



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON DC 20310

7 SEP 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Leader Involvement - Absentee Voting

The deadline for absentee voting for the 2 November General Election is fast approaching. Every leader must continue to emphasize the importance of voting throughout their command and ensure the availability of voting information and guidance. Over the last three months, the Army has conducted voting assistance operations in 120 countries and trained over 4,500 Voting Assistance Officers. We have posted voting banners on Army websites, Leave and Earnings Statements, and various other sources emphasizing the need to register and most importantly vote.

The next 30 to 45 days are crucial. Soldiers participating in the election should be receiving their absentee ballots from local election officials. Soldiers who want to vote must complete and mail them back promptly, in order to ensure they arrive in time to be counted. Leaders must pay close attention to this process. Any participating Soldier overseas who has not received their regular state absentee ballot by 8 October should instead use the Federal Write in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) and mail it to their local election official by 11 October. The FWAB can only be used from an overseas location by a registered absentee voter who has requested but not yet received their absentee ballot. We have ensured large quantities of the FWAB are available in overseas areas. In addition, the United States Postal Service has agreed to expedite the handling of absentee ballots going to and from overseas locations.

Rear Detachment Commanders must have access to voting information and materials in order to provide assistance to eligible family members of our deployed Soldiers. We ask Commanders to disseminate voting information through their Family Readiness Group channels. These voters are critical, and subject to the same deadlines.

Your personal involvement is needed for the success of the voting program and will ensure Soldiers around the globe are given the opportunity to influence the future of our country. It is the Soldier who gives us the freedom to vote. Make sure their vote counts!

PETER J. SCHOOMAKER
General, US Army
Chief of Staff

R. L. Brownlee
Acting Secretary of the Army

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