



DoD Announces Increase in Death Gratuity and SGLI

The Department of Defense announced July 1 a significant increase in the death gratuity for the survivors of service members killed in action and the Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage for service members deployed to designated combat zones.



The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror and Tsunami Relief Act 2005 (Public Law 109-13) increases this immediate cash payment from \$12,420 to \$100,000 for survivors of those whose death is as a result of hostile actions and occurred in a designated combat operation or combat zone or while training for combat or performing hazardous duty.

The supplemental also increases the maximum amount of SGLI coverage from \$250,000 to \$400,000 for all service members effective Sept. 1, 2005, and provides that the department will pay or reimburse the premiums to service members who are deployed in a designated combat zone for \$150,000 of SGLI coverage.

Until the effective date for the SGLI increase, the supplemental provides for a special death gratuity of \$150,000, retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001, for survivors of those whose death is in a designated combat operation or combat zone or occurred while training for combat or performing hazardous duty.

The Secretary of Defense has designated all areas where service members are in receipt of the combat zone tax exclusion as qualifying combat zones and all members deployed outside the United States on orders in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom as participating in qualifying combat operations.

Effective immediately, survivors of service members who die in these qualifying zones or operations will receive the increased benefits.