

Sent: Monday, March 01, 2010 9:16 AM

To: COA@LIST.NIH.GOV

Subject: [COA-DC-BRANCH] COA-DC-BRANCH Smart Brief - Benefits Available to PHS Officers

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN AREA BR



To members of the D.C. Metropolitan Area Branch,

This Smart Brief is a journal style email message intended to help keep you informed about various uniformed service benefits available to PHS officers. Please note that some offers may only apply to Armed Forces members; however, these Smart Briefs will help promote awareness and push toward including the common language of "Uniformed Services" in more legislation and benefits packages.

For the current posting, please forward any questions or comments to LCDR Robert Windom at robert.windom@foh.hhs.gov. We also welcome any hot topics or special discounts that you wish to share with your fellow officers. Thank you.

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Current Posting

1. Uniformed Services Tax Benefits
2. Filing State Income Taxes When You're in the Military
3. Military Discounts at Local Establishments
4. Broadway In the Beltway – Improved Process to Purchase Discount Theater Tickets Online
5. Military Appreciation Night Every Monday at The Melting Pot (Gaithersburg, MD)

6. GI Bill Transferability H.R. 3657*

Previously Posting

- 1. GI Bill Transferability H.R. 3657***
- 2. Busch Garden's "Heroes Salute" Extended Through 2010**
- 3. New Disney World Military Salute 2010**
- 4. Universal Orlando Extends 2009 Military Salute to March 2010**
- 5. Wet n' Wild (Orlando) Extends Military Appreciation Until March 31, 2010**
- 6. Free Lift Tickets for Active Duty / Emergency Personnel**

Current Posting

1. Uniformed Services Tax Benefits

The tax filing deadline is fast approaching. Taxpayers who need more time to complete their returns should submit their requests for an automatic extension electronically by April 15. This year anyone, regardless of income, can e-file their extensions at no cost from a home computer using IRS traditional FreeFile or FreeFile Fillable Forms. E-filing a request for an extension using either form of FreeFile is convenient, safe and secure, and taxpayers receive confirmation to keep with their records. The extension gives taxpayers until Oct. 15 to file the tax return. An extension does not give the taxpayer an extension of time to pay.

Many of the local military installations have set up volunteer tax centers that offer free electronic tax filing services to all uniformed service members. For more information contact your nearest military installation.

There are also many money saving tax benefits offered to uniformed service members. The below sites are provided for more information.

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html>

<http://www.military.com/Finance/Taxes/0,13397,82,00.html>

2. Filing State Income Taxes When You're in the Military

Military members may have more than one option for filing their state taxes, depending on their situation.

First, you need to understand these two terms used by the military:

Home of Record. Your home of record is the state recorded by the military as your home when you were enlisted, appointed, commissioned, inducted or ordered in a tour of active duty.

State of Legal Residency. Your state of legal residency (SLR) is your "home of record," unless you changed it to another state. Military members often mistakenly think that changing the state on their paycheck records changes their SLR. To change the SLR, a DD Form 2058 must be submitted to your local finance officer and accepted. For information on requirements for valid changes when filing Form 2058, check out this Fact Sheet on Legal Residence posted by the U.S. Air Force.

From a tax standpoint, your SLR is considered your "domicile" or "resident" state as long as you are on active duty. Even if you are stationed in another state, you're still considered a resident of your SLR.

IMPORTANT: A new law affects where the spouses of military service members can file state income taxes. For more information, see Military Spouse Residency Relief Act and State Taxes.

Please see attached State Tax Example

3. Military Discounts at Local Establishments

Attached is a short list of places that offer military discounts. Always call your local vendors to be sure they participate in the program. Also, never be afraid to ask a store if they offer a discount, even if one is not advertised. You may be pleasantly surprised.

4. Broadway In the Beltway – Improved Process to Purchase Discount Theater Tickets Online

MWR-eligible customers can access discount theater tickets online and purchase priority tickets to shows in Baltimore, DC and Norfolk VA. Here's your opportunity to choose and view your seat. Visit the online ticket sites below (formerly Event Usher / Broadway Across America) by copying and pasting the following links into your web browser to reach the military discount page.

Baltimore:

<https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/go.html?1=EN&t=baabal&o=64307181&g=445>

DC:

<https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/go.html?1=EN&t=baawdcmem&o=64307181&g=446>

Norfolk:

<https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/go.html?1=EN&t=baanor&o=64307181&g=447>

Instructions:

- (1) Visit the website (copy and paste the above links into your web browser); scroll down
- (2) Click on FIND TICKETS next to the show you want
- (3) Enter the password: 111ITTANMD
- (4) Create a New Account
- (5) Choose number of tickets and proceed with order

5. Military Appreciation Night Every Monday at The Melting Pot (Gaithersburg, MD)

The Melting Pot, Gaithersburg, MD hosts a Military Appreciation Night every Monday. Military personnel enjoy 20% off all food with a valid Military ID. The Melting Pot offers an extraordinary dining experience that you won't find at any other restaurant. Here, you'll discover all the ingredients to a perfect evening, including a relaxed atmosphere, private tables, attentive service, fine wines & cocktails, as well as fabulous four-course fondue dinners. To visit their site or view menu go to <http://www.meltingpot.com/>

6. GI Bill Transferability H.R. 3657

There is a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to extend GI Bill transferability to PHS and NOAA officers. The bill is H.R. 3657, introduced

by Rep. Ciro Rodriguez. At this time, there is no companion bill in the Senate. You can help in the following ways:

- **Write to your Representative in the House and ask him or her to co-sponsor H.R. 3657 to extend transferability of GI Bill benefits to PHS officers.**
- **Write to both of your Senators and ask them to support the creation of a companion bill to H.R. 3657 to extend transferability of GI Bill benefits to PHS officers.**

Please click on the COA website: [GI Bill Transferability - COA Call to Action](#) for information. COA created a document that contains rules to follow and helpful tips for writing your elected representatives. *Please read it before writing your representatives.* The website also contains sample letters you may use as a guide for writing your own letters.

After you write your elected representatives, please send copies of all your letters to COA Government Relations Director Judith Rensberger (jrensberger@coausphs.org). COA will send follow-up letters to your Representative and Senator, thus doubling the impact of your own efforts!

You have a lot to gain (college education for a child or spouse) and little to lose (a half an hour to write the letters, and the cost of a few stamps). Let your representatives in Congress know how you feel, then spread the word to your friends and colleagues. The more PHS officers who participate in this call to action, the better our chances at success. This effort will also serve to realign our benefits with other sister services and maintain parity with them, which is vital to our future. If you believe we deserve this benefit, then please help us secure transferability for current and future officers and their families!

Benefits Committee Note

The Benefits Committee is dedicated to researching offers, incentives, and legislative topics with the purpose of increasing awareness of benefits and services available to USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers, retirees, and family members. We strongly feel that sharing this valuable information will lead to increased morale and improved quality of life for our PHS community. We hope that you have enjoyed these Smart Brief publications and we want to continue sharing topics of interest and opening dialogue with you. Please note that Smart Briefs are sent out once a month; look for

future editions around the 2nd Monday of each month. For your convenience, a link has been created on the DC COA website that will allow you to access past Smart Brief editions. [DC COA Smart Briefs](#)

Thank you for your support,

LCDR Julian Canizares, Chair, DC COA Benefits Committee

CDR Lou Ann Rector

CDR Melissa Meredith

LCDR Robert Windom

LCDR Eduardo Lim

LT Kimberly Love

LTJG Tracy Tilghman

An example

Consider the example of Joe, who lived in South Carolina and joined the military there in 2000. With Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders, he now is stationed in Maryland and lives in Virginia.

Does Joe file a state tax return? If so, which state? South Carolina, Maryland and/or Virginia?

We know that Joe is considered a South Carolina resident (that's his "home of record" and his SLR.) South Carolina says that Joe must continue to file a South Carolina income tax return regardless where he is stationed.

Each state decides whether service members must file a return when they are stationed outside the state. If Joe's "home of record" was in a certain state, he might be required to file a return, then deduct all of his active duty income and pay little or no tax. Some "home-of-record" states, like South Carolina, will tax Joe on his income even if he is stationed outside of his "home of record."

When California is a "home of record" and the active military is stationed outside of California, the service member is considered a nonresident of California. For guidance about filing in a state other than your "state of legal residence," see that state's individual website found at [State Tax Websites](#).

Does Virginia or Maryland expect a tax return from Joe?

The Service member Civil Relief Act states that an active duty member is not considered a resident of a state unless it is his SLR. Joe would only file a Virginia or a Maryland return if he had a second, nonmilitary job in that state. If he's working at Home Depot in Virginia on the weekends, he would file as a Virginia nonresident and only report income from that W-2. He would not report any other type of income. If Joe is married and his wife works in a civilian job in Virginia she might have to file a state tax return in Virginia. However, if she qualifies under the 2009 Military Spouses Residency Relief Act, she might be able to claim California as her state of legal residence, along with her husband, and also be exempt from filing a state return.

MILITARY DISCOUNTS

Here is a short list of places that offer military discounts.

Always call your local vendors to be sure they participate in the program. Also, never be afraid to ask a store if they offer a discount, even if one is not advertised. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Local Business Discounts

- **ABKA Marble & Granite, Rockville (20% off)**
- Amtrack
- Diamond Auto Spa (Winchester, VA) offers 10 percent off all services
- Flagship Carwash (Rockville)
- Golden Corral (Frederick)
- IHOP (in Montgomery Village)
- Lake Forest Mall offers military families a coupon booklet for its stores
- Sally Beauty Supply (in Maryland and Virginia)
- The Rio (Gaithersburg)

National Business Discounts

Restaurants

- A&W
- Arby's
- Back Yard Burgers
- Burger King
- Captain D's
- Chick-Fil-A
- CiCi's Pizza (buffet and a drink for \$5.50)
- Cotton Patch
- Denny's
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Home Depot
- IHOP (20 percent discount with military identification)
- Java Café
- KFC
- Long John Silver
- Lowes
- Pancho's Mexican Buffet
- Pizza Hut
- Quizno's
- Sizzler
- Sonic
- Whataburger
- Zaxby's

Services

- **Corcoran Gallery of Art, 500 17th St NW, Wash. DC (Free admission w/ Military ID)**
- Aeropostale (10%)
- Anheuser-Busch's SeaWorld, Busch Gardens or Sesame Place Parks (single-day complimentary admission: <http://www.herosalute.com/>)
- Armed Forces Vacation Club <http://www.afvclub.com/>

- **Breckenridge Mountain Lodge, CO (33% off Ski Lift Ticket for Mbr & Spouse)**
- AT&T
- Blockbuster
- Budget truck rental (10-20%)
- California Cryobank
- Carnival Cruises (dependant on your time of travel)
- Choice Hotels (Comfort Inn and Suites, Quality Inn, Clarion Hotel, Sleep Inn, Rodeway, EconoLodge and MainStay Suite; also allow pets)
- Continental Airlines
- DIRECTV (\$5 off for 6 months)
- Geico
- Jiffy Lube
- Meineke
- Most movie theaters
- Professional Sports teams
- Ripley's attractions and museums
- Sears Portrait Studio
- Travel and Leisure
- Breckenridge Mountain Lodge, CO (33% off Lift tickets for military member & spouse)

Products

- Alltell 15%
- Apple Computers (Apple.com)
- AutoZone
- Barnhill's
- Bass Pro Shop
- Bath and Body Works
- Big 10 Tires
- Champs Sports
- Christopher & Banks
- Copeland's Sports
- Dell
- Dress Barn
- DSW Shoe Warehouse (Virginia Only)
- FootAction
- Footlocker (10%)
- Gadzooks
- GNC
- Goody's
- Great Party
- Happy Harry's
- Home Depot
- Hot Topic
- Jockey
- Lerner
- Lowe's (10%)
- Maurice clothing stores 10%
- Michael's
- NAPA Auto Parts
- New York & Company (15%)
- Old Navy (which will probably include the Gap & Banana Republic)
- Pac Sun

- Payless Shoes
- Pep boys
- Play It Again Sports
- Pure Beauty
- Quizno's
- Rack Room Shoes 10%
- Reebok
- Roomstore
- Sally Beauty Supply
- Shoe Carnival 10%
- Spencer's Gifts
- Suncoast
- The Buckle
- The Discovery Channel Store
- The Finish Line
- Timberland Outlets
- Wilson's Leather

Cell Phone Service Discount

All Federal Employees are able to get a 15% discount on their personal cell phones by calling their carrier and mentioning the "Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 - Discount to Federal Employees Past and Present."

- Cingular - 800-319-6393 (17% or 18% off bill and 25% off accessories)
- Sprint - 877-812-1223
- T-Mobile - 866-646-4688
- Nextel - 800-639-6111
- Verizon - 800-865-1825 (17%)

You will need to know the military member's supervisor's name, phone number, and full address, so that his/her military status can be verified.

Websites with lists of military discounts:

- <http://www.4militaryfamilies.com/militarydiscounts.htm>
- <http://benefits.military.com/misc/DC/DealIndex.jsp>
- Travel deals for the military: <http://www.govarm.com/>