**Department of Memorandum**

**Veterans Affairs**

Date: May 25, 2022

From: Brendan Makarewicz

Subj: Conflicting Address for Veterans/Claimants

To: Pittsburgh Director’s Office

**BACKGROUND:**

Veterans/Claimants residing outside of the United States seeking Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits are considered “foreign” claims. Some Veterans/claimants list a(n) Air/Army Post Office (APO), Fleet Post Office (FPO), or Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) as their address. APO, DPO, and FPO addresses are considered foreign claims. It appears that Veterans/claimants that reside within the United States are having a(n) APO, DPO, or FPO erroneously listed as their city.

Pittsburgh RO points of contact:

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**ISSUE:**

Veterans/claimants that reside within the United States are having instances of an APO, DPO, or FPO erroneously assigned at the time they submit a claim. These oversights result in inaccurate data, inaccurate distribution for processing, and cause avoidable delay(s) to the resolution and promulgation of claims, both domestic and foreign. Moreover, it is highly likely they will lead to undeliverable essential mail and missed payments for beneficiaries not receiving direct deposit.

**ANALYSIS:**

One method for identifying these instances is crossmatching foreign claims that show a USA country code. This list can be found at [Workbook: Foreign Claims Report (va.gov)](https://tableau.vba.va.gov/views/ForeignCLaimsReport/EPDatabyCountry?%3Aembed=y&%3AshowShareOptions=true&%3Adisplay_count=no&%3AshowVizHome=no#1). As of May 24, 2022, there are 345 pending foreign claims with USA as the country code. Please see the examples of Veterans/claimants with conflicting addresses below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Claim ID** | **EP** | **Content Source** | **System Source** | **Before or After cest** |
| 372901585 | 010 | VA.gov | EVSS | After |
| 252983419 | 020 | VA.gov | EVSS | After |
| 500866245 | 130 | BVA | Lighthouse | After |
| 297687831 | 130 | BVA | Lighthouse | After |
| 260556212 | 130 | BVA | Lighthouse | After |
| 134507293 | 130 | BVA | Lighthouse | After |
| 164581132 | 130 | Unknown | Unknown | After |
| 144621057 | 130 | BVA | Lighthouse | After |

22.6% of the claims are non-rating 130 end products (EP). Further investigation of a few 130 EP claims identify the Veteran/claimant resides in the United States, but a(n) DPO or APO was erroneously applied to the address upon receipt VA Form 21-686c or 21-674. VA Form 21-686c lists DPO as the city. VA Form 21-674 does not. The content source of these uploads is “BVA”, and the system source is “lighthouse.” It is unclear how APO or DPO populates on VA Form 21-686c.

Of the few rating EPs reviewed on the list, not all were erroneously identified as a foreign claim. Those that are erroneously identified as a foreign claim have an APO applied to the address upon receipt of the electronically submitted VA Form 21-526EZ, similar to VA Form 21-686c. VA Form 21-526ez shows APO listed as the city. The content source of these uploads is “VA.gov” and the system source is “EVSS.”

After discussing the issue with Office of Business Integration (OBI) and the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA), it is unclear how APO or DPO populates on VA Forms 21-686c and 21-526EZ. It is even more unclear how it populates for VA Form 21-674 since there is no indication of APO, DPO, or FPO listed on the form.

It should be noted that there is no trend on whether a specific city, state, or zip code is resulting in the erroneous application of APO, DPO, or FPO.

While all 56 regional offices, including Pittsburgh, are capable of processing claims of Veterans residing in the United States, only Pittsburgh is capable of processing claims of Veterans residing outside of the United States. Claimants that do not reside outside of the United States but are distributed as part of the foreign workload causes avoidable delay(s) to the resolution and promulgation of claims, both domestic and foreign.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

* After discussing the issue with OBI and BVA, it was collectively decided that OIT be contacted to further investigate the root cause of the conflicting addresses and resolve the issue.
* Until system resolution, Pittsburgh RO will continue to investigate and correct conflicting addresses as they are received. They will also maintain a tracked list of all conflicting addresses received.