“Implementation of Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018”

Orientation Briefing

FY19 NDAA 621/10 U.S.C 1065
Resale and MWR Patronage Expansion
Effective January 1, 2020
Purpose

• BLUF: DoD, in coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard), and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) will implement and deliver this benefit to the new patron groups on time.

• To provide information to the military installation leadership, installation access control personnel, and the commissary, exchange, and MWR workforce on the plan to implement Section 621 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018), codified at Section 1065 of Title 10, United States Code, that expands patronage for commissary, exchange, and revenue-generating morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) facilities on January 1, 2020.
Pursuant to the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018:

- Extend commissary and MWR facility privileges Purple Heart recipients, Medal of Honor recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with service-connected disabilities (SCD), and eligible caregivers for veterans, effective 1 Jan 2020
- Impose a user fee on individuals who are eligible solely under this act when they use a credit or debit card in commissaries that results in an increase in expenses borne by the Department of Treasury *
- Deposit with the Treasury commissary credit/debit card user fees collected

Note: *The credit/debit card user fee is not charged for purchases made with the Military Star Card, EBT cards, or cash
New User Groups

New user groups eligible solely under this act:

- Veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart
- Veterans who are former prisoners of war
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities (SCD) with VA certified ratings 0-90 percent
- Caregivers or family caregivers of veterans
  - Enrolled as the primary family caregiver in the VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
  - Eligibility limited to caregiver’s active appointment period (one year; renewable)
- Family members of these new patron groups are not eligible
- Access to facilities located in foreign overseas locations subject to limitations of host nation Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) and/or other international agreements

NOTE: Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with 100 percent service-connected disability ratings are already authorized shopping privileges and broader DoD benefits through current DoD policy
Authorized access to all:

- DoD Defense Commissary Agency commissaries

- U.S. Military, and U.S. Coast Guard exchange facilities

- MWR facilities access is limited to Category C retail/revenue generating activities on U.S. military, Defense Logistics Agency, and Coast Guard installations, such as golf courses, marinas, bowling centers, clubs and food and beverage facilities, etc. MWR programs and facilities supported primarily with appropriated funds are not authorized for access, such as gyms and fitness centers, libraries, child care centers, etc.
Identification Credentials

- Before new Veterans or caregivers eligible for DoD installation and shopping privilege access solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 must obtain the appropriate credentials from the VA.

- The credential identified for SCD veteran access to resale and MWR facilities is the VA issued Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC).
Identification Credentials

• Eligible Veterans who are eligible to obtain a VHIC must obtain a VHIC marked “SERVICE CONNECTED,” “PURPLE HEART,” or “FORMER POW” from the VA.

• To check VA health care enrollment eligibility and to enroll, visit a local VA medical facility; call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m., Eastern Time; or apply online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll

• Eligible SCD Veterans who are not currently eligible to obtain a VHIC will initially only have on-line shopping access while the DoD and VA are working on a credential for this special SCD vet group to obtain access to these on-installation privileges.
Identification Credentials

The DoD will accept the following VA documentation to differentiate and verify eligible veteran and caregiver patrons in accordance with Section 1065 of Title 10, U.S.C.:

- Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC)

- Primary Family Caregiver Letter issued by VA
  - Letters to be issued by VA annually in December to those still enrolled in the caregiver program and are in good standing
  - Letters will expire annually on December 31

- Electronic Verification for Access to Online Benefits
Identification Credentials

Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC)

- **Note**: All VHICs will show “VA Healthcare Enrollee”. *Only Veterans that qualify for the special categories (Service Connected, Medal of Honor, Purple Heart, Former POW) will have that category printed on their card. There could be multiple special categories on a VHIC. See the list of eligible categories located directly below the photo of the SCD Veteran.*
Identification Credentials

Old VHIC cards

- **Note:** There a small number of the old version of the VHIC still in the possession of Veterans eligible under the NDAA 621/10 U.S.C. 1065. If presented, this card is authorized for access to the commissaries, exchanges, and MWR facilities.

- Since it is in the old bar code configuration, it may not scan correctly in the DeCA commissary point of sale system and should be visually verified to see it shows the qualifying information on the front of the card e.g. Service Connected, Prisoner of War, Purple Heart, etc.
Identification Credentials

Veterans Identification Card (VIC)—is **NOT authorized for use under this patronage expansion**.

**Note:** This card serves as proof of service in the Armed Forces of the United States and does not reflect entitlement to any VA or DoD benefits under the 10 U.S.C. Section 1065 patronage expansion and **is not valid** for access to commissary, exchange, and MWR facilities. Only the VHIC will be accepted.
Identification Credentials

State and local issued Veteran’s cards like the examples below are **not** valid IDs for the purposes of gaining installation access or access to exchange, commissary, and/or MWR privileges.
Veterans eligible for DoD, Coast Guard, and Defense Logistics Agency installation and privilege access through previously established DoD and Coast Guard policy (Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with VA-documented service-connected disability ratings of 100 percent) may obtain a DoD identification card at the local installation ID card office to facilitate installation and privilege access.
Identification Credentials

Caregivers of Veterans

- Eligible caregivers will be issued a letter from the VA that indicates they are the primary family caregiver for a Veteran enrolled in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

- Letters will be mailed by the VA to caregivers in December 2019.

- Letters will expire on 31 December annually and must be reissued by the VA.

- For installation access and at point of sale, caregivers will need to show an acceptable credential (e.g., REAL ID-compliant driver’s license, U.S. passport) and their primary family caregiver letter.
Identification Credentials

• Example copies of the caregiver letters will be provided to all installations and resale and MWR organizations prior to the 1 January 2020 implementation date that should be used to train staff on visual verification of the letters.
How will new users get access to installations?

To access the installation, Veterans eligible solely under the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, who are eligible to obtain a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) will present their VHIC at installation access points.

Upon the first visit to the installation, eligible Veterans must present their VHIC at the visitor control center.
Identification Credentials

Acceptable form of identification for installation access that must be paired with the VHIC or caregiver/veteran memos, are outlined in DoD Manual (DoDM) 5200.08 Volume 3 and include:

- Acceptable credentials may include:
  - Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC)
  - DoD common access card (CAC)
  - DoD uniformed services identification card
  - REAL ID-compliant driver’s license issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
  - REAL ID-compliant non-driver’s identification card issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
  - Enhanced driver’s license issued by a State, territory, possession, or the District of Columbia
  - U.S. passport or passport card
  - Foreign passport bearing an unexpired immigrant or non-immigrant visa or entry stamp
  - Federal personal identity verification card
  - Transportation Worker Identification Card

Depending on the type of installation and the acceptable credential presented, Veterans and caregivers may be enrolled for recurring access, which would allow them to proceed to the gate for entry upon subsequent visits.
Identification Credentials

Real ID Compliant driver’s license compared to Standard driver’s license ID

The REAL ID vs. Standard ID

- **Note:** Real ID compliant driver’s licenses have a star at the top right corner of the card.
As with all other individuals seeking access to DoD installations, all eligible Veterans and caregivers must pass a basic on-the-spot background check prior to enrolling, and an automated check each time they enter the installation.

Veterans and caregivers with felony convictions, felony arrest warrants, or other types of derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will not be permitted entry to the installation.
Data Collection and Impact Assessment


- Performed comprehensive impact assessment to identify potential high volume locations based on veteran density and general cost of living

- Determined general low to moderate impact on installations and the VA
  - Higher impact in locations with a high veteran density (e.g., San Antonio, TX, San Diego, CA, Norfolk, VA)
  - Higher impact in locations with high cost of living (e.g., Hawaii, Alaska)
Conditions Impacting Patronage

- Time, distance, and effort to access installations (farther=lower usage)
- Time and distance from VA medical facilities (farther=less likely to obtain VHIC that would facilitate installation and shopping access)
- Time and distance projections have been provided to the military services and installations for planning purposes (see the example data map on the next slide)
- Personal mobility/transportation (less mobile=lower usage)
- Personal financial circumstances (higher income=lower usage rate)
- Local economic conditions (high cost of living areas=higher usage)
- Off-installation and online shopping competition
- Shopping habits and brand loyalty
- Family members are not eligible, so the primary shopper in the family may not shop
Strategic Communications Plan

• Deploying unified communication plan for use by all stakeholder agencies to reach target audiences
• Cohesive messaging to ensure a positive and welcoming shopping experience beginning on January 1, 2020
• Developing publicity that will deploy through the most effective tactics for various audience segments
  o Social media
  o Press releases
• Establishing central online resource for information sharing on this patronage expansion
• Leveraging lessons learned from launch of the Veterans Online Shopping Benefit (November of 2017)
Potential Challenges and Concerns

• Longer lines and wait times at visitor centers to register credentials
• Longer lines/wait times at front gates for installations with heavy usage
• Complaints from active duty and families during peak times when capacity issues arise for parking, product availability*, check-out
• Commissary credit/debit card user fee could result in complaints from new patrons to whom this fee applies (unfair that it only applies to them
• Data integration coding may not be complete by January 1; would require manual processing of commissary credit/debit card user fees until complete
• No ability to revoke privileges for caregivers if their primary caregiver status is revoked before the appointment period on VA memo expires
Where We Need Your Help

• Be familiar with the patronage expansion and be able to answer questions and direct to the web link for more info

• Help get the word out to the new patron groups

• Monitor and adjust the supply chain

• Quick actions on unexpected impacts, conditions and/or requirements
How to Get More Information

• To learn more about the commissary, military exchange and MWR expansion, visit https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf.

• The new patron groups can check VA health care enrollment eligibility and to enroll, by visiting a local VA medical facility; call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m., Eastern Time; or apply online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll