

Military OneSource Video — DOD Survivor Symposium

Video transcript

Mariah:

Welcome to the DOD Survivor Symposium, “Navigating Survivor Benefits and Resources Together,” hosted by the office of Casualty, Mortuary Affairs, and Military Funeral Honors. My name is Mariah, and I will be moderating the symposium today. First, the DOD Survivor Symposium event disclaimer.

The presence of links and information in presentations during the Defense Department Survivor Symposium does not constitute endorsement by the DOD. The opinions expressed in this presentation and on the following slides are solely those of the presenter.

This meeting is being recorded. During the symposium, attendees will be unable to use their microphones and video. The chat function and raise hand functions are also disabled. Please submit any questions you have in the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen. The panelists will respond to select questions from the Q&A box at the end of each of our three topics today. Responses to additional questions will be answered at the end of all briefings before the conclusion of the symposium. A recording of this symposium will be posted on Military OneSource. I will now turn the floor over to Ms. Deborah Skillman, director of the Office of Casualty, Mortuary Affairs, and Military Funeral Honors.

Deborah Skillman:

Welcome, everyone. I'm so happy that all of you could join us today. So as part of the Defense Department's commitment to survivors of active-duty deaths, the DOD is hosting its first Survivor Symposium. And online today, we have surviving family members and service providers, hence our theme, “Navigating Survivor Benefits and Resources Together.”

The symposium will provide a platform for survivors and service providers to learn and gain information on a variety of important topics. So during this focused, three-hour virtual conference, experts will address how survivor benefits change when you remarry, how a parent or guardian can apply for the death gratuity on behalf of a surviving child, and how a beneficiary survivor annuitant keeps their account up to date with the Defense Finance Accounting Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

So before we dive into the topics of the day, I want to introduce you to our Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, Mrs. Patty Barron, who will be providing opening remarks. Mrs. Barron, welcome.

Patricia Barron:

Thanks so much, Deb. Hello, everybody. I'm so, so excited to be here with you today. For those of you that might not know me, again, I'm Patty Barron, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy. But really one of the main titles that I honor is I'm an Army spouse. I followed my active-duty soldier for 30 years throughout his career. We raised three kids in the military community, and now, I'm just absolutely honored to be here with you today in this role. I also am excited to kick off this very first Department of Defense Survivor Symposium. What a fantastic idea, and I know it's something that Deb and her team, Lisa Valentine specifically, have been really working on very, very hard, and it has been a long time in coming. But you know what our goal is is to bring our survivor community together, along with all of the service providers that are also a part of the community, because they are so committed to assisting you.

But as you know, we can't assist you in a vacuum, that, you know, we just really do need to hear from you, understand where your challenges are, understand where some of the roadblocks are, try as much as we can to get rid of those roadblocks, educate you on the way forward, so that everybody can benefit, and that you and your family can have the best current situation as possible. As Deb said, the theme is "Navigating Survivor Benefits and Resources Together."

I just want to stress the together part, so don't be shy during this three hours. Make yourselves heard, ask your questions, provide comments, perspectives. That is why we are all here, because we really need to have that kind of information from you, so that we can address all of your challenges and questions, and provide you with something that's so important to all of us, which is peace of mind as best as you can have it.

So really look forward to having more occasions like this. I know this is not going to be the very first one, because you are a vital part of our global military community, and your feedback is so invaluable to us. Again, we're so honored to serve you, and dedicated to supporting you through the casualty and mortuary, through the Casualty Assistance program and through Military OneSource as best as we can. Thanks for joining us today. I am so incredibly honored to be here with you, and to support you in any possible way that I can. And so, Deb, back over to you.

Deborah:

Thank you so much, ma'am. I really appreciate those comments. So we're going to get started. And so, Mariah, I think our first speaker is hopefully ready to go. Thank you so

much, and looking forward to any questions. Please feel free to put them in the chat. Ask questions, and we will address them as they come up. Thank you so much.

Mariah:

Thank you so much, Ms. Skillman and Mrs. Barron. Our first topic today is How Remarrying Changes Your Survivor Benefits. Our panelists are Julie Burandt-Partin, Director, Defense Finance Accounting Service, Retired and Annuitant Pay, Nathan Lynix, Analyst, DFAS, Retired and Annuitant Pay, Scott Bell, Office of Survivor Assistance, Pension and Fiduciary Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, Bob Eves, Management and Program Analysis, Identity Policy, Defense Manpower Data Center, and Jennifer Harlow, Project Manager, MyServiceBenefits Online Survivor Reports, Survivor Benefits Reports Liaison.

Nathan Lynix:

OK, hello. Good morning, every ... or good afternoon, everybody. It's an honor to speak with you all today. I'm Nathan Lynix. As Mariah said, I'm an analyst with the Department of Defense Finance and Accounting Service. I started with DFAS in 2005, and I've worked for Retired and Annuity Pay for about 15 years, and spent a lot of time working on the annuitant side in the processing area and in the review team as well.

As she said, we also have on the line the Director of Retired Pay, Ms. Julie Burandt-Partin, and Shannon Bradford from our Corporate Communications team is on as well, and they'll be helping to answer any questions you may have in the chat section.

So as she said, today, I'd like to talk to you about how marriage can affect your Survivor Benefit Plan, and I'm going to be turning off my camera. I just wanted to come on to give you a face to go with the voice, but just for bandwidth issues, I want to turn the camera off while we're going through the presentation.

So ... So I'm going to talk first about how marriage affects SBP for spouses versus child SBP. All spouses under the age of 55 need to complete an annual verification. It used to be called a Certificate of Eligibility. Now, it's called the Survivor Benefit Plan Marital Status Update, and I'm going to talk more about that change later. But for right now, if you are 55 or over, you do not need to complete that annual verification, and if you do get remarried, there'll be no effect on your SBP.

However, if you're under 55, DFAS does need to know as soon as possible if you do get married. SBP will stop the month that you get married, and timely notification will reduce the possibility of any overpayments. It's important to know that if the member had spouse and child coverage for the Survivor Benefit Plan, the children will become eligible to receive SBP if the spouse gets married. But DFAS needs an application from each eligible child annuitant. The application should include a DD Form 2656-7 and also a direct deposit form and a FastStart direct and a IRS Form W-4P. All of these forms are

available on our website at www.dfas.mil, and you can just look off to the left side there.

There's a Forms Library, and like I said, all the forms are in there, and I'm going to be talking more about the forms. The 2656-7 especially has a Form Wizard option, and the Form Wizard is an online tool that we're working on that helps take the form out of the form, if you will. The Form Wizard will ask you a series of questions, and then in the background, it'll complete the form. And actually the 2656-7 has an electronic signature option as well, so you can sign that electronically, and submit it to us online. And like I said, I'll be going through that process a little bit more in a later presentation.

But one thing, did you know that ... Oh, next. Yeah, we're, right, we're on the right slide, OK. Yeah, that one.

Did you know that if a marriage ends, a spouse annuitant can reapply for SBP? So if there is a death or divorce, spouses can reapply for SBP. The same documents are needed to reapply, that DD Form 2656-7, direct deposit form, and the W-4P from the IRS. All of these, like I said, are on the website, and in addition, we would need a copy of a death certificate, or a divorce decree, to show that the spouse became eligible again for SBP and when that eligibility became effective. Be sure to include the member's SSN on all documents that you send in to DFAS.

Next slide. So if you have any questions, you can submit them through askDFAS, and I'll be talking about askDFAS again later. There's ... or also you can call our customer care center at 800-321-1080. Just to reemphasize here, timely notification of any changes in your eligibility are very important.

If you become eligible again and there is a child being paid SBP, that could create an overpayment if we continue to pay the spouse or the child after the spouse becomes eligible again. And also, surviving spouses may not realize that this is even an option, that they can reapply for SBP, and there is a six-year time limit on payments that DFAS can make. So please be sure to let DFAS know if there's any changes in your marital status.

Next slide, all right. So child annuitants are entitled to SBP through the age of 18, and then from ages 18 to 22, the SBP can continue, but they, a child, could lose their eligibility if they're not enrolled in school full time, if they join the military or if they get married, and this also applies to incapacitated children as well. And so, child annuitants need to verify their marital status with DFAS after the age of 14 through that Survivor Benefit Plan Marital Status Update, unless if they're between the ages of 18 and 22, there's a line on the school certificate to verify marital status.

So I know I just put a lot of information out there. Where were we? If you have any questions, you can put them in the chat, and we also, here, hang on. Hang on. Wait just a second. OK. Like I said, if there are any questions, just put them in the chat, and we'll respond to them.

Lisa Valentine:

So Nathan —

Nathan:

Yeah?

Lisa:

We talk about the age 55 is, we know that that age was defined by law, but is it the day that the individual turns 55, or is it the day after their birthday?

Nathan:

I'm thinking. So the day they turn 55 is the, you know, the day that it no longer applies.

Lisa:

Thank you.

Nathan:

Age 55 and over, they can get married without it affecting their SBP. So it wouldn't be the day after. It would be the day that, 'cause that, they turn 55 on their birthday, so ...

Lisa:

Correct, thank you.

Nathan:

Yeah.

Deborah:

And Lisa, why don't we ask some of these other questions that are showing up in the Q&A as well? So there's several here. One of the questions was "When interacting with military service programs, what is his or her status?" So, for example, "Navy Lodge told me I was now considered active duty with my deceased spouse rank. I wasn't sure if I should be using retired status or dependent."

Nathan:

I'm not associated with Navy Lodge. I wouldn't be able to answer that.

Deborah:

And this may be a DMDC question, as far as status on ID cards.

Bob Eves:

Good afternoon, Deb. This is Bobby Eves from DMDC. When the surviving spouse comes to the ID card site and is reissued an ID card, the status on that ID card will reflect active duty, the abbreviation AD, and a dash, and the abbreviation for deceased, DEC. That, I hope, answers the question asked in the chat, over.

Deborah:

Thanks, Bob, appreciate that. And we had another question about "Is there a Quick Reference Guide?" And I think ... is that in relationship to SBP annuities? I'm assuming so.

Nathan:

Yeah, there is a Quick Reference Guide on our website at dfas.mil/retiredpay/.

Julie Burandt-Partin:

Yeah, and this is Julie. I'll just add in that's for the DFAS entitlements only, and Nathan just said it, SBP. But we have tons of quick reference tools out there.

Lisa:

Can you post that in the Q&A for the audience, please, what that site is, just in case they don't have it?

Julie:

Sure, thank you.

Lisa:

Thank you.

Nathan:

I'm just going down the questions. I see there is a question about receiving healthcare coverage. That healthcare coverage is not done through DFAS, and not ... so I wouldn't be able to answer that. "Do the amount of assets affect SBP payment amount, or is it always 55% of the base pay?" It's always 55% of the base amount. Members can, they can choose a base amount at retirement of less than their full gross pay.

But the vast majority put, choose their full gross pay, and it's 55% of that. I have no insight on why Congress does anything. I wouldn't even dream of trying to answer why Congress does what they do. Let me read this question. "If a survivor marries under age 55 in a place of worship, but does not record it with the state, are they still viewed as un-remarried by DEERS and DFAS if they ..." I think this question about if a survivor marries under the age of 55 in a place of worship, but does not record it with the state, I suppose that's ... I'm not sure. This —

Julie:

Honestly, Nate, I'm going to jump in and not answer this question, but tell the —

Nathan:

Yeah, I wasn't going to answer it, either.

Julie:

Tell our customers what we in DFAS would look for is a marriage certificate always, right? So anytime —

Nathan:

Right.

Julie:

... a status changes, we would always need a marriage certificate, a, you know, a certificate of death if someone passes away, or a divorce decree. Like we're always going to look for that official documentation. So there was a lot in that question, but from an entitlement standpoint, we'd always look for a certificate of marriage, an official, like, you know —

Nathan:

Right.

Julie:

From the state certificate of marriage.

Nathan:

And I, yeah, and then I can answer from the other way. You know, if you're married and you get separated, separated is married, so you're not divorced until you're actually divorced through the courts, so ...

Deborah:

And I think Bob has raised his hand. Bob, go ahead.

Bob:

Yes, if I can add to that. ID card policy requires, and this should be clear to the sponsors, but I wanted to share that a qualifying life event needs to be reported to your local ID card site within 30 days of that qualifying life event. Qualifying life events include the death of a sponsor, that, a divorce, a remarriage, an annulment, and requires the individual to bring original supporting documentation documenting that qualifying life event. So we're looking for that. Beyond that, an individual, and in the case that was being discussed, if a ... when a marriage is not reported in a timely fashion that changes an individual's status. That individual could be liable for any benefits paid while they were ... past that qualifying life event date. Over.

Voice:

Thank you, Bob.

Voice:

Thank you, Bob.

Nathan:

Yeah, thank you. The next question, "How can you apply for a child if there is already a spouse receiving SBP?" You can't. You can only apply for child coverage after a spouse

becomes ineligible. So if a spouse passes away or gets married, that would cause them to become ineligible. Then if there's an eligible child, and the member had paid for spouse and child coverage, that's when the child can come in.

The next question, "I hear there is a movement from TAPS trying to pass a law to change the age." Yeah, any pending legislation, we don't have any kind of opinion on. Once Congress changes the law, we'll do whatever the law says. The next question, "If one remarries after 55 ..." Oh, this is about health insurance. You would have to contact TRICARE to answer that question.

Deborah:

But I think we have VA online. Scott, can you provide any insight into that? Is VA able to provide any insight?

Mariah:

Ms. Skillman, it looks like VA dropped off for a second. We're going to work on getting them back online.

Deborah:

OK, and then we'll put a response in the chat.

Mariah:

Perfect —

Nathan:

Oh —

Lisa:

And if it's OK, Nate, we could go ahead, and we have three other briefers about the same topic, and then what we'd like to do is to take all of the questions afterwards, so this way we might be able to answer some of those questions ahead of time. So with that, if we can go to the next slide. And, oh, that's the VA slide. So VA is not, we lost them.

Nathan:

And Scott just chatted that he lost presenter status if you can elevate him in the Q&A, he's wrote that.

Mariah:

Perfect, we're working on that now. Just one second.

Lisa:

OK, perfect.

Nathan:

If you want, I'll keep going through questions until the VA is ready.

Lisa:

Thanks.

Nathan:

All right. The next question was "If one remarries after 50 ..." Oh no, I'm sorry. We were just talking about it. "Would I keep my DIC if I remarry along with my SBP?" The DIC is through the VA. I'll let them answer that question.

Lisa:

VA's ready.

Nathan:

OK, very good.

Lisa:

Go ahead, Scott.

Scott Bell:

Sorry, Lisa, thank you so much. I hope you all can hear me OK. I'm terribly sorry about the technical issues. I've had some stability problems on my end. So my apologies. My

name is Scott Bell. I work in the Office of Survivors Assistance, and I'll be talking a little bit about the effects of remarriage before the age of 55 on your Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

As noted on this particular slide, if a surviving spouse were to remarry and remarry before the age of 55 and they are receiving DIC, their DIC will be suspended at the time of their marriage. Timely notification to VA is essential to reduce the possibility of an overpayment.

So as was noted with SBP, you know, there is a possibility that any overpayments received after eligibility has been, your status has officially changed, then those payments may have to be returned. But it's important to remember, though, if you are a surviving spouse, and let's say you have dependent children on your award, your dependent children should still be able to receive their Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. This would only impact the surviving spouse's portion of that DIC.

So it's important after you've made notification to VA and after the date of your remarriage to keep an eye on any payments you're receiving from VA. You should be anticipating a change in the amount that you are receiving. Specifically, you would look for the loss of the spousal portion, which is around \$1,600 per month.

But like I said, if you have dependent children, their payments should still be coming through if you are in fact the parent or guardian for that child and they were on your award.

Next slide. So what happens when a remarriage ends? Well, when a remarriage ends, you are potentially eligible to reinstate your Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. DIC does suspend, as I note, upon a marriage. But if you were to end that subsequent marriage either through death, or divorce or annulment, if you were to notify VA with that information, and complete and submit another 21-534EZ, which is listed on this particular slide, you should be able to have your Dependency and Indemnity Compensation reinstated. You would resubmit those forms to your regional office, or through our claims intake center.

And one other note I'd like to point out, or point to that I should have mentioned on the previous slide, you don't need to move back, by the way. I'll just mention it here. When notifying the Benefits Administration, it's a great idea to provide some kind of written documentation to show that you have made, taken that step.

You can make that notification by calling the 800 number, 800-827-1000. But I would also encourage you sending some type of written documentation as well, noting that you are remarrying. Specifically, you could write a letter, and just a quick note, or if you want to use a technical VA form, you could use VA Form 21-413A or 21-4138. That is a Statement in Support of Claim. It's basically a form that you can use to make an attestation to the VA.

You would put in your identifying information at the top of the claim, and then there's a dialogue box in the bottom, where you can state that, you know, you have remarried on such and such date, and that you are reporting that remarriage to the VA.

And that provides a paper trail, so we can go back and make sure that, you know, if any overpayments do continue that we can make sure that you're not necessarily carrying the burden of repayment, and that then the onus falls on VA to make sure that we are taking care of the documentation on our end. So with that, I will open myself up to questions.

Lisa:

So what we want to do is go to the next briefer, and then we're going to open up to questions.

Scott:

Perfect.

Lisa:

So we're going to begin with our next briefer from DMDC, which will be Mr. Bob Eves. Next slide.

Bob:

Good afternoon. My name's Bob Eves. I'm the identity and ID card policy lead at the Defense Manpower Data Center. I'm a retired naval officer and Navy helicopter pilot. My wife and I raised four children during my career, and I'm currently, in the job I'm in, I've been working ID card policy for about the last 13 years.

So I'd like to talk about remarriage and how it affects ID card benefits. When a surviving un-remarried spouse marries, it will be necessary to visit the nearest military ID card issuing facility to provide a copy of that most recent marriage certificate, and ask that your DEERS record be updated. At that time, the individual waiting on you will then scan that copy of the marriage certificate into the record.

The record will remain, but your status will change from un-remarried to remarried. As the slide says, you'll be asked to surrender your military ID, and with it, under current policy and regulation, you will lose the benefits indicated on the slide. And I think it's important here to note that there is a big difference in two separate healthcare benefits.

One is that healthcare extended by the DOD, which includes as an un-remarried spouse treatment at military treatment facilities, or civilian healthcare through TRICARE, and

the separate and distinct program run by the VA, which is CHAMPVA. So two different benefits. And when you lose that ID card due to remarriage and that health benefit, you're losing those DOD health benefits, not VA health benefits. Of note, children of a deceased military member whose living parent remarries will retain their ID card and their benefits.

So move on to the next slide, please. If that subsequent marriage ends due to divorce, annulment, or death of the new spouse, you may return to an ID card site with the appropriate documentation to reflect the scenario under which that marriage, subsequent marriage, ended, and apply for a new ID card.

You will most likely be asked to provide the marriage certificate and the divorce decree, or death certificate, documenting how that subsequent marriage ended. They will, at that time, when at that appointment, they will update your record. You will receive a new ID card as what we term an unmarried spouse, surviving spouse.

The health benefits will not be reinstated, but in most instances, that ID card will reflect eligibility for commissary, exchange and MWR benefits. Just a note, when you do go to the ID card site, those documents that you're taking with you should be the original document or a certified copy. If they're not, the individual waiting on you will most likely ask you to return with either the original or certified copy. I believe that's all I have for you this afternoon. We'll turn it over to the next speaker. Thank you.

Lisa:

Thank you, our next speaker will be Jennifer Harlow from the Online Survivors Benefit Report.

Jennifer Harlow:

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for having me. We have covered topics previously about remarriage, and one tool that's available to active-duty survivors is the online survivor benefit report. The report displays what the benefits are for the family, surviving family members, typically a spouse, and/or surviving children, And we're able to provide a report that shows what the benefits are now, and how they change over time. So for example, we're talking about effects of remarriage is this topic today.

So the Family Assistance Support Team (URL on the screen is <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/sp-l-casualty-assistance/interactive-online-survivor-benefit-reports/>) is there to answer your questions, and there's websites available for your particular service branch to be able for surviving spouses and guardians of survivors to view a report showing the lifetime stream of benefits. But another option is that a survivor can do "what if" scenarios, "what if" changes. So if you're a surviving spouse, and you're wondering, "I am considering getting remarried in one year," you can contact FAST and/or go to the

website, and run a survivor ... online survivor benefit report that shows what the benefits are, and how they change upon remarriage.

In addition to that, the Family Assistance Support Team is there to support you to answer your questions. Today, we're so fortunate to have all these experts here to be able to explain for each individual department, and the Family Assistance Support Team is there to answer those basic questions and then hand you off with a warm handoff to the agencies that you may need. And just one thing to, you know, talk about ...

Remarriage, if your education status changes for your kids, if they decide, for a surviving child, if they want to go to a military academy, how does that affect their benefits, if a child becomes disabled, all these different things are available to you through the online survivor benefit report.

If you are an active-duty survivor and you do not recall receiving an online survivor benefit report, the phone number for the Family Assistance Support Team is up on the screen, but I'll go ahead and read it out for you, so you can jot that down. It is 877-827-2471, or you can email (<mailto:MFOSBR@MagellanFederal.com>) the FAST team to answer your questions, and we are able to answer questions about remarriage, change in status, and then even just explain what the benefits are now and how they change over time. So we're available to you for that type of support. Thank you.

Mariah:

Thank you so much, panelists. We will now begin a Q&A session on this topic, how remarrying chooses, changes your survivor benefits. So panelists, go ahead and take a look at the Q&A box, and you may begin answering any questions pertaining to the topics you just briefed.

Jennifer:

This is Jen Harlow. I'm just going to speak up again real quick while everyone's reading the questions. One thing to note is that we have covered with the VA and DFAS one topic that is also should be considered is that Social Security remarriage age. The remarriage age to affect benefits for surviving spouses is age 60. So it is different from the Survivor Benefit Plan, which is 55, and the VA Dependency Indemnity Compensation, which is 55. So that is a little bit different. So I just wanted to point that out. Even though it's not one of our topics today, Social Security is affected if the survivor remarries after age 60.

Lisa:

Jen, there's another question. So, "If we are active duty, we have our own profile for OSBR. How can we view it as a survivor instead?"

Jennifer:

OK, so what I'm thinking I'm understanding is that the user is, oh, you're dual, dual military. So how we work that is that you have, for the DS Logon to be able to access the report, you would have to use a secondary email. So for example, instead of using your CAC card, or your government email if you're active duty, then you would have to use ... like, for example, one of my colleagues is an active duty spouse. She has a separate account with the DS Logon using her personal email, and then you connect that to our FAST team, and then we'll make sure you're set up, so it won't get confused with your active-duty profile. And the ... I see the question about the Social Security.

Social Security, you can only draw one benefit. So what I always recommend for surviving spouses is you go into Social Security before your 60th birthday. If you're already 60, that's fine. Still go in and talk to Social Security about what your options are.

If you have your own worker account and you have a surviving spouse account, Social Security will pay you the most advantageous account. So you cannot draw both, but you can, they will direct you to get the highest benefit you're eligible for. And then there's a question from Lark that says, "To piggyback on this, if a child does get adopted, is their Social Security affected?"

This is a question actually we got a while back, and we did some research on. All benefits are not affected. The eligibility for any child is what is their eligibility as the date of death. So if a child subsequently gets adopted by a future spouse, a grandparent, that does not affect the benefits for Social Security, VA Dependency Indemnity Compensation, or education, and Survivor Benefit Plan. Everything stays the same, because it's the status as of the date of death. So a subsequent adoption after the date of death does not affect the benefits.

Lisa:

We have some questions for Bob Eves in reference to ID cards. "Does the survivor go for a new ID card when the spouse passes, or do they wait until they need to renew their card?"

Bob:

I would say that's up to the survivor. The benefits that you're receiving as long as you're un-remarried will be ... will go unchanged. When you do document, or when your spouse, your sponsor's death is documented in DEERS, as I mentioned earlier in response to another question, that affiliation, the sponsor's affiliation with the department, will be changed to the Active Duty-DEC on the card. So I, not ... Again, it's when your comfort level permits you to undertake that, that would be a fine time to do so.

Lisa:

Thank you, Bob, and then “How does a remarried spouse get on the installation to bring his, or her children to the military treatment facility? And do the minor children have exchange privileges?”

Bob:

So at the present time, my colleagues in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, who oversee installation security, advise that a REAL ID Act compliant ID, which all states are now issuing, and a purpose for getting on the installation, in this case of the question, a child's appointment at an MTF, will suffice to get the individual on the installation. They will need to go to the visitor control center to present that REAL ID Act compliant ID, and then once enrolled in the physical access control system for that installation, subsequent visits to the installation, presentation of that REAL ID Act compliant ID should be enough to get you through the gate, just presenting to the guard at the gate and not going to the visitor control center.

The follow-on part of that question with regard to minor children having exchange privileges, the answer is yes. DOD policy has been that, and this is enforced at the service level, not at the OSD level, that we issue ID cards to children once they turn age 10. There are certain circumstances under which a child under the age of 10 can get an ID.

I don't have that list handy at the moment of what those circumstances are. But ... If those shopping privileges, not only exchange, but commissary, exchange and MWR, are available to those minor children, and if they need an ID card to take advantage of it, again, you'd need to make an appointment with the ID card site to get the card issued if it hasn't been already.

The children only require the birth certificate until they're age 18 to get an ID card, and with the appointment and that REAL ID Act compliant ID, the surviving spouse should be able to get on the installation and to the ID card site to get the ID card for the child that would allow them to take advantage of those privileges.

Lisa:

Thank you, Bob. Can you also talk about the DBIDS ID cards? Even those who remarry and next of kin family members, are they eligible for this, or is it just certain services, and what's that process? Thank you.

Bob:

So the DBIDS is, for those who don't know the acronym, it's the Defense Biometric Identification System. It is a ... issues a credential for installation access only. It does not contain any benefits on it, and it is issued at the discretion of the installation commander. So ... There may be, emphasis on may, be some installation commanders who will extend a DBIDS credential to a remarried surviving spouse in these circumstances, so that they're not required to present that REAL ID Act compliant ID. But again, that's at the discretion of the individual installation commander. It's not a enterprise-wide DOD policy, over.

Lisa:

Thank you so much, Bob, and in working with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, they are very concerned. We know that there is the request to have legislation passed for a gold star pass, but it isn't necessarily compliant with the REAL ID Act.

There's only three things that they always teach me to get onto a military base. Number one, you got to have a purpose. Number two, you have to have a REAL ID, and then number three is you have to be fit, and what that means basically is you can't be a felon. And if you meet those three requirements, then you can get on the installation.

Now, the key of it is you do have to go into the visitor center, and you have to do this for each installation. So once you do that one time on an installation, they have your information and then you can go into that installation with that REAL ID Act, again as long as you have that purpose and you remain fit, and of course, you have that REAL ID.

And so, I will tell you that it's about national security, and an ID card for survivors that have, that are beneficiaries, you know, that's why they have the beneficiary ID card, that military ID card, to get in. So we don't have to have a different ID for those who already have the military beneficiary card. So there's another one. It's DEERS ID.me. How do you file for your ID.me account? So I'm not sure if that's a VA question, 'cause I know that I, as a retiree, went through the ID.me. Scott is that something that you can answer, or Bob?

Bob:

Lisa, I'm not familiar. This is Bob. I'm not familiar with the ID.me requirement. For those that are eligible for a DOD ID card, one of our policies identifies the surviving dependents eligible for ID cards and benefits. It includes the spouse, the children, dependent parents. If there are dependent parents, they would have been established as dependent parents prior to the sponsor's passing, as well as permanently incapacitated children over the age of 21. They are eligible for ID cards and benefits, and I'm not sure they'd require the ID.me process. But that's about all I can offer, over.

Lisa:

Thank you. And so, Nancy, what we will do is we will go back and look at that how do you file for your ID.me account, and get back to you. And then “How often do you need to enroll, or reenroll in the compliant ID system?”

Bob:

This is Bob again. I think the question is referring to the installation physical access control system. And again, I believe that's going to vary from installation to installation, but I believe on many installations it's an annual requirement to reenroll, over.

Lisa:

So Bob, most U.S. ID cardholders are now eligible for online renewal. Does this include survivors? Sponsors can submit an online renewal request through the family ID cards page, and the card will be printed and mailed directly to the cardholder.

Bob:

The ID card online reissuance capability is new and expanding, and we went ... Initially, it was available only to individuals who could verify their identity using a common access card. It has recently been expanded to all sponsors who can verify their identity, either with a common access card or with a DS Logon credential. DS Logon credentials are issued by DMDC. It's like a user ID and a password. It's available to surviving spouses and children over the age of 18. But I'm not sure that the online reissuance program has been opened to surviving spouses yet.

We are, at DMDC, are looking to broaden that program as much as we can, where individuals meet the other requirements for ID card reissuance, primarily that they have a picture that is less than 12 years old, and they still, in the system, and they still resemble that picture, to do the online ID card reissuance. If documentation of any core kind is required to renew that ID card, right now, the capability does not have any upload function, where a document could be scanned and uploaded. So if documentation is required to support that ID card reissuance.

If ... the scenario the most, I think, commonly would occur is where a child ages out at 21 but is eligible for continuing benefits as a full-time student, and we need the letter from the educational institution documenting their full-time student enrollment, that would require for ID card reissuance that they return to an ID card site, over.

Lisa:

Thank you, Bob. Mr. Christian has a similar question regarding a surviving mother obtaining her survivor access card, which is the IMCOM Form 44, to escorting her surviving grandchildren, who they have ID cards. He spent hours trying to get her to the correct office to get her card. Any advice there, Bob?

Bob:

No, I'm sorry, I can't address that one. IMCOM is the Army, I believe Installation Management Command. That's an Army program not covered by our office at the OSD level. And unfortunately, I don't have a point of contact that I can point you to to assist in getting that card, over.

Lisa:

Thank you very much, Bob. And what I would recommend, Mr. Christian, is that you might want to reach out to the Army Survivor Outreach Services, to the coordinator for the surviving grandchildren, and seeing if they maybe can assist, since it's a Army program. We have another question in reference to the DBIDS, the Air Force Family program offers DBIDS for next-of-kin siblings. Is there a specific age siblings can obtain a DBIDS card, Bob?

Bob:

That's something, again, that is ... The actual DBIDS program is outside the purview of the DOD ID card policy group, and that's something I'd have to look into, but I, again, you're pointing, the question is pointing at an Air Force program, and I would suggest that for an Air Force-specific program, you're going to have to get an answer from the Air Force. OSD level DBIDS program office will not be able to address an Air Force-specific question, over.

Lisa:

Thank you, Bob. So what we recommend is contacting the Air Force Family Forever program to see about their age requirements. And Air Force Family Forever, we'll have a link in the next briefing where you can reach out to the long-term care managers. So if there is, if an installation's having a family event, survivors are encouraged to work with their branch programs, Navy Gold Star, Army SOS, we've got the Coast Guard Gold Star Family, and then let me see which one, and then the Air Force Families Forever to receive access to the installation (URL that is on the screen:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/casualty-assistance/survivor-support/survivors-guide-to-access-resources>). Those programs can work with base security protocol to

ensure smooth entry. So if they know ahead of time, what they can do is let the guards know, and so forth, so that goes a lot smoother.

And then just remember, like INS said, three things: purpose, REAL ID, and you have to be fit. You can go in and register. Once you register on that installation, then you can go on, you can continue going on, and that's what the benefit of having that REAL ID is. You don't have to go and get updated until it's time, you know, to renew your driver's license, or whatever kind of REAL ID that you're utilizing.

So that appears to be all the questions that we have at this time. Oh, wait, nope, there's another one. To the person who asked about struggling with access to Army installations, we can't provide personal email addresses, but what we would recommend is contacting your long-term care, or your Army SOS coordinator. If it's another base, then that is something that one can do. I'm going to also add Sergeant First Class Clark. He's got ... he's going to represent the Army. Go ahead, Sergeant First Class Clark from Army SOS.

Sergeant Clark:

Hi, yeah. So with that Form 44, you should be able to just take it to the visitor center. Only active installations have the ability to do that. So you'd go through the regular security, say that you need to go to the visitor center, and they should be able to process that card for you. Again, each installation is different, but all active installations are able to produce those survivor access cards.

Lisa:

Thank you very much. All right, so now, we're going to go to the next briefing. Thank you, Mariah. Go ahead if you enter —

Mariah:

Thank you so much, everyone. Our next topic of the day is Applying for the Death Gratuity on Behalf of a Surviving Child, and our panelists for this topic will be Lisa Valentine, Program Manager, Casualty, Mortuary Affairs, and Military Funeral Honors, Julie Burandt-Partin, Director, DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay, and Nathan Lynix, Analyst, DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay. Ms. Valentine, I think you're on mute.

Lisa:

Oh, thank you. Sorry about that. So good afternoon, everyone. My name is Lisa Valentine, and I'm the program manager for our Casualty, Mortuary Affairs, and Military Funeral Honors. I grew up as a military brat, so my dad was in the Army, and after that I joined the Army and served 23 years, and now I'm serving as a DOD civilian. I'm going to

talk to you this afternoon about the death gratuity. And so, I'm going to take my video off, so this way, you can hear me, and not be disturbed because of the bandwidth.

So anyways, so what is death gratuity? Well, death gratuity, it's a lump sum tax-exempt payment of \$100,000 that's provided by the Department of Defense, or DOD, to assist the survivors, or other people identified by a service member through what we call the DD Form 93, which is a Record of Emergency Data, prior to their death. The service member may designate up to 10 beneficiaries in increments of 10%. It is normally paid to eligible beneficiaries within 72 hours of the receipt of the DD Form 397, also known as the Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment.

The death gratuity is compensation for military service. It is not a tip, and it is provided to families in other industries as well, and it's authorized by numerous federal statutes. This includes families of coal miners and firefighters, for example, who receive a death gratuity to help them survive financial crises following their loved one's death.

The original purpose of the death gratuity is to help designated family members to cover the cost of immediate bills until survivor benefits kick in, which can take months, as some benefits are held up by the line of duty investigation required by law. So when is death gratuity payable? Death gratuity will be paid regardless of whether the death occurred in the line of duty, or as the result of a member's misconduct, to eligible beneficiaries when the service member dies on active duty, active duty for training, inactive duty for training, or within 120 days of release from active duty under honorable conditions if the death is determined to be the result of an injury, or disease incurred, or aggravated during duty.

So how is death gratuity distributed in absence of designated recipient? So if a service member doesn't make a designation, or designates only a portion of the amount payable, the amount of the death gratuity not covered by a designation shall be paid as follows.

So to the surviving spouse of the person, if any, and if there is no surviving spouse, then to any surviving children of the person, and the descendants of any deceased children by representation. And if there is none of the above, then to the surviving parents of the person, or the survivor of them. And if there is none of the above, then to the duly appointed executor, or administrator of the estate of the person. And if there is none of the above, then to other next of kin of the person entitled under the laws of domicile of the person at the time of the person's death.

So it's a lot of legal language, and it gets a little complicated. So how are children to be treated? Because that's really what the focus of this part of our briefing is today. So as mentioned before, if there's no designated beneficiary and no surviving spouse, then death gratuity is to be paid to any surviving children of the person and the descendants of any deceased children by representation without regard to age or marital status. And that goes to legitimate children; adopted children; stepchildren who are part of the decedent's household at the time of their death; illegitimate children of a female descendant; and illegitimate children of a male decedent who have been acknowledged

in writing, signed by the decedent, and who have been judicially determined before the decedent's death to be their children.

So what kind of documentation is needed for the children? So per DOD Financial Management Regulation, Volume 7A, Chapter 6, if a decedent is survived by a child, or children, but no spouse, then the documentation that is needed is documentary evidence showing termination of any marriage, including a certified copy of the spouse's death certificate, divorce, or an annulment decree; entitlement to Basic Allowance for Housing, also known as BAH, for a child, or children, or evidence of occupation of government quarters with the member before member's death; or in the absence of BAH entitlement as cited above, base eligibility of children, or children upon documentary proof of relationship. And this includes the original, or certified copy of the original birth certificate, a certified court order of adoption in the case of a legally adopted child; and a certified copy of the appointment paper if a guardian of a minor child; or children has been appointed by a court as distinguished from being awarded physical custody.

So next slide. We're going to be talking about a minor beneficiary. And so, a minor is a person who has not reached the age of majority under the law of the state where the person resides. And for more detailed information, you can refer to the DOD Financial Management Regulation, Volume 7B, Appendix H, Appendix H for the age of majority by state and United States possession. So it might be a little different depending on what state.

So if the death gratuity is in excess of \$1,000, payment for a minor child may be made to the parent, including an adoptive parent as natural guardian when all of the following conditions exist.

So you have to ... It has to have where a legal guardian has not been appointed, the parent has custody of the minor child, a statute of the state where the minor child and parent reside provides a means of obtaining a good acquittance, and all statutory requirements have been met, and the parent has submitted a notarized statement indicating the state statute involved, the facts bringing payment to this parent, and the parent understands the requirements of the statute. So it's not so easy. It's a little bit complicated, and again, it depends on the state.

So let's go to the next slide. So if a minor is entitled to a death gratuity in the amount of \$10,000 or less, then payment for the minor beneficiary may be made to the minor's parent, including an adoptive parent as natural guardian when the parent provides a notarized statement attesting to all the following conditions: A legal guardian has not been appointed for the minor beneficiary, the parent has custody of the minor; the parent will hold the payment for the sole use and benefits of the minor until the minor reaches adulthood; the parent will account to the minor for such amount when the minor reaches adulthood; and the parent will hold the government harmless in the event the minor, when he, or she reaches the age of majority, or adulthood, brings any legal action challenging the government's payment to the minor's parent.

So if a minor is entitled to a death gratuity to an amount of \$10,000 or less, and the child does not have a parent, then payment for the minor beneficiary may be made to the minor's nonparent legal guardian where one has been appointed.

The individual appointed as the legal guardian must provide a notarized statement attesting to all of the following conditions, as well as a certified copy of the court order appointing the legal guardian: The legal, the individual has been appointed as a legal guardian of the minor; the guardian will hold the payment for the sole use and benefit of the minor until the minor reaches adulthood; the guardian will account to the minor for such amount when the minor reaches adulthood; and the guardian will hold the government harmless in the event the minor, when he, or she reaches the age of majority, adulthood, brings any legal action challenging the government's payment to the minor's guardian.

So if a minor is entitled to a death gratuity in an amount exceeding \$10,000, then payment may only be made to the guardian, or a conservator of a minor's estate appointed by a court to receive such payments for the minor's benefit, even where the guardian, or conservator, is a child's parent, thereby providing the government a means of obtaining a good acquittance. And a good acquittance means the government and the guardian, or conservator, are in agreement that the debt has been fully satisfied. The guardian will hold the government harmless in the event the minor, when he, or she reaches the age of majority, or adulthood, brings any legal action challenging the government's payment to the minor's guardian. A certified copy of the court order appointing the guardian, or conservator of the minor's estate, must be provided before payment can be made. And guardianship, or conservatorship, of the minor as a person is not sufficient.

So let's go to the next slide. And so, we're going to talk a little bit about the Barring Act and why it's important to do those kind of steps, especially if the minor child is going to be more than six years before they reach the age of majority. So basically the Barring Act, it states that a claim against the government presented must contain the signature and address of the claimant or an authorized representative. It also requires that the claim must be received by the official responsible for settling the claim, or by the agency that conducts the activity from which the claim arises within six years after the claim accrues.

So for death gratuity, that six years actually starts from the date the service member dies, and not the date that the child reaches the age of majority. And so, that gets a bit complicated. So, basically, a claim that's not received in the time required by the Barring Act, the act states that the claim shall be returned, and no further communication is required. So basically, you do want to ensure that the death gratuity is applied for within the six years of the death of the service member for the child by submitting the DD Form 397, and work through the different requirements. So it's not a one-size-fits-all, as you can tell. There's different scenarios.

And so, what do you do? So for assistance before, or when a minor reaches age of majority to apply for the death gratuity for a child, what we recommend doing is that once your casualty assistance officer completes the benefits, entitlements, you should be warmly handed over to your service's long-term case management program.

They have expert case managers and counselors available to assist you in the years to come. And due to the complexities involved with applying the, you know, for the death gratuity for a child, we recommend contacting your long-term case manager when applying for the death gratuity for a child, whether the guardian, or child of age of majority.

So it is recommended that one apply for the death gratuity before the Barring Act takes effect. So to reach out to your service's long-term case management program, for Army survivors, we recommend contacting the Army's Survivor Outreach Services. For Navy survivors, we recommend contacting the Navy Casualties Long-Term Assistance Program, or the Navy Gold Star Program. For Marine Corps, we recommend contacting the Marine Corps Long-Term Assistance Program, and for Air Force and Space Force, contact the Air Force Families Forever program, and for Coast Guard, contact the Coast Guard's Office of Casualty Matters. And you can do so by connecting to the website address (<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/casualty-assistance/survivor-support/survivors-guide-to-access-resources>) shown on the screen.

And I know that for some of our surviving family members, they may not be aware of these long-term care programs, because this is new, not that new for some, but for some of our older survivors, it may be new. So we recommend checking out that and connecting with your long-term care program manager, 'cause as we said, they're here to assist you in the years to come, especially as benefits change. So with that, that concludes that part of the briefing, and we're ready to go ahead and answer questions.

Mariah:

Thank you so much, Lisa. We do have a few questions in the Q&A for you, and attendees, please feel free to submit additional questions.

Lisa:

And Mark Dunlop provided in the Q&As the link for the Army Resilience, that Army Survivor Outreach Services page. And so, it can direct you to your installation, so you can go directly to your SOS coordinator. All right. I think there, are there any questions? I don't see any other questions, so I think we're ready to go to our next topic.

Mariah:

Thank you so much, Ms. Valentine. Our third and final topic is How a Beneficiary Survivor Annuitant Keeps Their Account Up to Date With the Defense Finance Accounting Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our panelists for this topic will be Julie Burandt-Partin, Director, DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay, Nathan Lynix, Analyst, DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay, and Scott Bell, Office of Survivor Assistance, Pension and Fiduciary Service, Veterans Benefit Administration. Mr. Lynix, you may begin whenever you're ready.

Nathan:

All right, thank you. Like Mariah said, we're going to go over how to keep DFAS informed of changes. So, you know, we just want. There we go. All right, first it's important to know what kind of changes in your life DFAS would like to know about. The first key piece of information is your mailing address. We send out account statements, and any time there's a change to your payment, and we also send verification documents as well. If we don't have your current mailing address, it could delay that correspondence being delivered, which could cause your pay to be suspended.

Next, we have is your direct deposit information. If we don't have your current banking information, your payment will go to the account that we have on file. So if you close an account with one bank and move to another bank, and I know that happens occasionally, we need to know as soon as possible. We process our payments in the middle to the later half of the month, and if you make a change and don't let us know about that until after our cutoff, the payment is still going to go to that account that we have on file. Then we'll have to wait for it to come back before we can reissue it.

So one thing that I like to advise people on, if you're changing banks, leave the old account open until you get a payment in your new account. That way, there won't be any delays in you receiving your payments. Other changes that we like, that need to be kept up to date with DFAS, are your tax status, your marital status and your school enrollment if you're a child annuitant between the ages of 18 and 22.

So now that you know what kind of information DFAS needs, what is the best way to keep your account up to date? myPay. myPay is the best way to manage your account. If you don't have a myPay account already, you can get there by just going to our website at www.dfas.mil, and look in the upper right-hand corner. There'll be an icon that looks like the image that you see there on the screen. It's a key chain with myPay in it. Just click on that and follow the directions to create your own login credentials. Be sure to keep your email up ... your email address up to date in myPay as well.

Using myPay will allow you to make changes to your address, your banking information, tax status, and you can even complete those in some of the annual verifications, like the Survivor Benefit Plan Marital Status Update, which used to be called the COE, and the Report of Existence, which is now called the Foreign Address Update for Mailed Check. myPay is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and changes that you make there are applied to your account very quickly.

I can't, I can't say enough good things about myPay. It really is one of the best ways to keep your account up to date. So if you don't have a myPay account, like I said, just please go out there, and create a myPay account. Next slide.

So the next option is called askDFAS. askDFAS is, you can find askDFAS, again, by going to the dfas.mil, and right by where the myPay link is, there's all, there's another icon that looks just like that image up there. It says askDFAS there. You click on there, and it'll take you over to the askDFAS website. askDFAS is a great tool to upload documents to DFAS.

For example, if I didn't convince you to get a myPay account and you need to update your taxes, you could complete a W-4P, and upload it to DFAS through the askDFAS system. Not only is this a faster way to get us documents than through the mail, but certain type of documents also have status notifications and you'd enter your email address when you submit the document, and you'll get those status notifications. There are also Form Wizards, like I was talking about earlier, for some of the forms that you need to keep DFAS up to date, and the Form Wizard really helps by taking the form out of the form. You'll be asked a series of questions and the wizard will complete the form for you in the background.

To find the Form Wizards from dfas.mil you go to our Forms Library located on the left side of the website, and all of our forms are available there. And for example, one of the best forms for annuitants out there is the Child Annuitant's Annual School Certificate. There's a Form Wizard there for that, and this option makes it very easy to complete the form, and there's a way to sign it digitally, and then submit it through askDFAS, and you never even have to print out a piece of paper. You complete that annual certification right there, and it gets to us, and you can track it with those status notifications.

You can also submit questions about your account on askDFAS, and they'll be answered by our customer care center, and askDFAS also has a self-service section, where you can submit certain changes, like change of address out there. askDFAS in conjunction with myPay, these are two amazing tools for you to be able to communicate with DFAS and to keep your account up to date. So if you have a question that you just can't find the answer to on our website, you can always call us at 800-321-1080, and speak with our, one of our customer care representatives. We're here to answer your questions Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

And then the last way is the United States Postal Service, or fax. We've got our addresses up, our address and fax number, up there on the screen for you. Just be sure that when you're sending any documents in to us that you include the member's Social Security number on it. That's the way that we track everything, and that makes sure that your documents get to the right place with the right technicians to process whatever it is that you're sending in to us.

Go ahead on to the next slide. So the last thing that I wanted to talk to you about is just to bring awareness and make sure that everybody knows that the annual verification process has changed a little bit. The big takeaway on this is that annuitants only need to

complete one verification form, or one verification document each year. And so, if you are ... So the hierarchy of the verification documents are if you're a child annuitant between the ages of 18 and 22, that school certificate will take care of, will take care of everything for that year. It's got an ... it has a line on there to verify marital status and then it asks your address as well to make sure that the address is up to date if you're receiving a mailed check.

The certificate ... There used to be a document called the Certificate of Eligibility, and that has been replaced by the Survivor Benefit Plan Marital Status Update, or SBP-MSU. It looks very much like the old Certificate of Eligibility, and it needs to be completed annually by the month of your birthday for all annuitants between the ages of 14 and 55, unless, like I said, you're between 18 and 22 and completing that school certificate.

And then lastly, if you live outside the United States and you still receive a paper check, you previously needed to complete a Report of Existence twice a year, and now, that Report of Existence has been replaced by a Foreign Address Update for Mailed Check, and it is only needed if you haven't completed one of the previous certifications annually, just that one time per year before the month with your birthday in it.

If you happen to have an old COE or ROE lying around somewhere, we will accept those through the end of 2024. But all the new documents are what we're mailing out, and they are the ones that are available on our websites. Oh, one last, I'm sorry, one last thing, I forgot to mention this.

We also have two documents on our website that are extremely useful. One is called the "Helpful Tips for SBP Annuitants" and the other one is a "DFAS Quick Reference Guide." I believe we're going to put links for them in the chat there, and also they'll be sent out after the call. But they're on our website. You can just go to the ... There's another section on our website called the Quick Tools page. They're available there as well. (URL on screen: <https://www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/>)

Mariah:

Thank you so much -

Nathan:

And that's, that's it.

Mariah:

Mr. Bell? Ms. Valentine, it looks like we lost VA. Let me reach out to them real quick.

Lisa:

OK, in the meantime, we do have some other survivor questions that have come in. And this one, I don't know how to answer it, and maybe, Nathan and Julie, you might be able to assist me with this one. After a guardian acquires a court ordered, a court appointed conservatorship, are death gratuity funds only released if there's a special trust set up, a special trust set up, or does this depend on the state?

Julie:

Honestly, Lisa, I don't know, but I can take that for action, and run that past my MilPay friends. I don't know, and I don't want to provide a guess or a bad answer to you, but we can take that for follow-up.

Lisa:

Thank you very much. So, Ms. Hailey Chittick, we will get back, and we'll let the group know what that response is. Thank you. So, "As a remarried surviving spouse, how do I obtain access to myPay if locked out of my minor child's account?"

Nathan:

If you can't get in through the websites, there is a different phone, it's a different option when you call 800-321-1080 that will take you to a myPay customer service center, and they should be able to help you get in, in through there.

Lisa:

So Nathan, can you repeat that phone number, so that I can -

Nathan:

Yeah —

Lisa:

... write it in the chat?

Nathan:

Sure, yeah, it's 800, ooh, wait, wait. I think you have to call the DFAS 411. It's, hang on one second. Let me —

Julie:

Actually, Nathan, Shannon and I'll grab the number, and we'll put it in the chat.

Nathan:

That the, see? Yeah, the 800-321-1080 number, that goes right to Retired Pay. It skips a step. There's a, it's 866-332-7411. It spells out DFAS 411.

Julie:

Oh, nice, Nate. I was buying you some time, so we could convert those letters into numbers.

Nathan:

Yeah, it's 866-DFAS-411, and just follow the prompts for myPay. "Am I eligible for both DIC and VA survivor?" Well, DI, DIC is the payment from the VA. If you're asking if you're eligible to receive both DIC and SBP at the same time, yes, they just lifted the offset requirement, or the offset in 2023, it was fully implemented, where surviving spouses can receive both DIC from the VA and their full SBP from DOD. All right.

Lisa:

Thank you. And unfortunately, we've lost Mr. Bell from the VA. He's dropped off, and so, hopefully, he'll be able to rejoin us and can address, because I know that there's a VA Survivors Pension in DIC, but I don't want to speak for VA, and I don't know if one can receive both. So here we have ... so what we will do, Mary, is that we will do a due out if he's not able to come back and join us.

So here's a question. "I'm a Navy, I'm a retired Navy Reservist, and an active-duty survivor. I have a VA account as a veteran, and when I log in, there is information about me and my husband mixed in. Do I need a second account as a survivor, and how do I do that without messing up my benefits? I already have a .gov logon as a veteran and a retired DOD federal employee."

So does anybody from our panel have any ideas how to assist? So, Julie Hammond, I think we need to get back to you to try to help you with this situation, 'cause it sounds a bit complicated.

All right, so for myPay ... Whoop, my thing just jumped. Sorry about that. "For myPay, I was told I'm a third-party, and they can't speak to a third-party, and my children are minors, so they cannot speak to them until they're 18. Has this been fixed?"

So what we have is we have a remarried spouse who has minor children, but because she remarried, they're telling her that they can't speak to her, because she's a third-party.

Julie:

So I will say, this is Julie, this has come up before. That ... you know what I mean. You go and you try to reset passwords, or whatever in that situation and there's a problem. So we have addressed it with the myPay call center in the past.

If you are still having problems with that, can you confirm if that's happened to you recently? If it has, then I can take that back to the myPay Care Center, because I know that has come up in the past to DFAS, and we can take that back to the myPay Care Center, and get, if there's any additional information to you all as survivors that are in that situation, we can get that out to you.

I think there was very specific things they were looking for when a guardian was, or a parent, was calling on behalf of their minor children. But it has come up before. So if you're still experiencing that, can you confirm that for me, and we'll take that back to work with the myPay Care Center to get better information out to all of you, so that you don't have to jump through so many hoops. Thank you.

Lisa:

So it has not happened recently, so that sounds like good news.

Julie:

I still took a note to go back and check with the team as well, so just to make sure. So thank you.

Lisa:

Thank you. And ... So this is a question for Julie. "I am remarried to a mil member, a military member, and also is surviving spouse. The VA has me with two separate accounts under two separate last names." So we will ... Oh, and so, I think that this is how another survivor is able to see the differences is by having the VA provide two separate accounts under two separate last names. OK. Are there any other questions?

So we'll even open up, if you want to open it up to any type of questions that you would like us to find out answers to. If we don't have anybody in our panel that can ask the questions, we are glad to go and research, and try to get you the answers. And then also, too, just to let you be aware that if you think of a question, and you'd like to have it answered, we do have the Survivor Inquiry Form.

So if you go onto any page onto Military OneSource, then you can click on “I am a survivor,” or “I am a service provider,” and you can go into the Survivor Inquiry Form, and submit a question, and we'll be glad to get you the answer. So we are going to be following up to all of our participants for today's Survivor Symposium, and we'll be sending, including in there a survey, as well as the two attachments that the DFAS talked about.

And so, “Who is eligible for Survivor Cards at a visitors center? Is a gold star spouse eligible for one? Is a gold star child's spouse eligible for one?” So I think it depends on the service for a survivor card. Sergeant Clark, from an Army's perspective, is a gold star child's spouse eligible to receive a survivor card? So this would be ...

Clark:

So I'm going to pull up the form real quick, and I will be able to, hopefully, answer that better. So you're saying a gold star's ...

Lisa:

I'm not ... a gold star child -

Clark:

... spouse?

Lisa:

Spouse.

Clark:

So I believe —

Lisa:

Oh, so it's a spouse of a gold star child.

Clark:

OK, so again, I will have to look up that, but I'm pretty sure that it will only be to the dependent as well as the ... I believe it's dependents and parents of the deceased service member.

Lisa:

OK, so it's —

Clark:

That would mean that the spouse wouldn't be eligible.

Lisa:

OK. So a KIA child who's got married as an adult, is their spouse eligible? So the answer is no. Same eligibility as the Gold Star Lapel Button: parents, dependents and siblings. All right, any other questions?

All right, so ... We're very sorry that we lost the VA. I'm not sure what happened, some technical difficulties, but again, if there's any questions, please feel free to reach out to us, and also we encourage you to subscribe to “The Survivor Connection” through Military OneSource, and that's another way to keep updated as to future Survivor Symposiums, and we look forward to your feedback. And so, with that, I'm going to pass the floor back to Ms. Deborah Skillman.

Deborah:

Hey, I'm so sorry that we lost VA. I know this, all of us have challenges sometimes with the technology of today, but I really want to thank everyone for joining us today. We hope that “Navigating Survivor Benefits and Resources Together” as surviving family members and service providers proves to be beneficial. You know, we do look forward to your feedback, and we want you to join us for the next Survivor Symposium.

We'll make sure to get the word out when that next Survivor Symposium will be, and we really do want to hear from you about what topics are important to you, what you think we should cover, any new information that you just have a lot of questions about.

But as Lisa said, you are free to send us a question. You can go to the Survivors Inquiry Form. We're here to help, and we will try to make sure that next time we can get VA, try to, a new technology, or something that we can make sure that they stay on. So thank you again so much, and we look forward to talking to you in the future. Have a great day.

Mariah:

Thank you so much, Ms. Skillman. It does look like there are a couple more questions, Lisa, if you'd like to answer.

Lisa:

Sure. Let me see if I can get that, OK. Thank you, Nancy, so this way we can get back to you. So we're talking about the ID and me, and TRICARE changes after the three-year mark. So that's very important. And so, we're going to try to see if we can't get TRICARE for a future symposium to be able to talk about the different programs that they have.

But for active-duty deaths, at the three-year mark, that's where decisions are made as to which type of program that one would like to elect to be in, or not. Let me see. I ... So the slides will be available through the recorded version.

We will see if it's a possibility to send out those slides via email as well. All right, thank you, everybody. That's all the questions that I can see. If we've missed any questions, we will definitely respond. All right, so have a great and safe weekend, and thank you again for your participation in DOD's first Survivor Symposium.

Mariah:

Thank you all for attending. Feedback on this event is welcome and greatly appreciated. You will receive a survey that will be emailed to you, and we appreciate any feedback that you have for us. You may now exit the meeting. Thank you.