

More US Troops in Africa to Receive Imminent Danger Pay

Following the deaths of four American soldiers last October, the Pentagon added three African countries to an area eligible for danger pay

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The Pentagon announced in March that troops serving in the Sahel region of Africa will now receive monthly bonus pay for being in danger of hostile fire.

The monthly \$225 Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) will be paid to U.S. troops in Niger, Mali and parts of northern Cameroon. The pay will be retroactive to June 7, 2017.

This decision means there now are 19 African countries where troops receive IDP.

The issue was brought forth after four U.S. soldiers were killed in Niger last October. This measure will allow the families of Staff Sgt. Bryan Black, Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson, Sgt. La David Johnson and Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright to receive an additional \$225 a month for the time the soldiers were assigned there. All four served with the 2nd Bn., 3rd Special Forces Group. The unit's U.S. headquarters are located at Fort Bragg, N.C.

During a U.S. military training mission last year in Niger, a dozen American soldiers were ambushed by about 50 fighters believed to be associated with the Islamic State Greater Sahara.

At the time of the attack, some 800 U.S. troops were operating in Niger.

Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, commander of U.S. Africa Command, reported to the House Armed Services Committee in March that "several months ago" he told the office of the secretary of Defense that Niger and other countries in the area were dangerous.

During that same committee meeting, Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) said a constituent serving in Niger had emailed him asking why troops in Niger and Mali don't receive hostile

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

fire pay.

“We know enough about the incident from public hearings in this committee that it was a violent and vicious event,” Courtney said.

For VFW, membership recruiters should take note of Africa’s eligible countries and the units of U.S. troops who have served there.

“It’s important for our recruiters to stay on top of announcements like these,” VFW Membership Director Rick Butler said. “While the eligible pool may not be great in numbers, I would hate to think we would inadvertently turn away a potential member.”

Sec. 101 of VFW’s bylaws provides membership eligibility for those who receive hostile fire or imminent danger pay. This is regardless of medals earned.

This bylaw change occurred after Res. 201 was passed at VFW’s 101st convention in Milwaukee in 2000.

This was only the second time the VFW admitted overseas veterans not already entitled to a campaign medal or combat badge. The first such bylaw amendment was passed in 1995, granting membership to all U.S. veterans who have served in Korea since June 30, 1949.

This article is featured in the 2018 June/July issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor, VFW magazine.