

## Chapter 5 – Relocation Assistance for Demobilizing Guard and Reserve Service Members

Planning your return back home to family, loved ones, friends and the community after mobilization, activation, and or deployment is a critical part of your transition from full-time active duty status back to civilian life. In this section of the guide you will find information to assist you with returning home or with a subsequent move later on. Knowing about the basic procedures and your rights is essential to helping you make informed decisions and ensures your return home will be a smooth one.

**Information in this Chapter can help you later on, if you decide to relocate at any time for reasons not necessarily related to being in the Guard or Reserve.**

### A. Returning Home After Deployment, Demobilization/Deactivation

After returning home you may decide that you need to relocate to another area. You can locate the nearest military installation that has a Relocation Assistance Office at <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil/smart/MHF-MI>. The relocation staff is there to make sure you are fully prepared for any relocation. Since most Guard and Reserve personnel do not have ready access to a major military installation and RAP services, assistance is available online and through toll-free numbers.

RAP services include:

1. **Job potential:** Which community is most likely to offer job opportunities that match your skills, experience, and career goals?
2. **Affordability:** Consider the not so obvious expenses in addition to the cost of living. Compare local, state income, property, and sales taxes. Does the state tax your military retirement pay? Does the location have income and career potential?
3. **Community:** Do you have family or friends there? Can you count on them to help make your transition easier? Do you need to be close to your aging parents for economic or medical reasons? Are you seeking upward mobility with the potential to move, or are you looking for a community to settle for the long term?
4. **Environment:** Would you be happiest living in a city, the suburbs, a small town, or a rural area? Does the climate suit you?

Guard and Reserve members living near a military installation that has a RAP Office can also access the additional services listed below:

- Needs assessment and planning for individuals and families tailored to their personal circumstances and requirements.
- Extensive automated information on military and civilian communities worldwide can be obtained through the Military Installations and Plan My Move features of MilitaryHOMEFRONT ([www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil)). These features provide research and information, housing directories and services, employment, education, health and wellness, and family issues available near military installations.
- Help in developing a relocation plan – providing information specifically related to your unique situation, linking you with special programs, and referring you to other offices that can provide assistance.
- Workshops and individual sessions on managing relocation stress for all family members, planning a moving budget, how to buy, sell, and rent smart, settling into a new community, and a variety of other programs tailored to adults and children.
- Special re-entry services and programs if transitioning from an overseas installation.

You must have a valid identification to access the military installation. Be sure to call and make an appointment so the staff is prepared to assist you.

## B. Moving Out of the Area

If you decide at a to relocate future date, consult the Family Center nearest to your location and see you are eligible for assistance. They are a great source of relocation information and planning assistance. Other useful resources include local chambers of commerce, libraries, bookstores, and the Internet. Use them to find out what you need in order to make informed moving decisions.

Other resources available to you is the Plan My Move website found at:

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/pls.htmsdb/f?p=107:1:3267731230074301>. You can visit the Military OnceSource website at <http://www.militaryonesource.com> or call the Military OneSource Call Center at 1-800-342-9647. The Call Center services are available 24/7 for Guard and Reserve personnel for up to six months after demobilization/deactivation.

### Family Centers

Family Centers can refer you to offices, programs, and services that may be of assistance as you prepare to leave the military. Examples include the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP), the Personal Financial Management Program, Information and Referral, Spouse Employment Assistance Program, and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

The term "Family Centers" is used here to refer to the following Service-specific entities:

- **Army:** Army Community Service Center
- **Air Force:** Airman & Family Readiness Center
- **Navy:** Fleet and Family Support Center
- **Marine Corps:** Marine and Family Services

See section C to learn about communities where you might like to live; take advantage of the information and referrals available through Relocation Assistance Program.

### Chambers of Commerce

Many communities across America have chambers of commerce. Each chamber of commerce promotes its community and is a good source of information about the surrounding area: the local job market, housing costs, local realtors, cost of living, local taxes, climate, schools and availability of recreation or child care. Ask for the chamber's booklet – much like the relocation packet you received about a new installation when you changed stations.

You can find any Chamber of Commerce office in the nation at <http://www.chamberofcommerce.com>

### Libraries and Bookstores

Each of the Service Library Programs provides electronic content through their respective portals (<http://www.nko.mil>; <http://www.army.mil/ako>; <http://www.my.af.mil>). The electronic content provides information on relocating, career opportunities, and educational opportunities. If you are not able to access these sites, check out your local library. They will have a wealth of information that can assist you.

The reference section of your nearest installation library, public library or bookstore may offer atlases, maps, and geographical information that provide useful information. Tour books and guides in the travel section may provide insights into the community you may someday call home. Military libraries and public libraries also have many other free resources. Libraries also offer customer use computers which can help you keep up to date on the latest news in your new community, apply for a job, check your e-mail, or just chat with friends.

Some helpful websites on following topics:

**Relocation:**

<http://www.relo.usa.com>

<http://www.militaryonesource.com>

**Education:**

<http://www.voled.doded.mil>

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

<http://education.military.com>

**As Soon as You Know Your Departure Date...**

Visit the Relocation Assistance Program office at your Family Center. RAP staff will make you a “smart consumer.” They will tell you the questions you need to ask so you can get the most out of your move.

**C. Authorized Leave/Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY) and Travel for Job-Hunters**

The information in this section will normally not apply to drilling members of the Guard and Reserves. However, it's possible, that one day you may find yourself in a full-time active duty status that might qualify you for these benefits, pending Command approval. This information is provided solely for that purpose.

Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Military Department concerned may authorize administrative absence for any of the purposes outlined below for Service members:

Participation in preseparation job search and house hunting activities that facilitate relocation of members. The permissive temporary duty (PTDY) authority to facilitate transition into civilian life for house and job hunting for military members being involuntarily separated under honorable conditions or retiring from active duty is extended indefinitely.

The Secretary concerned:

Shall grant members being discharged or released from active service as involuntary separatees under honorable conditions as defined in section 1141 of Title 10 of the United States Code such excess leave for a period not in excess of 30 days, or such transition PTDY not to exceed 10 days, as members require to facilitate relocation, unless to do so would interfere with military missions; and may authorize for members described above and for those being retired:

- An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY for those members stationed outside the Continental United States (CONUS).
- An additional 10 days up to a total of 20 days transition PTDY for those members stationed in the CONUS.
- An additional 20 days up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY for those members who were domiciliaries before entering active duty and continue to be domiciliaries of States, possessions or territories of the United States located outside the continental United States (CONUS), including domiciliaries of foreign countries, and are stationed at a location other than the State, possession,

territory or country of their domicile. Members may be authorized up to a total of 30 days transition PTDY only for house and job-hunting to the State, territory, possession or country of their domicile.

Regulations permit you to use excess leave or permissive temporary duty (PTDY) in accordance with the following guidance:

- **If you are an eligible involuntary separatee or a retiree:** Your spouse may take one round trip on the military aircraft for house and job hunting, on a space-available basis and unaccompanied by a military spouse.
- **If you are attending a Department of Defense-approved transition assistance seminar:** If you are using excess leave, PTDY, or temporary additional duty to attend the seminar, you are authorized to use military air transportation, if available.
- Service members separating at the end of a normal term of service (ETS – Expiration Term of Service) or (EAOS – End of Active Duty Obligated Service) are not eligible for PTDY.

If you are traveling from overseas to CONUS to attend such a seminar, your spouse can accompany you on military air transportation on a space-available basis. Your spouse is *not* authorized to travel within CONUS.

Unless a service member falls into one of the above categories, he/she is not eligible.

#### D. Transportation Back Home

The government may arrange your return trip or you may be authorized to make your own arrangements with prior command approval. In either case, you should complete your final travel voucher before your release from active duty. Make sure you understand all travel payments, the amount due, as well as when to expect receipt of any final travel payment. During your financial out-processing ask for a copy of your final travel voucher. When you get home, put it in a safe place in case you need it later. In addition you should know whom to contact in case you have a problem regarding your final travel payment. If you are authorized to travel back home on your own, understanding your travel entitlements before being released from active duty will help you avoid out-of-pocket expenses.

If you use the government to assist you in making your final transportation arrangement back home, try to arrange for transportation counseling at the military installation.

If you do not understand your transportation arrangements and travel entitlements, do not leave until you do.

The reimbursement amount is determined by the regulations pertaining to your particular entitlement. Entitlements vary with individual situations. Your exact entitlement and the time limits for its use will be explained to you during your out-processing at your demobilization or deactivation installation.

For example: If you are demobilizing or deactivating overseas, make sure you fully understand what you are authorized to ship back to the United States, weight allowances, and other travel reimbursements you may be entitled. Make sure you know what receipts are required to receive any reimbursements.

**Note:** Airline tickets must be purchased from the Commercial Travel Office (CTO) under contract to your respective organization.

For more information, please go to: <https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil.perdiem/>.

## E. Housing

The following is important guidance about making the transition from your old housing to your new location.

**If while on full-time active duty your family lived in government quarters:** You must arrange a time for a member of the Housing staff to come to your home to perform a pre-inspection and explain the requirements for cleaning and vacating quarters, as well as options available for you to accomplish them.

If you live in government housing, you must make an appointment with the Housing Office as soon as your departure date is established.

**If upon your return home you decide to move from a rental property:** Notify your landlord as soon as possible. Your Unit Housing Officer or Legal Assistance Office can assist you with any landlord problems you may have in conjunction with your return and decision to relocate.

## F. Shipment and Storage of Household Goods

The following guidance may apply to the shipment and storage of household goods for members of the Guard and Reserve on full-time active duty – IF while in a full-time active duty status, you are involuntary separated or are forced to retire.

Mobilized/activated members of the Guard and Reserve that processed for involuntary separation or retirement, while in a full-time active duty status, must check with their unit Commander, the appropriate transportation office, and personnel office to see if you are eligible for shipment and storage of household goods based on the guidance below.

- **Eligibility Involuntary Separatees and retirees:** You are authorized storage and shipment of household goods for up to one full year. Your items may be shipped to:
  - Any destination within the United States
  - Your home of record outside the United States - Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military.
  - The place from which you were initially called to active duty
  
- **All Others: Guard and Reserve personnel must see if their orders authorize them** storage and shipment of household goods up to six months. Your items may be shipped to which ever of the following points for which you collected separation travel pay:
  - Your home of record - Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military.
  - The place from which you were initially called to active duty.

### “It’s Your Move”

Be sure to download the latest version of the “It’s Your Move” pamphlet ([http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/p55\\_2.pdf](http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/p55_2.pdf)). It will give you the basic information you need to get started planning your household goods shipment.

## **G. Special-Needs Family Members**

Guard and Reserve Service members with family members that have special needs members can find information on the services available in your new hometown through the closest military installation Family Center, the United Way/Community Chest, the community social services office listed in the local telephone directory, or the closest veterans' hospital. Information is also available through the "Special Needs" website at <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>.