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'Ailing World War II veterans can mail requirements for US benefits package'

By [James Mananghaya](#) Updated March 07, 2009 12:00 AM

MANILA, Philippines - World War II veterans who could no longer personally process their claims on the US benefits package because of illness and old age can now do so by sending their requirements through mail, an official said.

Defense undersecretary and concurrent Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Executive Director Ernesto Carolina said the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has sent out application forms to veterans, which would later be submitted to the US Embassy in Manila for processing.

He said those who could appear before the processing centers all over the country could still do so, as the new measure was done for the convenience of those who are sick and incapable of traveling.

"They now allow that because before, they would like to see the veterans to interview them. So now they allow the submission of application forms with the supporting documents, the proof of service to the USDVA in Roxas Blvd.," Carolina said.

Earlier, the PVAO and the USDVA put up 12 fast-track centers in various provinces after applicants flooded their Manila office last week after the signing of the benefits grant by President Barrack Obama.

Carolina said those who wish to apply through mail could also secure an application form from the USDVA website, as well as from the PVAO and the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

He said the USDVA has so far received about 15,000 applications since the US announced the \$9,000 lump sum payment,

Carolina said they are expecting some 80,000 to 100,000 because they have been encouraging WWII veterans to apply to determine if they are eligible for the payment.

"There are World War II veterans who are asking how they would know if they are in the Missouri list and the only way to find out, according to the USDVA, is to apply. We don't tell them they are not qualified so we encourage World War II veterans to apply. That explains why we have a lot of people going here last week," he said.