



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 17, 2010

## **VA Honors Veterans on POW/MIA National Recognition Day *Special Benefits Available to Former POWs***

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki wants former American prisoners of war (POWs) to be aware of the benefits and services available to them as Americans across the nation show respect and appreciation for this special group of men and women during POW/MIA National Recognition Day.

"These Veterans made great sacrifices for their country in time of war, and it is our Nation's turn to honor them by reinforcing to them the full range of compensation, health care and benefits they have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has expanded policies to cover increasing numbers of former prisoners of war.

Special benefits for former POWs include enrollment in medical care for treatment at VA hospitals and clinics without copayments, as well as disability compensation for injuries and diseases that are associated with internment.

Former POWs are also generally entitled to a presumption of service-connection for certain diseases, based on the length of captivity and the severity of their conditions.

Free dental treatment for any dental condition is also available to former POWs. These benefits are in addition to regular Veterans' benefits and services to which they are already entitled.

A major benefit for survivors of former POWs include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), which is a monthly benefit which may be payable to the surviving spouse, children and, in some cases, parents.

Currently, more than 15,000 POWs are receiving VA benefits for service-connected injuries, diseases, or illnesses. VA is asking former POWs not currently utilizing VA benefits to contact the agency at 1-800-827-1000 to find out if they may be eligible for disability compensation and other services.

**- More -**

**POW/MIA National Recognition Day 2/2/2/2**

Veterans can also apply online at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp> or contact their coordinator for former POWs located at each VA regional office.

More information about VA services for former POWs is available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheets/misc/formerpow.doc>.

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