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U. S. ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND

News Release

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Armed Services Blood Program revises policy, works closely with civilian agencies

Washington D.C., Oct. 15, 2007 — The Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) can now accept blood donations by individuals other than active duty Service members, their immediate families, retirees and Department of Defense (DoD) employees.

The DoD policy on blood donations by non-DOD individuals signed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England last week, comes in response to a need by the military for specified blood products and the desire by Veterans groups, military family support groups and other groups, who requested the current policy be changed, to accommodate those previously ineligible to donate blood to the military during this time of war.

“We are very grateful for the support shown by citizens who were willing to seek change in order to support their troops,” said Navy Cdr. Michael C. Libby, director of the Armed Services Blood Program Office (ASBP).

“While the need for blood within the military is a fraction of the need the civilian community faces, blood is still perishable and can only be replenished by volunteer donors,” Libby said.

To ensure that this policy change does not infringe upon community blood needs, the ASBP is working closely with its civilian counterparts—America’s Blood Centers, the American Red Cross, and the American Association of Blood Banks - now known as AABB - to illustrate the critical need for regular donations, as opposed to one-time large scale donations that might go unused.

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ASBP revises policy (page 2)

“There have been times when donors, motivated by the understandably strong desire to give, have overwhelmed donor centers with their offerings, typically following a natural disaster. This creates a stockpile of donated blood that cannot be used within the expiration period,” Libby said. “When you donate blood regularly, you truly contribute to a continuous flow of life.”

Sharon Pavlovsky of America’s Blood Centers adds that: “Although there are 22 military blood donor centers throughout the United States, there are also countless community and hospital blood donor centers that not only provide blood to hospitals and clinics to meet civilian needs, but also to provide for Service members and their families.”

Notes Air Force Blood Program Director Lt. Col. Dale Ferguson “Blood is a human resource, not just a military or civilian resource.”

To find out more about the Armed Services Blood Program, and the revised DoD Policy, please visit us online at: www.militaryblood.dod.mil. And please, give blood.

About the U.S. Armed Forces Military Blood Collection, Distribution and Transfusion Program

The Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) plays a key role in providing quality blood products for service members and their families in both peace and war. As a joint operation among the military service (Army, Navy, Air Force), the ASBP has many components working together to collect, process, store, distribute, and transfuse the blood worldwide.

Formally established as the Military Blood Program in 1952 by Presidential Order as part of the National Blood Program, today's ASBP consists of approximately 81 blood banks and blood donor centers worldwide, including 22 Food and Drug Administration licensed blood donor centers.

The ASBPO is a joint health agency chartered to monitor the implementation of blood program policies established by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense - Health Affairs (OASD–HA) and to coordinate the blood programs of the military services (Army, Air Force, and Navy) and the combatant commands. The U.S. Army Surgeon General, on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, serves as the Executive Agent for the ASBPO for administrative support and staff supervision. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, by Memorandum of Understanding, are responsible for the review and provision of guidance in all matters regarding blood support in joint operational planning. The OASD-HA provides policy guidance to the ASBPO. All of the ASBP components function together to successfully operate the military blood program.

[History of the Armed Services Blood Program](#)

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