

VVA CHAPTER 1069 VETERANS BENEFITS HANDOUT 10/9/2019

Mike Harbaugh – Chapter member and Certified Wharton County VSO

- **New Commissary Privileges beginning in January 1, 2020**

Currently veterans cannot shop at commissaries (they can at the Exchanges) but the DoD is currently considering allowing veterans to shop the commissaries. However, effective January 1, 2020, the fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act expanded the pool of eligible exchange, commissary shoppers to include all service-connected disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war and primary veteran caregivers. The benefit will also extend to MWR "revenue generating facilities".

Who are currently (or will on Jan 1, 2020) allowed to shop at Commissaries:

- Medal of Honor recipients
- Retired uniformed personnel
- Any uniformed personnel
- DoD civilian employees overseas
- Authorized family members
- 100% disabled veterans
- All disabled veterans (Eligible Jan. 1, 2020)
- Primary Veteran Caregivers (Eligible Jan. 1, 2020)
- Purple Heart Recipients (Eligible Jan. 1, 2020)
- Former Prisoners of War (Eligible Jan. 1, 2020)

Visit the Military website (link below) for more information on Commissary benefits:

<https://militarybenefits.info/commissary-benefits/>

- **Congress and DoD Step Toward Expanding Access to Commissaries, Exchanges**

Defense Department officials have told Congress they conditionally support opening on-base shopping to disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients and caregivers of severely injured veterans - changes to current law that would add at least a few hundred thousand weekly shoppers to commissaries and exchanges nationwide. To gain access to bases, these secondary groups of shoppers could use their Department of Veterans Affairs-issued Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC), which identifies the holder as having a service-connected disability. The Defense Department's electronic physical access control system, to be completed by September 2019, will accept the VHIC to enable streamlined access to bases and shopper discounts.

Visit the Military website (link below) for more information on Commissary benefits:

<https://www.military.com/militaryadvantage/2018/07/05/congress-and-dod-step-toward-expanding-access-commissaries-and-exchanges.html>

- **Find a Commissary or Exchange store near you**

Use the links below to find a Commissary or Exchange near you by entering your zip code.

<https://www.commissaries.com/shopping/store-locations/find-a-store>

<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/exchange-stores#>

- **Wharton County Service Officer Contact Information**

Chapter member, Michael Harbaugh, is also the Wharton County "VA accredited" Veterans Service Officer. His contact information is shown below. You may also use the link below to visit Mike's webpage that resides on our chapter's website.

Main Office Address:

VA Accredited Veterans Service Office

1017 North Alabama Road

Wharton, Texas 77488

Phone: (979) 532-1311

Email: mike.harbaugh@co.wharton.tx.us

Webpage: <http://www.vva1069.org/wcvso/wcvso.html>

Veterans News page: <http://www.vva1069.org/wcvso/wcvsonews.html>

Meeting Handouts page: <http://www.vva1069.org/wcvso/wcvsohandouts.html>

- **VVA Chapter 1069 Website:** <http://www.vva1069.org>