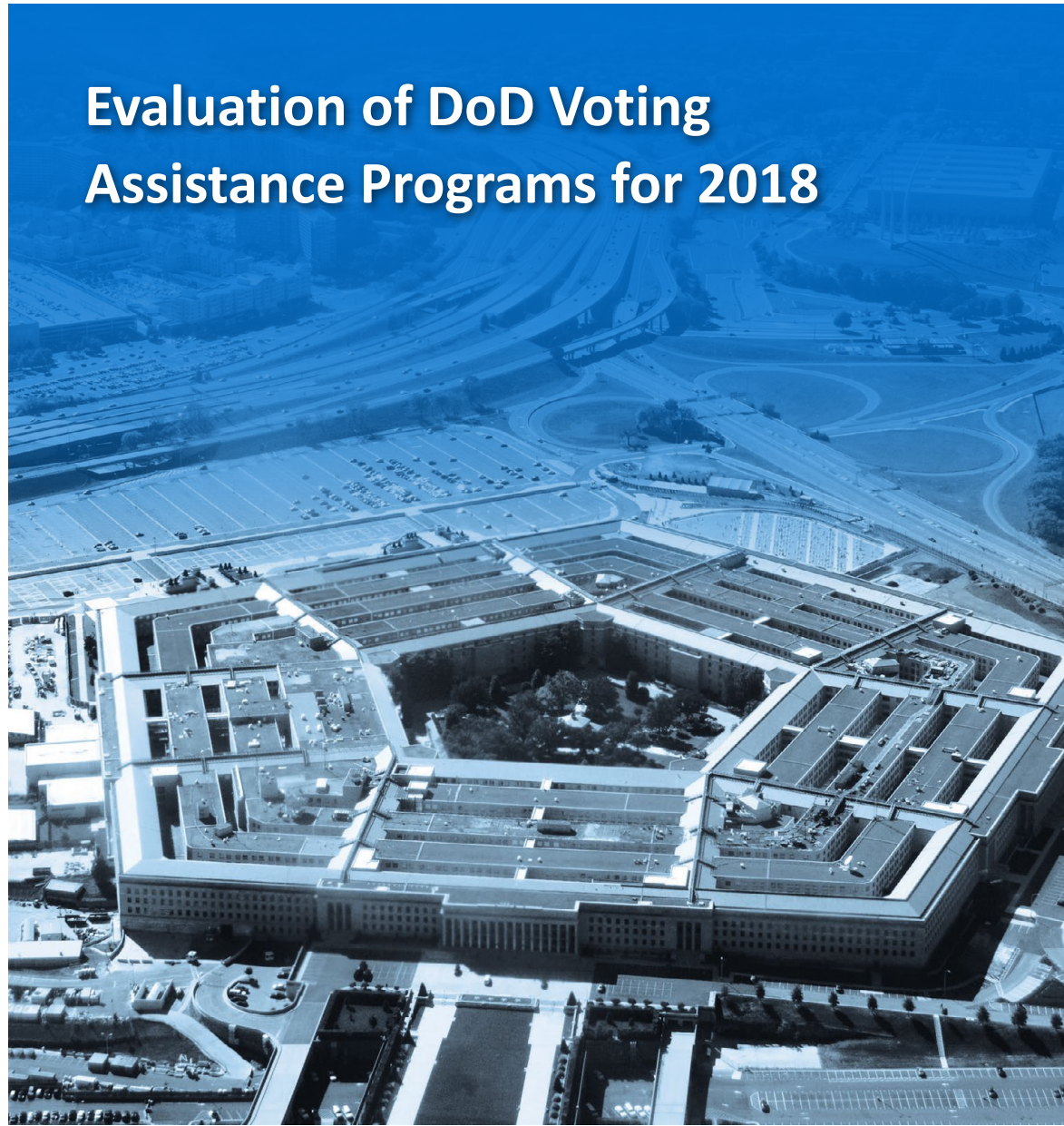




INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

MARCH 25, 2019



Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for 2018

INTEGRITY ★ INDEPENDENCE ★ EXCELLENCE





Results in Brief

Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for 2018

March 25, 2019

Objective

In accordance with the requirements of U.S.C. § 1566, our objective was to determine:

- the effectiveness during the preceding calendar year of each of the Services' voting assistance programs; and
- the level of compliance during the preceding year by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps with U.S.C. § 1566 and their respective voting assistance programs.

Our additional self-initiated objective was to determine whether the headquarters of the combatant commands complied with the requirements of DoD Instruction 1000.04 "Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)."

Background

"The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act," as modified by the "Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act" and other provisions, states that the right to vote is important to Uniformed Service members, their eligible family members, and other eligible overseas voters. The law establishes various voting assistance programs intended to help these absentee voters register, vote, and have their vote counted.

"Voting assistance programs" are defined in 10 U.S.C. § 1566 as "the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) carried out under the 'Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act' (UOCAVA) and any similar program." The statute requires that the DoD Office of the Inspector General

Background (cont'd)

complete a report by March 31 every year and the Inspectors General of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to annually:

- review the compliance and effectiveness of their Service's voting assistance program, and
- report the results to the DoD Office of Inspector General in time to be reflected in the Inspector General's March 31 report to Congress.

Service-Report Summaries

We reviewed the annual assessments of the Voting Assistance Programs (VAP) for 2018 submitted by the Inspectors General of the Military Services.

- The Army Inspector General (IG) reported that the Army VAP complied with federal statute and Service guidance, and that the program was effective. For example, the Army IG wrote that voting action officers had distributed the Federal Post Card Application on or before the required date at 97 percent of units and organizations that the Army IG inspected. In addition, two Army voting assistance offices won the FVAP of the Quarter for the first and third quarters of 2018, awarded by the FVAP office.
- The Naval IG determined that its Service's VAP was non-compliant but "effective where implemented." However, the Naval IG's methodology of rating units that failed to respond to its survey as non-compliant may yield a less-than-complete picture of the Navy VAP. In our previous report, the DoD OIG found that the Navy was non-compliant with Federal guidance during calendar year 2017 because it had eliminated the position of unit voting assistance officers. In April 2018, the Chief of Naval Operations issued an administrative message restoring voting assistance officers in organizations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel. The Naval IG reported that many commands remained unaware of this administrative message and had not reappointed unit voting assistance officers.



Results in Brief

Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for 2018

Service-Report Summaries (cont'd)

- The Air Force IG reported compliance with Federal statute and Service guidance and reported that the Air Force improved the effectiveness of its program. In our previous report, the DoD OIG found that the Air Force was not compliant with Federal guidance because it had eliminated the position of unit voting assistance officer. In August 2018, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force issued a memorandum restoring voting assistance officers in all major commands and units with 25 or more permanently assigned members.
- The Marine Corps IG reported that the Marine Corps VAP complied with federal statute and DoD policy and was effective. The Marine Corps IG based this conclusion on inspection results and quarterly reports on effectiveness and measures of performance. At the reported current rate, the Marine Corps is expected to meet its stated goal to inspect all 334 units for VAP compliance and effectiveness at least once in a three-year period.

Findings

The Navy's VAP evaluation of its Service compliance with 10 U.S.C. 1566, DoD Instruction 1000.04 was incomplete. The Navy relied on a survey with a 49 percent response rate, counting all non-responsive commands as noncompliant, likely underreporting unit FVAP compliance. Over the past four years, the Naval IG reported inspecting 18 of 31 total echelon-2 commands it planned to inspect on a five-year cycle. At this reported rate, the Navy may not achieve its stated goal. Additionally, the Navy still did not have voting assistance officers in every echelon-2 command, region, and installations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel.

We determined that two of the ten combatant commands (USAFRICOM and USTRANSCOM) had a written FVAP policy as required by DoD Instruction 1000.04 "Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)."¹ The remaining eight combatant commands gave various reasons for not having a policy, stating that they:

- relied on the Service component or installation policy (USCYBERCOM, USEUCOM, USSOCOM, USSOUTHCOM, and USSTRATCOM),
- were drafting a policy (USINDOPACOM and USNORTHCOM), or
- had none, replying, "a written policy is not in effect," (USCENTCOM).

Written voting policies serve to educate and provide awareness and assistance to all eligible personnel within the command who want to vote. A written policy would also guide Combatant Command staff in the execution of congressionally mandated voting assistance.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Navy senior service voting representative:

- determine if the evaluation protocol is capturing Service compliance with the Federal Voting Assistance Program, and
- coordinate to ensure that the goals established by the Navy for the frequency of unit Federal Voting Assistance Program inspections are met, and
- bring the Navy voting assistance program into compliance with Section 1566, title 10 United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 1566) "Voting assistance: compliance assessments; assistance" and DoD Instruction 1000.04 "Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)" with regard to assigning unit voting assistance officers.

¹ DoD combatant commands are components of the DoD. There are 10 combatant commands, each with a geographic or functional mission.



Results in Brief

Evaluation of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for 2018

Recommendations (cont'd)

We recommend that the Commanders of the following combatant commands:

- U.S. Central Command,
- U.S. Cyber Command,
- U.S. European Command,
- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command,
- U.S. Northern Command,
- U.S. Southern Command,
- U.S. Special Operations Command, and
- U.S. Strategic Command,

develop and implement written voting policies to support Uniformed Services personnel and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations.

Management Comments and Our Response

The response from the Commander, Navy Installations Command, agreed with the recommendation and stated that the Navy Service Voting Action Officer will review the Navy's self-assessment checklist to ensure that it accurately captures line item compliance with the FVAP. However, the response concerned Service compliance with the FVAP and did not meet the intent of the recommendation. The intent of the recommendation was for the Navy to review its methodology for determining unit compliance with the FVAP, because the decision by the Naval IG to consider non-responsive units as non-compliant while compiling results for the Navy's annual FVAP report likely results in underreporting.

We redirected the recommendation to the Naval IG, which should consider conducting a review of the Navy's methodology and use of survey responses to determine compliance with the FVAP. We request that the Naval IG respond to the final report by April 29, 2019.

The Commander, Navy Installations Command, stated that the Navy will implement a plan to increase the frequency of unit-level voting inspections for the 2020 election cycle. The Commander also stated that the Navy will release additional guidance and new administrative messaging regarding the updated Service policy on unit voting assistance officers. The recommendations are resolved but remain open. We will close them once we have verified that the Navy has taken the proposed actions.

Six of the eight combatant commands—U.S. Central Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Southern Command, and U.S. Strategic Command—agreed with our recommendation for them to develop and implement new written voting policies. Representatives from USCYBERCOM and USEUCOM agreed with the recommendation, but we did not receive signed comments in time for inclusion in this report. Each stated that their command would develop and implement a written voting policy. We request that USCYBERCOM and USEUCOM provide signed comments in response to the final report by April 29, 2019. The recommendation is resolved, but remains open. We will close the recommendation once we confirm that the combatant commands have published their respective policies.

Please see the recommendations table on the next page.

Recommendations Table

Management	Recommendations Unresolved	Recommendations Resolved	Recommendations Closed
Navy Senior Service Voting Representative		A.2, A.3	None
Naval Inspector General	A.1		
Commander of U.S. Central Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Cyber Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. European Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Northern Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Southern Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command		B	None
Commander of U.S. Strategic Command		B	None

Please provide Management Comments by April 29, 2019.

Note: The following categories are used to describe agency management's comments to individual recommendations.

- **Unresolved** – Management has not agreed to implement the recommendation or has not proposed actions that will address the recommendation.
- **Resolved** – Management agreed to implement the recommendation or has proposed actions that will address the underlying finding that generated the recommendation.
- **Closed** – OIG verified that the agreed upon corrective actions were implemented.



**INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500**

March 26, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: DoD Voting Assistance Programs for CY 2018 (Report No. DODIG-2019-065)

We are providing this report for review and comment. We performed the evaluation in accordance with the requirements of U.S.C. § 1566.

We considered management comments in response to a draft of this report when preparing the final report. Two of the three comments from the Naval IG were responsive and conformed to the requirements of DoD Instruction 7650.03; however, one did not. We therefore require additional comments on recommendation A.1 from the Navy by April 29, 2019.

Comments from U.S. Central Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Strategic Command were responsive to our recommendation and we do not require additional comments. We did not receive signed comments from U.S. Cyber Command and U.S. European Command in time for inclusion in this report. DoD Instruction 7650.03 requires that all recommendations be resolved promptly. We therefore request that these two combatant commands provide comments on recommendation B by April 29, 2019.

Please send a PDF file containing your comments to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Copies of your comments must have the actual signature of the authorizing official for your organization. We cannot accept the /Signed/ symbol in place of the actual signature.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance received during the evaluation. Please direct any questions to [REDACTED]


Kenneth P. Moorefield
Deputy Inspector General
Special Plans and Operations

Distribution:

DIRECTOR, FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
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Introduction

Objective

Section 1566, title 10, United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 1566), “Voting assistance: compliance assessments; assistance,” as amended, requires the DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG) to report annually to Congress, not later than March 31 each year, regarding:

- the effectiveness during the preceding calendar year of voting assistance programs, and
- the level of compliance during the preceding calendar year with the voting assistance programs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

To meet the Congressional requirement, we analyzed and summarized reports submitted by the Service Inspectors General regarding voting assistance program compliance and effectiveness for their respective military Service.

In addition to the congressional requirements, we also determined whether DoD combatant commands complied with applicable requirements of DoD Instruction 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)” September 13, 2012 (as modified by Change 1, effective December 1, 2017), at their respective headquarters.

Background

Criteria

Federal

“The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act,” (UOCAVA [Public Law 99-410]), states that exercising the right to vote by Uniformed Service members, their eligible family members, and other eligible overseas voters is important. Accordingly, the UOCAVA establishes various programs and requirements intended to help these absentee voters.

The law affects multiple executive departments, including the U.S. Departments of Defense, State, and Justice. The law also requires the President to “designate the head of an executive department to have primary responsibility for Federal Functions” under the law, and then describes specific duties for the “Presidential designee” to perform.

Executive Order 12642, signed on June 8, 1988, designates the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee,” pursuant to the UOCAVA. The order also authorizes the Secretary of Defense to delegate any or all “Presidential designee” functions, responsibilities, powers, authority, or discretion to any person within the DoD. The Secretary delegated this responsibility to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

The “Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act,” (Public Law 111-84, Title V, Subtitle H) was signed on October 28, 2009, and significantly amended the UOCAVA with requirements intended to help eligible military members, their eligible family members, and other eligible overseas voters. The House of Representatives Report that accompanied the legislation (House Resolution 2647) opines that the right to vote is fundamental and that many logistical, geographical, operational, and environmental barriers restrict the ability of military and other eligible overseas citizens to vote. The UOCAVA, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act and other provisions, is codified in 52 U.S.C. § 20301–20311.

10 U.S.C. § 1566 defines, “Voting Assistance Programs” as “the Federal Voting Assistance Program” (FVAP) carried out under the ‘Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act’ and any similar program.” In addition to requiring this report from the DoD OIG, the statute requires the Inspectors General (IGs) of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to:

- conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of their respective voting assistance programs,
- conduct an annual review of compliance of their voting assistance programs, and
- submit a report to the DoD OIG in time each year to be reflected in the DoD OIG’s March 31 report to Congress.

Department of Defense

On December 1, 2017, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness published Change 1 to DoD Instruction 1000.04 “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP).” The Instruction:

- implements the UOCAVA and 10 U.S.C. § 1566 by establishing policy and assigning DoD responsibility for the FVAP;
- states that the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness would execute “Presidential designee” responsibilities that were assigned to the Secretary of Defense in Executive Order 12642;

- further delegates “Presidential designee” authority and responsibility to a “civilian FVAP Director,” and specifies that the FVAP Director will “manage, coordinate, and perform the Presidential designee’s responsibilities as established by the UOCAVA;”
- requires the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to manage their individual Service voting assistance programs (VAPs);
- requires the Inspectors General of the Military Departments to review their voting assistance programs annually and, in accordance with the UOCAVA and 10 U.S.C. § 1566, submit a copy of their report to the DoD OIG by January 31 of the following year; and
- requires Combatant Commanders to ensure deployed forces have access to Federal voting information, assist the military Services with voting responsibilities, and develop written voting-related policies to support all eligible Uniformed Service personnel and their families.

Military Services

Each military Service has published voting assistance program policy to implement the law and DoD Instruction. These policies are:

- Army Regulation 608-20, “Army Voting Assistance Program,” April 22, 2014;²
- Chief of Naval Operations Instruction (OPNAVINST) 1742.1C, “Navy Voting Assistance Program,” February 5, 2016;
- Air Force Instruction 36-3107, “Voting Assistance Program,” February 27, 2014; and
- Marine Corps Order 1742.1B, “Voting Assistance Program,” April 1, 2013.

Each Service supplements its voting assistance program with annual voting action plans. These plans guide commanders and voting assistance officers in implementing the law and DoD policy. The plans also identify key dates for ordering and mailing voting material, and reporting voting assistance metrics for each election year.

Combatant Command Headquarters

The DoD has 10 combatant commands, each with a geographic or functional mission commanding military forces during war and peace.

The combatant commands are:

- U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM),
- U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM),

² The Army updated this regulation as of February 5, 2019. However, the 2014 version was in force during the period covered by this report.

- U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM),
- U.S. European Command (USEUCOM),
- U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM),
- U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM),
- U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM),
- U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM),
- U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), and
- U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM).

Combatant commanders are responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense for the conduct of missions assigned to that command, and are directly responsible for the preparedness of the command to carry out assigned missions. However, the Secretaries of the Military Departments retain responsibility for the administration and support of forces assigned from the military Services to the combatant commands. As a result, primary responsibility for the exercise of voting assistance programs throughout the combatant commands will lie with military Service component headquarters. Each combatant commander retains responsibility for the exercise of voting assistance programs in the combatant command headquarters. The table shows the number of Uniform Service members and DoD civilians assigned to each combatant command headquarters.

Table. Service Members and Civilians Assigned to Combatant Command Headquarters

	Service Members	Civilians	Total Population
USAFRICOM	734	682	1,416
USCENTCOM	1,615	2,216	3,831
USCYBERCOM	367	129	496
USEUCOM	543	337	880
USNORTHCOM	785	565	1,350
USINDO - PACOM	378	278	656
USSOCOM	1,283	963	2,246
USSOUTHCOM	728	423	1,151
USSTRATCOM	1,052	1,079	2,131
USTRANSCOM	1,008	832	1,840
Combatant Commands Totals	8,493	7,504	15,997

Source: Data from combatant commands as of December 2018. Table assembled by DoD OIG.

DoD Federal Voting Assistance Program Office

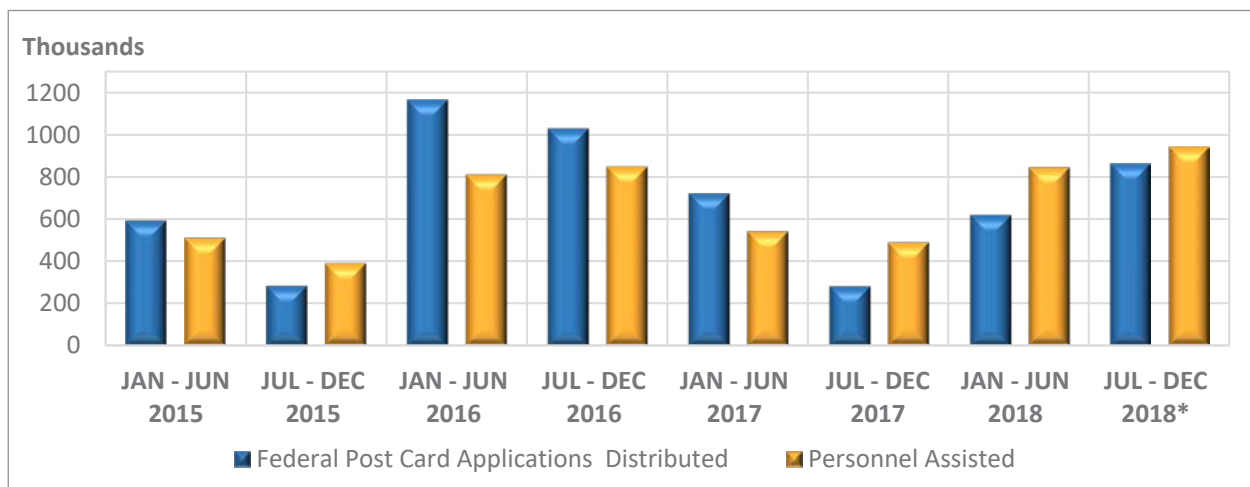
The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) office coordinates with the military Services to ensure that Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully exercise that right. See Appendix B for additional description of the responsibilities of the FVAP office.

Senior officials in the DoD FVAP office determined that two metrics provide the clearest indicators of Service VAP activity and implementation: the number of federal post card applications distributed and the number of personnel who sought assistance from their voting assistance officer. The DoD FVAP defined these indicators in September 2017:

- “Distribution of forms: any verifiable method to provide a form, whether it be a hard copy, via email, or referral to FVAP.gov;” and
- “Personnel assisted: actively assisting a voter with the Federal Postcard Application, the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, the National Main Voter Registration Form, or general voting information through in-person, telephonic, or electronic assistance.”

The Services began collecting and reporting data on these two metrics in 2015. As shown in Figure 1, VAP activity increased during the 2016 presidential election and the 2018 Senate and House election cycles.

Figure 1. Combined Service Performance Measures Show Higher Utilization During Election Cycles



Source: Data from DoD FVAP office.



Military Service Inspector General Reports

Army Inspector General

The Department of the Army IG issued its “Calendar Year 2018 Annual Report of the U.S. Army Compliance with Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program Requirements,” on December 21, 2018. The Army IG found that the Army’s Voting Assistance Program was effective and complied with 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoD Instruction 1000.04, and Army Regulation 608-20, Army Voting Assistance Program, April 22, 2014.

For its 2018 report, the Army IG compiled Voting Assistance Program data from:

- 9 Army senior-level commands,
- 326 organizations and units, and
- 688 unit voting assistance officers serving at senior command through company-size units.³

The report also includes information from U.S. Army Recruiting Command pertaining to enlistee voting requirements.

The Army IG report provides VAP compliance assessments in seven specific program areas: staffing, training, material distribution, communication and information network, commander and installation-level involvement, program compliance, and program effectiveness.

The report highlights four Army accomplishments.

- Soldiers received annual training on absentee registration and voting procedures at all 25 Installation Voting Assistance Offices inspected, and at all 326 Army organizations and units inspected.
- Of the eight Army installations inspected that had units or Soldiers deploying, all eight installations complied with the requirement to provide training and voting assistance to these personnel.
- Voting Action Officers distributed the Federal Post Card Application (Form SF-76) on or before the required date at 97 percent of units and organizations inspected by the Army IG.
- An Army Installation Voting Assistance Office and Unit Voting Assistance Office won the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the Quarter Award for the first and third quarters of calendar year 2018.

³ The Army categorizes the four senior-level Army Commands, ten Army Service Component Commands, and an additional six Army Direct Reporting Units as “senior level commands.”

The Army IG reported that over 495,000 military personnel, family members, and Army civilians received voting assistance from installation voting assistance officers and unit voting assistance officers through the first three quarters of 2018. Additionally, the Army IG noted a continued increase in the use of electronic and social media, such as installation and Army websites, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, giving Service members access to voting materials at any time and place they had internet access.

Supervisors documented VAP duty performance in personnel evaluations for 100 percent of installation voting assistance officers, as required by the federal statute and Army guidance. However, the Army IG determined that only 42 percent of personnel evaluations for unit voting assistance officers met this requirement. This is a significant decrease from past years that an Army IG official attributed in part to:

- high attrition rates, and
- a lack of awareness by some commanders and unit voting assistance officers.

The Army IG planned to make the annotation of duty performance in unit voting assistance officer evaluations a command emphasis item in the 2019 Army Voting Action Plan.

For the third year, the Army IG used a rotational system to determine which Army senior-level commands to inspect over the 4-year election cycle. The Army IG inspects all 20 Army senior-level commands twice over the four-year election cycle.

The Army IG used a standardized inspection tool that incorporates requirements from 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04 to conduct VAP inspections. For the calendar year 2018 report, the Army IG sent the standardized inspection tool to senior-level command Inspectors General, who in turn inspected their subordinate commands as part of their annual VAP assessments.

Navy Inspector General

The Naval IG issued its “Report of Assessment of Navy Voting Assistance Program (VAP) for Calendar Year 2018,” on January 31, 2019. The Naval IG concluded that the Navy’s VAP was not compliant, but that it was effective where implemented. The criteria used by the Naval IG for its compliance testing included 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoD Instruction 1000.04, and OPNAVINST 1742.1C. The Naval IG surveyed the 1305 Navy commands meeting the requirements for a VAP and relied on self-reporting by the surveyed commands to determine compliance with the criteria listed in this paragraph.

According to the Naval IG's report, in 2018, 645 of the 1,305 commands (49 percent) responded to the survey, an increase from 171 commands in 2017. Of the 645 that responded in 2018, 307 noted two or more discrepancies on the VAP inspection checklist, resulting in a rating of non-compliant from the Naval IG. In addition, the Naval IG also rated non-responsive commands as non-compliant, which could yield an incomplete picture of overall Navy VAP compliance.

The Naval IG report shows an increase in one of its measures of effectiveness, the overall utilization of VAP services. The number of personnel assisted in 2018 increased 88 percent, and the number of Federal Post Card Applications distributed increased by 53 percent from the previous year.

The Naval IG report reflects results from three echelon-2 command inspections (those reporting directly to the Chief of Naval Operations), three area visits, and an end-of-year survey of the 1,305 commands.⁴ During 2018, Naval IG inspection teams reviewed documents on-site and interviewed personnel assigned to voting assistance offices. The Naval IG reported on Navy VAP compliance in seven specific categories: staffing, training, material distribution, communication and information network, commander-and installation-level involvement, program compliance, and program effectiveness. The report stated that all units inspected were compliant.

According to the report, Navy commanders inspect unit VAP at all levels of command, but at different frequencies. Most echelon-2 commands inspect the VAP in at least 10 percent of their subordinate commands annually, the Naval IG reported. The Naval IG also reported that it set a goal to inspect all echelon-2 commands every 5 years. Over the past four years, the Naval IG inspected 18 of 31 total echelon-2 commands:

- seven in CY 2015,
- four in CY 2016,
- four in CY 2017, and
- three in CY 2018.

At this reported rate, the Naval IG may not achieve its stated goal. However, this is not a requirement of DoD Instruction 1000.04 or OPNAVINST 1742.1C.

⁴ An area visit is a site visit to the commands in a specific area that results in an assessment of multiple installations and commands in the same geographical region, such as Naval Air Station Atsugi and Fleet Activities Sasebo, both in Japan.

In our previous report, “DoD Voting Assistance Program for Calendar Year 2017,” we determined that the Navy was not compliant with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04, which require each Service to appoint at least one trained military member as a unit voting assistance officer in every military unit of 25 or more permanently assigned personnel. On April 4, 2018, the Chief of Naval Operations issued an administrative message restoring voting assistance officers in every echelon-2 command, region, and installations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel. However, the Naval IG reported that awareness of this administrative message was incomplete, and a number of commands continued to follow earlier Navy guidance that eliminated this requirement. The Naval IG point of contact believed that attention to this issue by the Navy voting officers will address this issue over time.

Air Force Inspector General

The Air Force IG issued “Air Force Federal Voting Assistance Program Inspection Report - FY18,” on January 31, 2019. The AF IG reported that the AF VAP complied with 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoD Instruction 1000.04, and Air Force Regulation 36-3107 and made improvement in its measures of VAP effectiveness. For example, compared with 2016, the Air Force IG reported a 135 percent increase in the number of personnel assisted in 2018, and a 12 percent increase in the number of forms distributed, such as the Federal Post Card Application, Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, and National Voter Registration.

The Air Force IG reported inspecting the FVAP at all organizational levels of command. Major Command and Wing inspectors identified 55 deficiencies during the 169 inspections of Wings (or Wing-equivalents).⁵ Inspectors found 11 of 55 total deficiencies as significant.⁶ All 11 significant deficiencies occurred at just four of the 157 Wings inspected. Of the 11 significant deficiencies:

- Eight resulted from the failure of unit leaders and FVAP managers to comply with published requirements, such as providing newcomer orientation briefings, maintaining VAP documentation, and voting assistance officer training.
- Three resulted from commanders failing to establish or maintain a voting program at their level of command, such as headquarters, Major Command, installation, or unit.

⁵ The Air Force defines Major Commands as those commands assigned a major part of the Air Force mission and directly subordinate to U.S. Air Force headquarters. The Air Force IG reported 157 Wings or Wing-equivalents, with some units receiving multiple inspections. A wing is an operational unit composed of one primary mission group with manpower requirements set at those levels required for mission success.

⁶ Air Force Instruction 90-201 defines a Significant Deficiency as, “A validated deficiency which has or could have negative mission impact.”

The Air Force IG reported that commanders had corrected 5 of the 11 deficiencies as of the issuance of its report in January 2019.

The Air Force IG reported that its teams conduct VAP inspections using standardized criteria derived from DoD Instruction 1000.04. The report states that the Air Force Inspection Agency plans inspections of command-level Voting Assistance Program responsibilities at each Major Command every four years and the Service Voting Action Officer every year.

In our previous report, “DoD Voting Assistance Program for Calendar Year 2017,” we identified that the Air Force was not compliant with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04, which requires the Service to appoint at least one trained military member as a unit voting assistance officer in every military unit of 25 or more permanently assigned personnel. On August 30, 2018, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Manpower and Reserve Affairs issued a memorandum restoring voting assistance officers in all Air Force major commands and units with 25 or more permanently assigned members and one additional UVAO for each 50 members thereafter.⁷ As of December 31, 2018, Air Force units had trained and re-appointed over 2,350 unit voting assistance officers to inform and assist Air Force personnel on voting matters.

Marine Corps Inspector General

The Marine Corps Inspector General (IG) issued its “Annual Assessment of the Marine Corps Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for Calendar Year (CY) 2018,” on December 20, 2018. Overall, the Marine Corps IG concluded that the Marine Corps VAP complied with 10 U.S.C. § 1566, DoD Instruction 1000.04 and Marine Corps Order 1742.1B, and was effective in assisting ligible voters.

The Marine Corps IG based this conclusion on:

- 19 Marine Corps IG inspections conducted during CY 2018,
- 102 Commanding General inspections of the VAP at various Marine units conducted during CY 2018, and
- 4 quarterly reports on voting assistance effectiveness and performance measures established by FVAP.

⁷ Air Force Guidance Memorandum to AFI 36-3107, Voting Assistance Program, August 30, 2018.

The report states that the inspection methodology includes interviews with Commanding Officers, personnel randomly selected within Marine Corps units, and voting assistance officers of the major commands, subordinate commands, installations, and units. Additionally, Marine Corps IG inspection teams:

- reviewed documents and procedures to ensure compliance with applicable guidance, and
- inspected facilities to ensure voting assistance materials are displayed in accordance with guidance.

According to the assessment report, the Marine Corps inspected unit VAP for compliance and effectiveness at all levels of command, but at different frequencies. The stated goals in the annual report are for:

- the Marine Corps IG to inspect every independent unit or activity that does not report to a Major Subordinate Commander every other year,
- the Marine Corps IG to inspect every Major Subordinate Command every third year, and
- Commanding Generals of Major Subordinate Commands to inspect their subordinate units every other year using their own inspection programs.

The Marine Corp IG reported that it set a goal to inspect all 334 units subject to inspection every three years. Over the past two years, the Marine Corps inspected 239 units combining Marine Corps IG inspections and the Commanding General's Inspection Program:

- 118 in CY 2017, and
- 121 in CY 2018.⁸

At this reported rate, if the Marine Corps inspects an additional 95 units next year, it will meet the stated goal of inspecting all 334 units in three years.

The Marine Corps IG also reported that using the quarterly measures of effectiveness and performance provided an accurate representation of the use of voting assistance resources. The Marine Corps IG stated that the quarterly voting reports provided by voting assistance officers and Marine Corps recruiters through the FVAP portal record a complete view of the voting assistance at each Marine Corps installation. Overall, the Marine Corps IG concluded in its report that service members, civilians, and their eligible family members were made aware of the 2018 midterm elections, state primaries, and all special voting events, and were provided assistance and documentation for all absentee voting requirements.

⁸ The total for CY17 is higher than the total inspections reported in the 2017 Marine Corps IG FVAP report and included in Report DODIG-2018-093.

Finding A

The Navy is Not in Compliance with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04 “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)”

The Navy’s VAP evaluation of its Service compliance with 10 U.S.C. 1566 (2014), DoD Instruction 1000.04 was incomplete. Additionally, the Navy still did not have voting assistance officers in every echelon-2 command, region, and installations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel.

The Navy relied on a survey with a 49 percent response rate, counting all non-responsive commands as noncompliant, when they may have been. Over the past four years, the Naval IG inspected 18 of 31 total echelon-2 commands, while its stated goal is to inspect all echelon-2 commands every 5 years. Additionally, the Navy did not provide enough command emphasis on the April 4, 2018 Chief of Naval Operations administrative message restoring voting assistance officers in every echelon-2 command, region, and installations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel.

As a result, the Navy is likely under-reporting FVAP compliance, may not achieve its stated goal for inspection of echelon-2 commands, and does not comply with the requirement for assignment of voting assistance officers.

Discussion

The Naval IG issued its “Report of Assessment of Navy Voting Assistance Program (VAP) for Calendar Year 2018,” on January 31, 2019. The Naval IG concluded that the Navy’s VAP was not compliant, but that it was effective where implemented. The criteria used by the Naval IG for its compliance testing included 10 U.S.C. 1566 (2014), DoD Instruction 1000.04, and OPNAVINST 1742.1C. The Naval IG surveyed the 1,305 Navy commands meeting the requirements for a VAP and relied on self-reporting by the surveyed commands to determine compliance with the criteria listed in the preceding sentence.

According to the Naval IG’s report, in 2018, 645 of the 1,305 commands (49 percent) responded to the Naval IG. The Naval IG rated non-responsive commands as non-compliant when they may have been, which could yield an incomplete picture of overall Navy VAP compliance.

According to the report, Navy commanders inspect unit VAP at all levels of command, but at different frequencies. Most echelon-2 commands inspect the VAP at least 10 percent of their subordinate commands annually, the Naval IG reported. The Naval IG also reported that it set a goal to inspect all echelon-2 commands every 5 years. Over the past four years, the Naval IG inspected 18 of 31 total echelon-2 commands:

- seven in CY 2015,
- four in CY 2016,
- four in CY 2017, and
- three in CY 2018.

At this reported rate, the Naval IG may not achieve its stated goal. However, this is not a requirement of DoD Instruction 1000.04 or OPNAVINST 1742.1C.

Finally, in our previous report, “DoD Voting Assistance Program for Calendar Year 2017,” we determined that the Navy was not compliant with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04, which require each Service to appoint at least one trained military member as a unit voting assistance officer in every military unit of 25 or more permanently assigned personnel. On April 4, 2018, the Chief of Naval Operations issued an administrative message restoring voting assistance officers in every echelon-2 command, region, and installations with more than 25 permanently assigned personnel. However, the Naval IG reported that awareness of this administrative message was incomplete, and a number of commands continued to follow earlier Navy guidance that eliminated this requirement.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation A.1

We recommend that the Naval Inspector General determine if the evaluation protocol is accurately capturing naval unit compliance with the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Navy Installation Command Comments

The Commander, Navy Installations Command, agreed with the recommendation and stated that the Navy Service Voting Action Officer will review the Navy’s self-assessment checklist to ensure that it accurately captures line-item compliance with the FVAP. The comments also stated that the Command will complete this review by July 31, 2019, prior to the annual Inspector General FVAP assessment.

Our Response

Comments from the Commander, Navy Installations Command, did not address the intent of the recommendation; therefore the recommendation is unresolved. We did not comment on the content of the Navy's self-assessment checklist during this evaluation. The intent of the recommendation was for the Navy to review its methodology for determining unit compliance with the FVAP. The Naval IG's decision to consider non-responsive units as noncompliant likely results in underreporting as the IG compiles the information and prepares the Navy FVAP report. Therefore, we clarified the intent of the recommendation and redirected it to the Naval IG as stated below.

Redirected Recommendation

In response to management comments, we redirected Recommendation A.1 to the Naval IG, that has the authority and responsibility to take the action. We request the Naval IG provide comments on the final report.

Recommendation A.2

We recommend that the Navy senior service voting representative coordinate to ensure that the goals established by the Navy for the frequency of unit Federal Voting Assistance inspections are met.

Navy Installations Command Comments

The Commander, Navy Installations Command, agreed with the recommendation. Specifically the Commander stated that the Navy Senior Voting Action Officer will coordinate with Navy Office of the Inspector General to explore how the Navy Installations Command's voting program staff and other echelon-2 command IG teams can assist in conducting voting inspections within their respective organizations. The Commander pledged that a plan would be in place for the 2020 election cycle.

Our Response

Comments from the Commander, Navy Installations Command, addressed the intent of the recommendation. Therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close the recommendation once we verify that the Navy Installations Command has implemented a plan for augmenting its voting inspections.

Recommendation A.3

We recommend that the Navy senior service voting representative bring the Navy voting assistance program into compliance with Section 1566, title 10 United States Code (10 U.S.C. § 1566) “Voting assistance: compliance assessments; assistance” and DoD Instruction 1000.04 “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)” with regard to assigning unit voting assistance officers.

Navy Installations Command Comments

The Commander, Navy Installations Command, agreed with the recommendation. The Commander stated that the Navy Installations Command will release additional guidance and coordinate with the Chief of Naval Operations to promulgate a new administrative message for the 2020 election cycle. In addition, the Senior Voting Action Officer will continue to distribute guidance to all Voting Action Officers via email distribution and monthly newsletters.

Our Response

Comments from the Commander, Navy Installations Command, addressed the intent of the recommendation. Therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We will close the recommendation when we verify that the designated entities have taken the proposed actions.

Finding B

Most Combatant Commands Did Not Comply With FVAP Policy

Eighty percent of combatant commands did not have a written voting policy, as required by DoD Instruction 1000.04 “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP),” September 13, 2012.

Combatant commands were not in compliance because many of them believed that the Services or installations were responsible for voting or stated that written voting policies were in draft.

Without a written voting policy, combatant commanders cannot ensure they meet the intent of DoD Instruction 1000.04.

Discussion

DoD Instruction 1000.04, “Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP),” establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for the FVAP. The instruction states that DoD Components, which include combatant commands, shall “develop written voting-related policies to support all eligible Uniformed Services personnel and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations.” The instruction also requires the heads of all DoD Components to “disseminate voting information and assist eligible voters in their respective organization.” Specific to combatant commands, the instruction requires commanders to:

- “ensure that deployed forces have access to Federal voting information and assistance, particularly in remote locations;”
- “provide Uniformed Services members under their command with access to computers with Internet capability and other necessary resources, including, but not limited to, printers and scanners for absentee voting purposes, to the extent practicable;”
- “emphasize, within the operational chain of command, the importance that they and the DoD attach to participation by Uniformed Service members in the Federal, State, and local election process;” and
- “make every reasonable effort to assist the Military Services in discharging the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in this Instruction [Enclosure 4].”

Combatant Command Compliance

We sent a request for information to all 10 combatant commands to obtain information on their support to the FVAP. See Appendix C for the list of questions included in the information request.

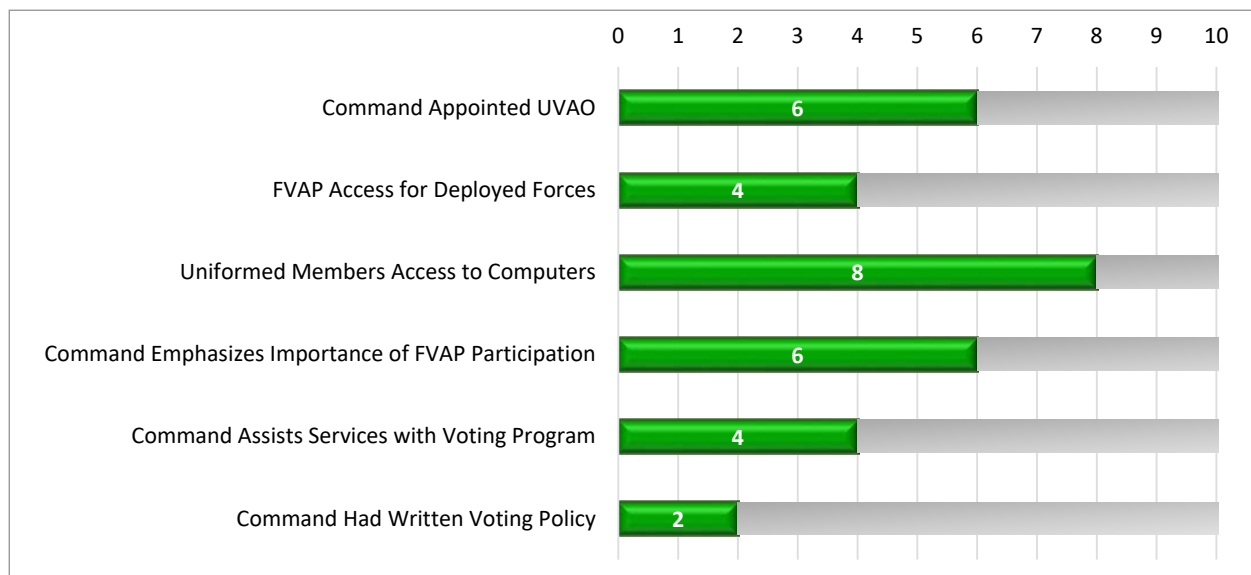
In response, only USAFRICOM and USTRANSCOM stated that they had a written policy. Both provided copies, which we reviewed and determined they complied with DoD Instruction 1000.04. USTRANSCOM officials added that they are updating their policy, last published in September 2014.

The remaining eight combatant commands replied that they did not have written voting policies. Their stated reasons for not having a policy were that they:

- relied on the Service component or installation policy (USCYBERCOM, USEUCOM, USSOCOM, USSOUTHCOM, and USSTRATCOM);
- were drafting a policy (USINDOPACOM and USNORTHCOM), or
- had none; replying “a written policy is not in effect,” (USCENTCOM).

Figure 2 summarizes command responses to our request for information. The responses demonstrate that, while most of the combatant commands lacked a written voting policy, 6 out of 10 displayed a level of support for, and awareness of, the voting program. Of note, 4 of 10 combatant commands stated they appointed unit voting assistance officers in writing to carry out duties prescribed in DoD Instruction 1000.04. Even though the instruction does not require combatant commands to appoint a unit voting assistance officer, the commanders of USAFRICOM, USCYBERCOM, USEUCOM, and USSOCOM opted to do so.

Figure 2. Summary of Combatant Command Efforts to Support Voting Within Their Operational Chain of Command



Source: DoD OIG.

Five of the 10 combatant commands reported they had processes and procedures in place to ensure that deployed forces have access to federal voting information. Three of the 10 combatant commands stated that they require a voting assistance officer to brief all deploying personnel prior to deployment, and that they ensure units have voting assistance officers at their deployed location. Additionally, 7 of the 10 combatant commands stated that they had procedures in place to ensure that their assigned personnel have access to computers with internet capability and other necessary resources including, but not limited to, printers and scanners for absentee voting purposes while in a deployed environment.

While five combatant commands wrote that they relied on the military Services or the command at their host installation to provide voting information for their personnel, several provided examples of how they emphasize voting. For example, USAFRICOM officials stated that their appointed unit voting assistance officer worked with other units on the installation during voting drives. Voting drives provided Service members and voting-age family members with access to absentee voter registration and information to include recommended mailing dates and voting deadlines.

USCYBERCOM reported that it used its appointed unit voting assistance officer to distribute information throughout the command and had the USCYBERCOM IG review its program for compliance. In addition, USCYBERCOM officials stated that the host installation trained its unit voting assistance officer and his assistant, and reviewed voting program compliance. USEUCOM, whose position is that Service components support its respective deployed forces, reported that the installation voting assistance officer distributed informational material, such as posters, to its unit voting assistance officer to display in its respective directorates. Additionally, the USEUCOM unit voting assistance officer sent emails promoting voting and shared information in person. USEUCOM also reported using the installation voting assistance officer to conduct a voting emphasis campaign during which the command placed voting information on tables in high foot-traffic areas, such as the base exchange and commissary.⁹ Finally, USEUCOM reported that Command personnel staffed those tables and provided assistance on voting programs.

While most Combatant Commands reported that they supported the VAP, USCENTCOM and USNORTHCOM reported no examples of command action or emphasis on the importance of participation by Uniformed Services members in the Federal, State, and local election processes. In addition, USSOCOM stated that, as a tenant unit on MacDill Air Force Base, the command relied on the installation's voting program for combatant command headquarters personnel to obtain voting information. These three combatant command headquarters were among the eight without a written voting policy.

⁹ An exchange is a type of retail store found on United States military installations worldwide.

All DoD Components are required to have a written voting policy, in accordance with DoD Instruction 1000.04. Written voting policies serve to educate and provide awareness and assistance to all eligible personnel within the command who want to vote. Without a policy, the command runs the risk of assigned personnel missing key voting information, to include election dates and deadlines for absentee registration and voting. A written policy would clearly state the Commander's support for the FVAP and guide combatant command staff in the execution of congressionally mandated voting assistance.

Recommendation, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation B

We recommend that the Commanders of U.S. Central Command, U.S. Cyber Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Southern Command, and U.S. Strategic Command develop and implement written voting policies to support all eligible Uniformed Services personnel and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations.

U.S. Combatant Command Comments

Six of the eight Combatant Commands provided a formal response to this recommendation in time to include them in this final report. Two Combatant Commands gave informal comments.

Representatives from USCENTCOM, USINDOPACOM, USNORTHCOM, USSOUTHCOM, USSOCOM, and USSTRATCOM gave a signed response agreeing with the recommendation. Representatives from USCYBERCOM and USEUCOM agreed with the recommendation, but we did not receive signed comments in time for inclusion in this report. Each stated that its command would develop and implement a written voting policy.

Our Response

Comments from USCENTCOM, USINDOPACOM, USNORTHCOM, USSOUTHCOM, USSOCOM, and USSTRATCOM addressed the intent of the recommendation. Unsigned comments from USCYBERCOM and USEUCOM addressed the intent of the recommendation. Therefore, the recommendation is resolved, but will remain open. We request that USCYBERCOM and USEUCOM provide signed comments in response to the final report. We will close the recommendation once we have verified that the commands publish written voting plans that satisfy DoD Instruction 1000.04.

Appendix A

Scope and Methodology

We conducted this evaluation from October 2018 through March 2019 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, “Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation,” January 2012. Those standards require that we plan and perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations, based on our evaluation objectives. We believe the evidence obtained meets those standards.

The scope of this evaluation included the reporting period beginning January 1 through December 31, 2018, in accordance with our responsibilities under 10 U.S.C. § 1566. We collected reports from the Inspectors General of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps assessing their Service’s voter program compliance during 2018. We reviewed these reports and supporting data, as needed. We also reviewed documents prepared by the Federal Voting Assistance Program office, including their annual report to Congress on the effectiveness of activities carried out under the UOCAVA. To avoid duplication, we reviewed relevant reports by other oversight organizations such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

We determined whether voting assistance programs of the military Services and combatant commands were effective and whether these programs complied with the relevant DoD and Service guidance. We reviewed relevant federal laws, DoD policies, Service policies and voting action plans, and other appropriate documents. We interviewed representatives from the offices of the DoD FVAP, the Service IGs, and Combatant Commands to assess their implementation of requirements specified in DoD Instruction 1000.04. We also collected Combatant Command responses to a standardized question set about their voting assistance program policies and activities. (See Appendix C for a copy of that question set.)

Limitations

DoD Instruction 1000.04 requires the Inspectors General of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to submit their reports assessing Voting Assistance Program efforts to the DoD OIG by January 31, while 10 U.S.C. § 1566 requires the DoD OIG to submit our report by March 31. As a result of this compressed timeframe, our ability to review, test, or examine the Military Service IG reports is limited. While we reviewed the Service IG’s 2018 VAP reports for consistency and reasonableness, we did not validate their data and conclusions.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We used computer-processed data reported by the Navy and Marine Corps IGs to support the conclusions and recommendations of Findings A and B in this evaluation. While we did not assess the reliability of the data, in both cases the data were sufficiently reliable as our recommendations are for the respective Military Service representatives to take action to verify or increase their reported numbers. Specifically for the Navy, we recommend it validate the number of units reporting VAP data.

Prior Coverage

During the past 5 years the GAO, the DoD OIG, and others have issued reports discussing support to UOCAVA voters. Access unrestricted GAO reports at <http://www.gao.gov>. Access unrestricted DoD OIG reports at <http://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/>.

GAO

GAO Report No. GAO-16-378, “DOD Needs More Comprehensive Planning to Address Military and Overseas Absentee Voting Challenges,” April 20, 2016

According to the GAO, the DoD estimated the number of UOCAVA voters at more than 6 million U.S. citizens. The GAO reported that local election offices rejected UOCAVA voter ballots at about a six percent rate, while at the same time rejecting one percent of the non-UOCAVA voter ballots. The report explained that the discrepancy primarily resulted from local election offices receiving overseas ballots after established receipt deadlines. While the GAO found that the DoD had taken steps to improve military and overseas absentee voting assistance, it concluded two longstanding issues remained. First, UOCAVA voters were not fully aware of FVAP resources intended to help them register, vote, and have their vote counted. Second, mail delivery from overseas locations was unpredictable.

GAO recommended that DoD establish time frames for actions the FVAP office identified to address challenges, fully implement the selected leading practices of federal strategic planning into its day-to-day operations, and develop a strategic plan that fully exhibits the six selected leading practices of federal strategic planning. DoD generally concurred with GAO’s recommendations.

DoD OIG

DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2015-135, "Assessment of Electronic Absentee System for Elections (EASE) Grants," June 30, 2015

The report objective was to determine whether recipients of Electronic Absentee System for Elections 2.0 grants inappropriately used grant funds to develop systems for the electronic return of a marked ballot. It determined how the DoD Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) office accounted for about \$85 million in Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation funds received between 2010 and 2013. The FVAP office used these funds to execute the Electronic Absentee System for Elections 2.0 grant programs, and about 10 other projects to support FVAP's mission of providing support to military and overseas voters.

DoD OIG Annual Reports on the DoD FVAP

As required by 10 U.S.C. § 1566, the DoD OIG has reported annually since 2001 on the effectiveness of DoD voting assistance programs and compliance with the voting assistance programs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

As appropriate, these reports made recommendations to address program challenges and to improve program support for absent military personnel, their dependents, and other overseas voters. Only the report for the year 2017 has open recommendations as described below. Management took appropriate action on recommendations in earlier reports and we closed them.

DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2018-093, "DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2017," March 30, 2018

The report found that that the Navy and Air Force VAPs did not comply with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 or DoD Instruction 1000.04, which require the Uniformed Services to appoint at least one trained military member as a unit voting assistance officer in every military unit of 25 or more permanently assigned personnel. Responsible Navy and Air Force officials changed their voting assistance programs and eliminated unit voting assistance officer positions.

The report also found that only 3 of 19 Defense Agencies had written voting related policies, as required by DoD Instruction 1000.04.

Additionally, DoD Instruction 1000.04 did not provide sufficient clarity and guidance to the Services and Agencies about the FVAP. Specifically, DoD Instruction 1000.04 did not provide sufficient clarity and guidance because:

- the instruction only required “written voting-related policies” for “Uniformed Services personnel and their family members,” and
- the instruction did not specify what “written voting-related policies” should contain.

The report also noted that the suspense of January 31 of each year for the Military Service Inspectors General to submit their FVAP reports to the DoD OIG, as established by DoD Instruction 1000.04, makes it difficult for the DoD OIG to submit the required report to Congress by March 31.

The report recommended that the FVAP Director, in coordination with the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness:

1. coordinate with the Navy senior service voting representative to bring the Navy voting assistance program into compliance with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04 with regard to unit voting assistance officers,
2. coordinate with the Air Force senior service voting representative to bring the Air Force voting assistance program into compliance with 10 U.S.C. § 1566 and DoD Instruction 1000.04 with regard to unit voting assistance officers,
3. clarify or revise DoD Instruction 1000.04 to ensure that all elements of the UOCAVA population, including all eligible civilian U.S. citizens residing outside the United States, are included in all provisions of DoD Instruction 1000.04.

Recommendations 1 and 2 are closed. In 2018, both the Navy and the Air Force issued updated Service guidance requiring units to appoint unit voting assistance officers in every military unit of 25 or more permanently assigned personnel, as required by DoD Instruction 1000.04. Recommendation 3 remains open.

The DoD OIG annual reports issued for the previous 4 years are:

- DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2017-071, “Assessment of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2016,” March 31, 2017
- DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2016-071, “Assessment of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2015,” March 31, 2016
- DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2015-098, “Assessment of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2014,” March 31, 2015
- DoD OIG Report No. DoDIG-2014-051, “Assessment of DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2013,” March 31, 2014

Appendix B

Federal Voting Assistance Program Overview

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) provides voting assistance to military personnel, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens through a federal mandate. FVAP works to ensure that each of these groups is aware of the right to vote and has the tools and resources to successfully do so from anywhere in the world.

52 U.S.C. § 20301 requires the President to delegate the head of an executive department to have primary responsibility for the functions related to the registration and voting by absent Uniformed Services voters and overseas voters in elections for Federal office. Specifically, the Presidential designee shall:

- “consult state and local election officials in carrying out this chapter, and ensure that such officials are aware of the requirements of this Act;
- prescribe an official postcard form, containing both an absentee voter registration application and an absentee-ballot application, for use by the states, as required under section 20302(a)(4) of title 52;
- carry out section 20303 of title 52 with respect to the Federal write-in absentee ballot for absent Uniformed Services voters and overseas voters in general elections for Federal office;
- prescribe a suggested design for absentee-ballot mailing envelopes;
- compile and distribute –
 - descriptive material on state absentee registration and voting procedures, and
 - to the extent practicable, facts relating to specific elections, including dates, offices involved, and the text of ballot questions;
- not later than the end of each year after a Presidential election year, transmit to the President and the Congress a report on the effectiveness of assistance under this chapter, including a statistical analysis of Uniformed Services voter participation, a separate statistical analysis of overseas nonmilitary participation, and a description of State-Federal cooperation;
- prescribe a standard oath for use with any document under this chapter affirming that a material misstatement of fact in the completion of such a document may constitute grounds for a conviction for perjury;
- carry out section 20304 of this title with respect to the collection and delivery of marked absentee ballots of absent overseas Uniformed Services voters in elections for Federal office;

- to the greatest extent practicable, take such actions as may be necessary –
 - to ensure that absent Uniformed Services voters who cast absentee ballots at locations or facilities under the jurisdiction of the Presidential designee are able to do so in a private and independent manner; and
 - to protect the privacy of the contents of absentee ballots cast by absentee Uniformed Services voters and overseas voters while such ballots are in the possession or control of the Presidential designee;
- carry out section 20305 of title 52 with respect to Federal Voting Assistance Program Improvements; and
- working with the Election Assistance Commission and the chief State election official of each state, develop standards for –
 - states to report data on the number of absentee ballots transmitted and received under section 20302(c) of this title and such other data as the Presidential designee determines appropriate; and
 - the Presidential designee to store the data reported.”

Executive Order 12642, “Designation of the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential designee under title I of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act,” identified the Secretary of Defense as the Presidential designee. The Secretary of Defense delegated this authority and the reporting requirement to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, who further delegated this authority to the Director, FVAP.

The FVAP Office is required to report the information specified within UOCAVA to the President and Congress not later than March 31 of each year. Its report is required to include descriptions of Military Department voter registration assistance programs and their use, absentee ballot collection and delivery, cooperation between states and the Federal Government, as well as assessments of absent Uniformed Services and overseas voter registration and participation.

The FVAP Office, in accordance with 52 U.S.C. §20305, provides an online portal to inform absent Uniformed Service members, their families, and overseas citizens about voter registration and absentee ballot procedures. Military Service officials, election officials, and other stakeholders use data from the portal for dissemination, analysis, and program improvements.

Appendix C

Request for Information

DoD OIG sent the document below to the ten combatant commands.

**DoD Voting Assistance Programs for Calendar Year 2018
(Project No. D2019-D00SPO-0026.000)**

Combatant Command Request for Information.

Please provide the requested information to the POCs on the cover letter no later than November 30, 2018.

Background.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1000.04, dated September 13, 2012, and incorporating Change 1, December 1, 2017, establishes Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) policy and assigns responsibilities for Combatant Commanders in accordance with Executive Order 12642 and sections 20301 – 20311 of title 52, United States Code.

Combatant Commander and DoD Component Responsibilities.

1. DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 5 directs heads of the DoD Components and the uniformed services to, “disseminate voting information and assist eligible voters, as required, in their respective organization, following the procedures in Enclosure 4.”
2. DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 6 directs Combatant Commanders to:
 - a. “Ensure that deployed forces have access to Federal voting information and assistance, particularly in remote locations. To the extent practicable, provide uniformed services members under their command with access to computers with Internet capability and other necessary resources including, but not limited to, printers and scanners for absentee voting purposes.”
 - b. “Emphasize, within the operational chain of command, the importance that they and the DoD attach to participation by uniformed services members in the Federal, State, and local election process and make every reasonable effort to assist the Military Services in discharging the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in this Instruction.”
3. DoDI 1000.04 Enclosure 4, Section 1 directs DoD Components (including Combatant Commanders) to:
 - a. “Develop written voting-related policies to support all eligible uniformed services personnel and their family members, including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations. Establish the ratio and maximum number of voters who may be represented by a VAO [Voting Assistance Officer].”
 - b. “Ensure command support at all levels for the FVAP”.

Request for Information (cont'd)

Request for Information.

1. State whether the Command appointed a VAO, and if so, provide a copy of the appointment letter for the current Command VAO. Include the VAO's contact information.
2. Please provide the Command's processes and procedures for ensuring that deployed forces have access to federal voting information and assistance, particularly in remote locations. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 6.a.)
3. Please provide Command processes and procedures for providing uniformed services members with access to computers with Internet capability and other necessary resources including, but not limited to, printers and scanners for absentee voting purposes. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 6.a.)
4. Please describe, providing examples as applicable, of how, within the operational chain of command, the Command emphasizes the importance that it attaches to participation by uniformed service members in the Federal, State, and local election process. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 6.b.)
5. Please describe, providing examples as applicable, efforts the Command makes to assist the Military Services in discharging the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in the DoD Instruction. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 2, Section 6.b.)
6. Please provide a copy of the Combatant Command written voting-related policy, including the Command's policy to establish the ratio and maximum number of voters who may be represented by a VAO. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 4, Section 1.a.)
7. Please describe, with examples as applicable, how the Command provides support at all levels for the FVAP. (DoDI 1000.04, Enclosure 4, Section 1.b.)

Combatant Command HQ Personnel Demographics / Command Authorities.

8. What is the total number of personnel, categorized by uniformed service members and civilian employees, assigned to the Command HQ?
9. How does the Command provide voting assistance for organic assigned personnel other than those at the Headquarters Element?
10. How, if at all, does the Combatant Command conduct oversight of Service Component Commands' execution of Federal Voting Assistance requirements?

Acronyms and Abbreviations

FVAP	Federal Voting Assistance Program
GAO	Government Accountability Office
IG	Inspector General
OIG	Office of Inspector General
UOCAVA	The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act
USAFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USCYBERCOM	U.S. Cyber Command
USEUCOM	U.S. European Command
USINDOPACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command
USNORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
USSTRATCO	U.S. Strategic Command
USTRANSCOM	U.S. Transportation Command
U.S.C.	United States Code
VAP	Voting Assistance Program



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