



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO OPEN ONLINE EXCHANGE SHOPPING TO VETERANS

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Bakersfield, CA) The Department of Defense (DOD) has announced that veterans will soon be able to shop online at military exchanges. The policy change will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans.

The shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, November 11, 2017, and will include the four military exchange systems – Army and Air Force Exchange (AAFES), Navy Exchange (NEX), Marine Corps Exchange (MCX), and Coast Guard Exchange (CGX).

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services’ dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families. The change follows careful analysis, coordination, and strong public support, according to the DOD.

Eligibility determination is being conducted by VetVerify (<https://www.vetverify.org>), a shared verification service with the four military exchanges that depends on the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) for service verification data. “We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family”, said Peter Levine, performing duties for the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. “In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low cost opportunity to help fund morale, welfare and recreation programs in support of service members’ and their families’ quality of life. And it’s just the right thing to do”, Levine added.

As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members. Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say ‘Thank you’ to those who served with honor. When asked about the new online benefit, Berney DeLaCruz, a local Air Force veteran said, “What a nice opportunity for some tax-free shopping”.

Only a veteran can use the program, not the spouse, dependents, or surviving spouses. The veteran must have an honorable discharge, and be in the database of the DMDC. The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges’ online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges online presence, according to DOD officials, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments and improved efficiencies.

The goal of the Kern County Veterans Service Department remains the same today as when it was first established in 1944: To assist veterans, their dependents, and survivors to obtain the benefits they have earned as a result of their honorable military service.