

THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICES OF  
III CORPS, 1<sup>ST</sup> CAVALRY DIVISION, AND 4<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION (MECHANIZED)  
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544

**SERVICEMEN’S GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (SGLI)**

**I. INTRODUCTION** - Servicemen’s Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is for members of the armed forces, purchased by the government from private insurers, and partially subsidized by the government. It is term life insurance. There are no loan, cash, or paid up, or extended values. It was established by Public Law 89-214, effective 29 September 1965. It has been amended several times and is now codified as Title 38 United States Code Section 1965-1980. AR 608-2 explains the program.

**II. SGLI COVERAGE**

A. *Active Duty Soldiers* - are automatically insured for \$250,000 unless they opt out in writing. Soldiers can elect lower coverage or no coverage by completing VA Form SGLV-8286. Certain reservists are eligible for coverage.

B. *Loss of Entitlement* - Soldiers may lose their entitlement to SGLI based on their duty status at time of death, e.g., if death occurs during extended AWOL, while serving term of confinement, or following conviction of certain serious crimes. See AR 608-2, para. 2-5 and 2-7. Cause of death, however, is not relevant to the payment of SGLI proceeds.

C. *Insurability* - is guaranteed when first given the opportunity to elect SGLI. Thereafter, soldiers who desire to increase coverage may be subject to insurability determinations. Soldiers are protected for 120 days following separation even though no insurance premiums are required during this additional 120 day period. Soldiers may convert to Veteran's Group Life Insurance (VGLI) within 120 days of separation.

**III. BENEFICIARIES**

A. *Designating Beneficiaries* - A soldier can give his or her SGLI to any person or legal entity designated. “By Law” designations are no longer authorized by the Army. Because the SGLI will not be paid to a minor unless it is a minor spouse, soldiers should consider giving the proceeds to a trustee or to a custodian under the Uniform Gifts/Transfer to Minors Act.

B. *Updating SGLI* - Some states, such as Texas, have laws that cause ex-spouses to lose all entitlements to life insurance unless the deceased spouse made a special election after the divorce was final. In an Oklahoma case, a soldier designated his spouse as the beneficiary on his SGLI and then later got divorced. The soldier had intended to change the beneficiary on his SGLI but failed to do so. Under Oklahoma law, the ex-spouses would lose the entitlement to life insurance proceeds because they had divorced. However, since the SGLI is a federal entitlement, Oklahoma law could not change the designation of the ex-spouse on the SGLI. Thus, the ex-spouse got the insurance proceeds instead of the soldier’s family.

**IV. DISTRIBUTION** - The proceeds of SGLI are distributed either by lump-sum or by 36 monthly installments. The SGLI is not a part of the deceased's estate and is paid directly to the beneficiary without passing through probate court, unless the deceased has named a Trustee as designated by his Last Will and Testament. In cases involving children, the proceeds will be distributed through probate court according to the deceased's Will. Apply for benefits by submitting SGLV-8283, Claim for Death Benefits, to OSGLI, 213 Washington Street, Newark, N.J. 07102-2999. OSGLI may accept a fax copy of the claim. The Information telephone number is as follows: 1-800-419-1473. OSGLI Claims Department: (973) 802-3446.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICES ON FORT HOOD: III Corps, Building 1001, Room C224, 287-7901/3199; 1st Cavalry Division, Building 28000, Room 1155, 287-6060; 4th Infantry Division (Mech), Building 410, Room 175, 287-1850.**