

by the deceased member as to his marital and dependency status, and the Government otherwise has no information which would give rise to doubt that such status is as represented, the payment is not to be regarded as "erroneous." The Government has a good acquittance in such cases even though it may subsequently develop that the payee is not the proper statutory payee of the gratuity and no second payment is authorized.

[24 FR 7523, Sept. 18, 1959, as amended at 44 FR 25647, May 2, 1979]

Subpart B—Provisions Applicable to the Navy

§716.10 Procedures.

(a) *Action by commanding officers.* See §716.7(b)—(1) *Immediate payment—Eligible beneficiary residing with deceased member.* Commanding officers, in order to expedite the payment of the death gratuity, will, upon official notification of death, ascertain the duty status of the deceased, and determine the eligibility of the spouse or designated beneficiary who was residing with the deceased member on or near his duty station at the time of his death. The services of a staff or district legal officer will be utilized as required. Every effort should be made to effect prompt payment (within 24 hours, if possible). It is the intent that determinations of entitlement by commands in the field will be confined largely to spouses and parents designated by the service member who were living with him at the time of his death.

(2) *Questionable cases.* If entitlement to the death gratuity payment is questionable after seeking advice of the staff or district legal officer, such case will be forwarded promptly to the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732) with a brief statement relative to the facts which raised the issue of doubt. Every effort will be made to expedite action by a review of the official records of the decedent in the Bureau of Naval Personnel and the Family Allowance Activity at Cleveland, Ohio. Those cases wherein the service member was in a deserter status, absent without leave, or in the custody of civil authorities at the time of death, wherein

guardianship must be provided for the protection of the decedent's children, or wherein a technicality exists which makes immediate certification legally unsound, will be considered questionable.

(3) *Exception.* Where the entitlement of the survivor who is living with the deceased at the time of his death is questionable and such survivor is in dire financial circumstances, the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-G23) shall be requested by message to make an adjudication of entitlement. If it is determined that the survivor is entitled to the payment, the commanding officer will be authorized by message to execute DD Form 397.

(b) *Action by Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) officers; Potential beneficiary not residing with member—(1) Widow(er).* The CACP officer, on his or her initial visit to a widow(er), determines, propriety permitting, whether there is an urgent need for financial assistance. If there is an urgent need for financial assistance, the CACP officer should obtain DD Form 397 from any military disbursing office and, on his or her second visit to the widow(er), have him or her sign it and obtain the signatures of two witnesses on the form. It should be noted that the following procedure is confined to cases in which the decedent's eligible survivor for the death gratuity is a widow(er), and efforts to effect immediate payment in accordance with the intent of the governing statute are appropriate. In such cases, the CACP officer, upon learning that a widow(er), not residing with his or her spouse at or near the spouse's duty station, is in urgent need of financial assistance, shall advise the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732) of the need by message. The CACP officer shall send a copy of this message to the decedent's duty station, if known. Upon receipt, the disbursing officer will furnish the Navy Finance Center, Cleveland, Ohio 44199, with the decedent's basic monthly pay [plus any special (see §716.1), incentive, and proficiency pay] in the event the pay account has not been forwarded previously to that center sufficiently early to have reached there. The CACP officer shall also send a copy of his message to the Navy Finance Center

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with the request that payment of the death gratuity be made upon receipt of the certification of beneficiary entitlement from the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732).

(2) *Navy Relief.* In cases where there is immediate need prior to receipt of the death gratuity, the Navy Relief Society will be contacted by the Casualty Assistance Calls Program officer.

(c) *Action by the Chief of Naval Personnel.* (1) In all cases where death gratuity is not authorized to be paid locally and in cases where authority exists to pay locally but entitlement is questionable (see paragraph (a)(2) of this section), the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732) will expedite adjudication of claims. As indicated in paragraph (b)(1) of this section CACP officers will refer cases of urgent financial need to the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732) by message for action.

(2) If a minor is entitled to a death gratuity under 10 U.S.C. 1477 not exceeding \$1,000, such death gratuity may be paid to the father or mother as natural guardian on behalf of the minor, provided a legally appointed guardian has not been appointed, upon substantiation by a sworn (notarized) statement of the natural guardian:

(i) That no legal guardian has been appointed and that such an appointment is not contemplated;

(ii) The relationship of the natural guardian to the minor;

(iii) That the minor is in the actual custody of the natural guardian;

(iv) That an amount paid to the natural guardian will be held for, or applied to, the use and benefit of the minor.

If the death gratuity to which a minor is entitled exceeds \$1,000, the appointment of a legal guardian on behalf of the minor is requested. Certification of the minor eligible to receive the death gratuity is made by the Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-732) and payment is effected by the Navy Finance Center, Cleveland, OH 44199;

(d) *Cross-servicing procedure.* Payment of the death gratuity may be made by a disbursing officer who is maintaining the pay record of a member of another service, provided the command to which the member is attached and

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which maintains his service record is in the immediate vicinity and certifies the beneficiary eligible to receive payment on the proper voucher (DD Form 397). Otherwise the pay record will be sent to the Army Finance Center, Air Force Finance Center, Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code CDB), the Navy Finance Center, of the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, as appropriate.

[24 FR 7523, Sept. 18, 1959, as amended at 44 FR 25647, May 2, 1979; 45 FR 43165, June 26, 1980]

Subpart C—Provisions Applicable to the Marine Corps

§716.11 Procedures.

(a) *Action.* Commanding officers will direct immediate payment of the gratuity where the deceased member's spouse was, in fact, residing with the member on or near the station of duty at the time of the member's death while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive-duty training. Every effort should be made to effect such payment promptly (within 24 hours, if possible). In cases where the eligible survivor residing with the member on or near the duty station is other than a spouse, commanding officers may direct the payment of death gratuity when the case can be properly determined, and an urgent need exists for immediate payment. Proper determination is imperative.

(b) *Qualifications.* (1) Where any doubt exists as to the legal recipient of the gratuity, the case will be referred to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code MSPA-1) for determination.

(2) [Reserved]

[24 FR 7523, Sept. 18, 1959, as amended at 44 FR 25648, May 2, 1979]

PART 718—MISSING PERSONS ACT

Sec.

718.1 General provisions.

718.2 Allotments.

718.3 Transportation of dependents.

718.4 Delegations.

§718.1 General provisions.

(a) Under the provisions of the Missing Persons Act, as amended, a finding