

# FORCECOM Newsletter

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## Sea Legs: Family Member's Guide to the Coast Guard

January 2015

Coast Guard family members have access to information through Sea Legs, a Coast Guard Life and Services Handbook. The new revision contains information and resources for spouses, but especially for those beginning life as a military spouse. Not every question will be answered, but a spouse can find links and contact information on matters as benefits and privileges, healthcare, duty stations, deployments, and family services. There is also information on the Coast Guard mission and a glossary of terms and acronyms (even veteran spouses could find this useful I am sure!)

You can download Sea Legs in PDF format at

<http://www.uscg.mil/sealegs/>

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## BAH Rates 2015

The 2015 BAH Rates have been released. Remember you are protected at your rate for your current tour. Many have been reduced but you can calculate your rate at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bahCalc.cfm>

## iPrevail

CG SUPRT has launched this new online interactive program to help manage many life issues, including eating disorders, depression, and more. This personalized program is available to USCG active duty, civilian employees, selected reserves, and family members. It is free and confidential.

iPrevail can be accessed on home computer, iPad, or smartphone. It is available all day, every day.

The program is guided by an Avatar, and multimedia lessons aid in addressing stressors that individuals have identified.

The program is free and confidential, and users who stay active can earn points to be redeemed for gift cards.

To sign up, visit [www.cgsuprt.com](http://www.cgsuprt.com) then click on the link "On Demand, Personalized Support for Life's Challenges"

## Tricare Phone Scam

There have been some reports of a phone phishing scam affecting TRICARE beneficiaries. Callers are attempting to sell medical supplies. Do not give out personal information to unknown callers. TRICARE will not call to offer supplies or call to ask for personal information. If you receive one of these phone calls, you may contact the DHA Program Integrity office. All information on reporting fraud and further information can be found on TRICARE's website at [www.tricare.mil/fraud](http://www.tricare.mil/fraud)

## Homes.mil

A new DOD website to help service members find a home has launched for the new year. The site connects service members/ families and military housing offices to landlords and property managers to list rentals in the area of Coast Guard and DOD duty stations.

This tool will allow members to search for rentals that have been approved by military housing offices. With transfer season coming up, take a moment to check out the website at [HOMES.mil](http://HOMES.mil).

**Another website, not DOD  
related, is  
[www.militarybyowner.com](http://www.militarybyowner.com)**

## Flu Season is here!

As you are aware of (since it is all over the news), flu season is here, and reports are that it is widespread. If you have not had your flu shot, it is not too late. Even though some strains of the flu are not covered by the vaccine, it will still help with the severity of the illness. If you or someone in your family has the flu or flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, sore throat, body aches), stay home. When out in public, or even at home, take preventative measure with washing hands, covering mouth for cough/sneeze, and use disinfectant sprays or wipes as needed. Do not send children to school if sick with the flu (or any illness) until symptoms are gone and fever free (or vomit free) for 24 hours.

## Tax Filing Service

Starting January 13<sup>th</sup>, CG SUPRT will launch H&R Block Tax service online for free (free offer is only valid through the CG SUPRT website). Access the software only through the link provided by CG SUPRT. You may not access the site until the 13<sup>th</sup>; make sure you have all of your tax documents ready before filing, including 2013 tax return.

Once the site launches, and you have all the required documents, you may file your taxes. Even if the IRS opening date has not arrived, you may complete your e-file and the H&R Block system will submit the return once the date opens. Active duty, selected reserve members, spouses and dependent children, civilian CG employees, and their household members and dependents are eligible to use the free service. If you are prompted to enter payment, call CG SUPRT. You are allowed 1 Federal and up to 3 state returns per user. Visit [www.cgsuprt.com](http://www.cgsuprt.com) once January 13<sup>th</sup> arrives.

For questions about the service or your return, call 1-855-247-8778 to speak with a tax consultant. Trained consultants will be available M-F, 0900-2000 Starting January 13<sup>th</sup>.

## MLK Day

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929. After his assassination on April 4, 1968, a campaign began to honor him with a federal holiday. Today we celebrate his life and all that he worked for with Civil Rights on the third Monday in January.

President Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and was observed for the first time in 1986. There was reluctance to observe the holiday as a paid holiday. Many states combined the holiday with another, including Columbus Day. Many also opposed the holiday because he was not important enough. Another name for the holiday was Civil Rights Day. In 2000, all 50 states celebrated MLK for the first time.

Now, MLK day has become a day for service. Since 1994, the day has also been designated as MLK Day of Service, part of United We Serve, the President's call to service initiative. During the 2014 Day of Service: over 38,000 veterans, military families and members received assistance; 100,000 people received disaster preparedness training; 58,000 children and teens received tutoring and mentoring; and 360,000 people received emergency food.

For information on how you can serve, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/days-service/martin-luther-king-jr-day-service-0>

## Adoption Information

November was National Adoption Month. Even though it is January, I wanted to shed some light on adoption and benefits for military families.

There is an adoption reimbursement program for active duty and reservists on active duty for 180 consecutive days. If budget allows, reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per child per year and a max of \$5,000 in a calendar year is available to eligible members. Some may also be eligible for a tax credit for qualifying related adoption expenses. CG SUPRT is available to help with adoption, such as resources and finances. Coast Guard Mutual Assistance also offers assistance in the form of a loan or grant. For more information, please visit [www.uscg.mil/worklife/adoption.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/adoption.asp)

**November is designated as  
National Adoption Month**

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## FORCECOM

300 East Main Street  
Suite 1100  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
**Phone (Holly):** 979.777.0263  
**E-mail:**  
fcombudsman@gmail.com

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your ombudsman. Please know that I am here to help in any way. You can reach me by email or phone.

There are many resources available to Coast Guard families. If I am not sure of the best way to help you, I will find out.

Looking forward to a great 2015!

-Holly Aber

FORCECOM Ombudsman



*Semper  
Paratus*

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## Links & Information

Coast Guard Support: available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Toll free number:  
1-855-CGSUPRT (247-8778)

Confidential professional counseling, education, and referral services to help you with variety of issues:

- marital problems
- work concerns
- child care
- K-12 education concerns
- pet care
- depression and anxiety
- career transitions
- adoption
- moving and relocation

<https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/cgsuprt/Home.do>

Health, Safety, and Work Life Service Center (HSWL) There is an app available at the app store (iPhone and Android). The app has lots of great information to get you connected to many resources, as does the website.

<https://www.achievesolutions.net/achievesolutions/en/cgsuprt/Home.do>  
[www.uscg.mil/worklife/default.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/default.asp)  
[www.uscg.mil/mwr](http://www.uscg.mil/mwr)  
[www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil)  
[www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)  
[www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov)  
<http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/ready>

