



## **News for Immediate Release**

**Feb. 2, 2012**

### **Tax Time Offers Opportunity to Help PA Military Families**

PA Military Families can apply for up to \$3,500 in emergency assistance grants

**Harrisburg** – Individuals filing their 2011 Pennsylvania personal income taxes can help Pennsylvania's military personnel and their families by donating part or all of their refund to the Military Family Relief Assistance Program.

The program provides grants of up to \$3,500 to Pennsylvania members of the armed forces and their families who have a direct and immediate financial need as a result of military service. The tax form includes instructions on how to donate.

"These grants are a real blessing for families facing hard times that sometimes occur during a military deployment," said Major General Wesley E. Craig, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' Adjutant General. "Service members and their families sacrifice so much; it's only right that we are there for them in times of hardship. This program is a way for all of us to lend a helping hand."

Examples of how the grants helped service members in 2011 include:

- A service member from Lebanon County, who lost almost everything due to flooding caused by Tropical Storm Lee, received \$1,250 to provide necessities and living expenses until a FEMA grant arrived.
- A service member from Lancaster County was unable to find employment after returning from deployment. The spouse was recently diagnosed with a disabling medical condition. The family received \$3,500 to pay the mortgage, utilities and necessities for the family.
- A service member from Northampton County was hospitalized from injuries sustained in an explosion during deployment. The spouse was traveling twice a week to visit the service member and incurred unexpected expenses from the travel, child care and hotel costs. The family received \$3,500.
- A service member from Schuylkill County received \$3,500 to help with post-deployment financial problems that included medical bills from a serious illness of one of their children.

Since the program began in 2006, nearly \$1 million has been donated by individuals filing their Pennsylvania personal income tax returns.

Members of the armed forces who are residents of Pennsylvania are eligible to apply for assistance while they are serving on active duty for 30 or more consecutive days with the Army, Army Reserve, Navy, Navy Reserve, Air Force, Air

Force Reserve, Marine Corps, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard, Coast Guard Reserve, or the Pennsylvania Army or Air National Guard.

All members of the armed forces who were discharged for medical reasons are also eligible to apply for assistance for up to two years after a medical discharge.

In addition, reserve component service members (including Pennsylvania National Guard) and their families may be eligible for a grant for a period of up to one year after release from a qualifying tour of active duty.

The program also applies to certain family members of eligible service members who are Pennsylvania residents. Applicants must show that their need for assistance is directly related to their active military service.

In addition to the check-off box on the Personal Income Tax form, contributions can be made directly by sending a check to the Military Family Relief Assistance Program, c/o Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Bldg. 0-47 Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003-5002. Donations are tax deductible to the extent authorized by federal law.

To learn more about this program, visit [www.dmva.state.pa.us](http://www.dmva.state.pa.us) and select DMVA Offices & Programs.

**Media contact:** Joan Z. Nissley, 717-861-8720

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