FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop within 90 days of appointment. Training can also be completed via CD-ROM, on-line or attending a service workshop. The preferred method of training is the FVAP workshop. However, each method provides the UVAO with the knowledge needed to perform his/her duties successfully. Access the on-line training via www.fvap.gov.

(2) Actively collect and share “Good Ideas” with other UVAOs and your SVAO. The “Good Ideas” should be submitted with your monthly report to your SVAO.

(3) Encourage personnel on permanent change of station orders to submit a FPCA to inform their local election office of their new address. UVAOs should advise voters to indicate on their FPCA if they desire to be notified of all elections.

(4) Work closely with their unit mail clerk to ensure that “Undeliverable as Addressed” voting materials are returned to the Fort Sill Post Office immediately with the “Forward to” address clearly written on the envelope. UVAOs will utilize all available resources to obtain the correct forwarding address for voting materials. This includes ensuring that **all** Soldiers (whether they live in the barracks or housing) in/out-process through their unit mailroom.

(5) Ensure in- hand or electronic delivery of FPCAs to all uniformed absentee voters and their eligible Family members no later than 15 January of each year.

(6) Deliver the FPCA no later than 15 Sep of even numbered years to those serving within the territorial limits of the U.S.

(7) Ensure contact information is listed on voting posters throughout the command area.

(8) Ensure they have adequate supplies of voting assistance material. The UVAOs should obtain blank forms and voting posters through their normal publication supply channels or from their SVAO. At a minimum, each UVAO must have a continuity folder that has the following items:

- (a) A copy of the Voting Assistance Guide (2016-2017).
- (b) All promotion material needed (i.e., posters, etc.).
- (c) FPCAs and FWABs.
- (d) VAO designation letter.
- (e) Election date calendar.
- (f) Good ideas and lessons learned.
- (g) Voting news releases.
- (h) Information on your voter activities.
- (i) VAO training certificate.

(9) Immediately notify the IVAO and their SVAO whenever a voter is denied the opportunity to vote in any state.

(10) Train all Soldiers (including activated National Guard and Reserve component personnel) on absentee registration and voting procedures during years of elections to federal offices.

(11) Provide training and voting assistance for units preparing for deployment where voting materials and accessibility to register may be limited.

(12) Provide FPCAs for both BCT/AIT Soldiers and their voting age Family members prior to graduation starting with classes graduating after 1 August 2016.

5. FVAP Program Missions. There are two missions associated with the FVAP, which are as follows:

a. The first mission, which is the primary focus of the program, is the traditional voting assistance provided to Soldiers and their eligible Family members. The unit voting assistance officer (UVAO) provides individual voting assistance and technical guidance.

b. The second mission is to educate every Soldier about the importance and usefulness of voting and the opportunities they have to participate in the voting franchise if they so desire. Commanders must become personally involved in both

aspects in order to meet this mission and ensure that it is accomplished within the limits of law and policy.

6. Prohibited Practices. The primary goal of the program is to actively assist Soldiers, as well as other eligible individuals, to register and vote without violating federal statute or regulation. Those involved with providing voter assistance must comply with the prohibitions listed below, as well as those listed in the references above in order to meet this goal. Commanders and UVAOs may obtain assistance from the Staff Judge Advocate office in applying these guidelines while implementing the Voting Assistance Program.

a. Commanders and VAOs are prohibited from maintaining lists to keep specific account of Soldier's decisions regarding registration and voting. The only reporting that this program requires is the total number of Soldier participation in the voter assistance program – regardless of whether they choose to register to vote later.

b. Commanders will not permit the use of installation facilities by any candidate (either incumbents or new office seekers) or members of their staffs and campaign representative for: political assemblies or meetings; media events; fund-raising dinners; parties or social events; causes, no matter who the sponsor; press conferences; or similar activities. Commanders must coordinate with the Installation Public Affairs Office (PAO) for guidance when planning the official visit of a current official who is also a candidate for public office.

c. Commanders will decline requests for support to any political event that may imply association with any partisan group.

d. VAOs will not engage in or support any activities that could be interpreted as associating the Department of the Army with any political causes or candidates.

e. Commissioned, warrant, and noncommissioned officers of the Armed Forces will not use their military authority to influence or attempt to influence any other member to vote or not to vote, or to require any member to march to any polling place or place of voting. Such activity violates the criminal laws of the United States (18 U.S.C. 609). This does not prohibit individuals in their personal capabilities from discussing political issues or the candidates for public office, but leaders must be cautious because of the influence they have over subordinates even in informal conversation. For additional guidance on this issue, contact the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) office.

f. VAOs must be aware that the types of voting literature that may be distributed is very limited: Department of Defense (DoD) policy prohibits active duty personnel from distributing **any** campaign literature, whether you consider it partisan or not. Active duty personnel will only distribute information relating to the process of registering to vote (i.e., Voting Assistance Guide).

g. Commanders or VAOs will **not** contact State or local officials or agencies about voting matters. They should contact the FVAP office for assistance. The FVAP office

is the sole DoD representative for obtaining and distributing voting information from these officials.

7. Army Forces Voter Week (27 June 2016 – 5 July 2016). The Army Voter Registration Week will be the primary time for all levels of UVAOs to assist their commanders in providing focus on the mission to education Soldiers and assist those who desire/need assistance in requesting their State ballots.

a. During this week, commanders and their UVAOs must ensure that all Soldiers are given the opportunity to register and request a ballot from their State election officials.

b. If the Soldier desires to register, they must do so in person or by using the FPCA. Information for completing the FPCA, for residents in all States and U.S. territories can be found in the Voting Assistance Guide (2014-15) and on-line at the following website:

<http://www.fvap.gov/vao/index.html>

8. Absentee Voters Week (26 September 2016 – 3 October 2016). This is the primary time for UVAOs to encourage Soldiers and Family members to vote and mail their absentee ballots. During this week, commanders and their UVAOs must ensure that all Soldiers have received their absentee ballot from their State or, if not, ensure their Soldiers have access to the on-line FWAB or are provided a paper copy of the FWAB.

9. Coordinating Instructions. The following instructions are phased in as to coincide with major events throughout the election cycle. It serves as a guide to be adapted and amplified as local circumstances dictate. The Army Voting Assistance Plan divides the voting cycle into four distinct phases.

a. Phase I (December 2015 – Spring 2016).

(1) Appoint IVAO, SVAO, and UVAOs to serve throughout the election cycle of 2016-2017. Ensure IVAO, SVAOs, and UVAOs receive FVAP training and training regarding the legal land policy limits on political activities of uniformed service members and Civilian employees. Servicing SJAs should be used to the maximum extent possible to provide this training.

(2) CONUS commanders must inform their Soldiers they can obtain a copy of the FPCA on the above website or that they can obtain a paper copy of the FPCA from their UVAO during the installations' Voter Emphasis Week. UVAOs, commanders, and other leaders must be cautious by ensuring that this delivery is done in an informational non-coercive way. The idea is to get the forms to Soldiers who want them without coercing Soldiers to use the forms.

(3) Commanders should review their command's voting assistance program in order to ensure that the Army Voting Assistance Program is implemented as

specified throughout this plan.

(4) Commanders should begin their command's voting assistance programs concerning primary elections as directed by DoD and Army leadership. These informational efforts should be repeated, as necessary, to inform and educate Soldiers and their Family members on how to exercise their right to vote in primaries and general elections. Family members should be encouraged to participate in these programs.

b. Phase II (January 2016 – October 2016).

(1) UVAOs must attend a FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop.

(2) Concentrate efforts to provide absentee registration and voting assistance to Soldiers for State primary elections (January-October 2016).

(3) Ensure Soldiers have access to the FWAB either via on-line or paper. The FWAB may be used only under the conditions specified in the Voting Assistance Guide (2016-2017) or by the individual States.

(4) Conduct the Armed Forces Voters Week (27 June 2016 – 5 July 2016). If necessary, designate other special days September and October to emphasize voting registration and the importance of voting. Develop programs to support the objective of creating awareness of the process and requirements for Soldiers to register to participate in the general election. Publicize the importance of early action on the part of voters to obtain a ballot for the general election well in advance of election deadlines.

c. Phase III (October 2016 – Election Day).

(1) Continue to widely disseminate voting information to include Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery schools, hospitals, reception battalions, and in-processing stations.

(2) Report the success of the Armed Forces Voters Week.

(3) Remind Soldiers as how they can obtain a copy of the FPCA NLT 15 September 16.

(4) UVAOs should advise absentee voters serving in the United States that their absentee ballot must be mailed a minimum of 14 days prior to the ballot return deadline set by their State. Absentee voters outside of the United States must mail their ballot in sufficient time to vote and return it to be counted by the State election officials.

(5) UVAOs should know how and when to use the FWAB and recommend its usage if the voter meets the criteria and does not receive the regular absentee ballot in a sufficient amount time so that it can be returned and counted by State election

officials.

d. Phase IV (November 2016 – December 2016).

(1) Assist, as requested, with post-election surveys of UVAOs. The survey's findings will be used in formulating plans for future voting assistance programs and as a part of the report on the FVAP.

(2) If requested, provide an after-action report.

10. Administration.

a. Voting Action Line. UVAOs who encounter difficulties in preparing and carrying out their voting assistance program may address problems or questions to their SVAO or if unavailable to the IVAO by calling (580) 442-0148 or by email, usarmy.sill.imcom-west.mail.dhr-vote-sill@mail.mil.

b. Delivery of FPCAs. The FVAP requires the UVAO to ensure Soldiers have access to the FPCA either via on-line or paper copies. Therefore, the UVAOs must develop plans to assure that each Soldier is aware of the on-line access or has received a paper copy of the FPCA by 15 January 2016. UVAOs should have a roster of all their Soldiers and include a check block to show that each Soldier was contacted. The UVAOs should also contact the majority of their Soldiers during the Armed Forces Voters Week (27 June 2016 – 5 July 2016).

c. Electronic Transmission of Election Materials. Often, transmitting voting material by mail prevents timely receipt and return of materials. When such conditions exist, possibly preventing an individual from voting, electronic transmission may be possible. The Voting Assistance Guide has complete details on the possibilities of using this method that is allowed by certain States.

11. Points of Contact. The primary and alternate Installation Voting Assistance Officers are located in the Directorate of Human Resources, Hartell Hall, Bldg 4700, Room G35. The primary IVAO maintains a listing of all SVAOs and brigade-level VAOs.

a. Senior Installation Voting Assistance Officer: Ms. Lisa A. Thomas, (580) 558-7002, e-mail (lisa.a.thomas.civ@mail.mil).

b. Alternate Installation Voting Assistance Officer: Mr. Earl R. Emerson, (580) 442-0148, e-mail (earl.r.emerson.civ@mail.mil).

Appendix A References

Section I Required Publications

AR 608-20

Voting by Personnel of the Armed Forces

DoD Directive 1000.04

Federal Voting Assistance Program

DoD Directive 1344.10

Political Activities by Members of the Army Forces

2016-2017 Army Voting Action Plan

Section II Related Publications

This section contains no entries.

Section III Prescribed Forms

Standard Form 76

Registration and Absentee Ballot Request – Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

Standard Form 186

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Section IV Referenced Forms

This section contains no entries.

Glossary

Section I Abbreviations

ACS

Army Community Services

AIT

Advance Individual Training

ASD

Administrative Services Division

AR

Army Regulation

ARIMS

Army Records Information Management System

BCT

Basic Combat Training

CONUS

Continental United States

DA

Department of the Army

DHR

Directorate of Human Resources

DoD

Department of Defense

FPCA

Federal Post Card Application

FORSCOM

Forces Command

FRG

Family Readiness Group

FWAB

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

GC

Garrison Commander

IMCOM

Installation Management Command

IVAO

Installation Voting Assistance Official

MEDDAC

Medical Activity

NLT

No longer than

OCONUS

Outside of the Continental United States

PAO

Public Affairs Official

SJA

Staff Judge Advocate

SVAO

Senior Voting Assistance Official

TRADOC

Training and Doctrine Command

USAG

United States Army Garrison

U.S.

United States

UVAO

Unit Voting Assistance Official

Section II Terms

This section contains no entries.

Section III

Special Abbreviations and Terms

This section contains no entries.

IMSI-HR



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