

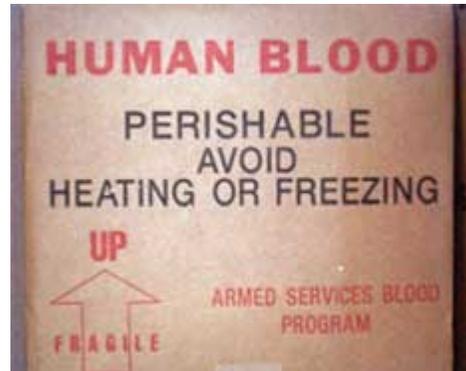
# Blood Still Needed to Support Servicemembers in Need

FALLS CHURCH, Va., May 16, 2003

Though major hostilities have ended in Iraq, blood is still needed to support those who remain and those engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition to supporting the needs of military members and their families at home, the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) is responsible for supplying blood to soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines deployed worldwide. Having enough blood in forward areas can make the difference between life and death for those injured in the line of duty. The ASBP needs continuing donor support to make sure the men and women who serve receive the best care possible.

Blood and blood products are needed for procedures ranging from leukemia treatment to trauma surgery every day. The need for blood was high before the war and it was critical during the height of military operations. Though the need remains high, the ASBP has fewer eligible donors than it had just a few months ago.

The ASBP collects blood from the military community, for the military community. ASBP Director Colonel G. Michael Fitzpatrick says, "The program depends on donors who give as often as they can to provide blood products for sick and injured servicemembers. Many of those who gave routinely are now deployed or are temporarily unable to give because they were recently in malaria-endemic areas. We need others to step up and fill that void."



Some confusion exists over who is able to donate. While many who have been in Europe for extended periods of time are currently not eligible to donate due to concerns about transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease, travel to Europe for shorter periods of time doesn't necessarily exclude a person from donating. Information explaining [donor eligibility](#) is available on the ASBP Web site. Those with additional questions about eligibility should contact their [local blood donor center](#).

"Though many medical advances are helping save lives in the field, nothing can take the place of blood," says Col. Fitzpatrick. He also noted that, "Bandages with clotting agents can help slow bleeding, but once blood is lost it must be replaced. That's what makes blood donors so important. We really can't do it without them. They truly save lives every day."

While all blood types are needed every day, Type O blood continues to be in high demand. ASBP officials explain that Type O blood is sent to forward areas because it can be given to anyone in an emergency. Once tests can be run to confirm their blood type, injured servicemembers will receive blood that matches their specific type.

If you'd like to donate blood or sponsor a group blood drive, contact your [local blood donor center](#) to make arrangements.

*American pride flows through us all. Donate blood.*

