

Time Remains for Absentee Voting, Official Says

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

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WASHINGTON — Absentee Voting Week is a reminder that it's still possible for eligible U.S. voters overseas to register and to vote, the acting director of the department's Federal Voting Assistance Program said today.

"It's not too late to vote," Pamela S. Mitchell told reporters during a telephone news conference.

Mitchell said that during Absentee Voting Week, which runs through Oct. 4, FVAP's staff encourages all service members, spouses, voting-age family members and overseas civilians who haven't already done so to visit the program's website, <http://www.fvap.gov>, register to vote and request an absentee ballot.

"It's important to note that military voters and their families can certainly participate in this election," Mitchell said. "It's not too late to vote."

Registration and ballot deadlines vary by state, she noted.

"We encourage everyone to double-check those state-specific deadlines," Mitchell added. "However, in no case is there a deadline any longer than 30 days prior to the [Nov. 6] election to register. So again, there is still time to register and to request a ballot."

As a backup, she said, voters may submit a federal write-in absentee ballot any time after

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

they submit a federal postcard application to register. More than 600,000 of the postcard applications have been downloaded from the FVAP site, she noted.

“You can use this write-in ballot as long as you follow the state deadlines,” Mitchell said.

Those who need help can visit one of more than 220 voting assistance offices at installations around the globe, she said, or can speak to one of thousands of unit assistance officers in place to help military voters.

Absentee voters, including those deployed or at sea, also can contact their state board of elections directly, visit the FVAP site or call 800-438-VOTE(8683), Mitchell added.

Registering to vote is “very expeditious and very easy” through the FVAP website, Mitchell said. The program staff will continue to provide assistance to overseas voters through the end of the election season, she added.

As a 25-year Army veteran, Mitchell said she’s ““very aware how important it is to be able to exercise your right to vote when you’re away from home. ... I’m confident that voting assistance is the best it has ever been.”