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Internal Revenue Service

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Armed Forces' Tax Guide

For use in preparing
2000 Returns



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Contents

Important Changes	2
Important Reminders	2
Introduction	2
Gross Income	3
Includible Items	3
Excludable Items	4
Foreign Source Income	4
Community Property	4
Adjustments to Income	5
Individual Retirement Arrangements	5
Moving Expenses	5
Combat Zone Exclusion	6
Combat Zone	6
Serving in a Combat Zone	7
Amount of Exclusion	7
Alien Status	7
Resident Aliens	8
Nonresident Aliens	8
Dual-Status Aliens	8
Exemptions	8
Dependents	9
Sale of Home	10
Itemized Deductions	11
Miscellaneous Itemized Deductions	11
Earned Income Credit	13
Persons With a Qualifying Child	13
Persons Without a Qualifying Child	14
Earned Income	15
Advance Earned Income Credit	16
IRS Will Figure Your Credit for You	16
Child Tax Credit	16
Qualifying Child	16
Decedents	17
Combat Zone Forgiveness	17
Terroristic or Military Action Forgiveness	17
Claims for Tax Forgiveness	18
Filing Returns	18
Where To File	18
When To File	19
Extensions	19
Signing Returns	19
Refunds	20
Extension of Deadline	20
Filing Returns for Combat Zone/Qualified Hazardous Duty Area Participants	22
How To Get Tax Help	22
Index	25

Important Changes

Photographs of missing children. The Internal Revenue Service is a proud partner with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Photographs of missing children selected by the Center may appear in this publication on pages that would otherwise be blank. You can help bring these children home by looking at the photographs and calling **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)** if you recognize a child.

Paid preparer authorization. Beginning with your return for 2000, you can check a box and authorize the IRS to discuss your tax return with the paid preparer who signed it. If you check the "Yes" box in the signature area of your return, the IRS can call your paid preparer to answer any questions that may arise during the processing of your return. Also, you are authorizing your paid preparer to perform certain actions. See your income tax package for details.

Standard mileage rate. Beginning January 1, 2000, the optional standard mileage rate for operating your car for business purposes is 32.5 cents for each business mile.

Limit on personal credits. For tax years 2000 and 2001, your nonrefundable personal credits for the year can offset both your regular tax (after reduction by the foreign tax credit) and your alternative minimum tax for that year, if any.

The personal credits that can offset those taxes, but cannot be refunded if they are more than those taxes, are:

- Adoption credit,
- Child tax credit,
- Credit for child and dependent care expenses,
- Credit for the elderly or the disabled,
- Education credits (Hope and lifetime learning credits),
- Mortgage interest credit, and
- District of Columbia first-time homebuyer credit.

For more information about these credits, see the instructions for Form 1040.

Individual retirement arrangement (IRA). If you are covered under an employer retirement plan, the amount of income you can have in 2000 and still claim a deduction for a contribution to a traditional IRA has increased in most cases. For more information, see Publication 590, *Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs) (Including Roth IRAs and Education IRAs)*.

Important Reminders

Extension of time to file. You can get an automatic 4-month extension if, by April 16, 2001, you either file Form 4868 or pay part or all of the tax you expect to owe for 2000 electronically by credit card. For details, see Form 4868.

Earned income credit. The amount you can earn and still qualify for the credit has increased for 2000. The amount you earn must be less than \$10,380 with no qualifying children, \$27,413 with one qualifying child, and \$31,152 with two or more qualifying children. See *Earned Income Credit*, later.

Child tax credit. You may be able to claim a child tax credit of up to \$500 for each of your qualifying children under the age of 17. See *Child Tax Credit*, later.

Education benefits. The following benefits are specifically for higher education expenses.

Hope credit. You may be able to claim a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for each eligible student.

Lifetime learning credit. For qualified tuition and related expenses paid during the tax year, you may be able to claim a tax credit of up to \$1,000 for all students. However, you cannot take both the Hope credit and the lifetime learning credit for the same student in the same year.

Education IRAs. You may be able to make non-deductible contributions of up to \$500 to an education IRA for a designated beneficiary under age 18.

Interest on student loans. You may be able to claim a deduction for interest paid on a qualified student loan. For 2000, the maximum deduction is \$2,000.

For more information, see Publication 970, *Tax Benefits for Higher Education*.

Introduction

This publication covers the special tax situations of active members of the U.S. Armed Forces. It does not cover military pensions or veterans' benefits or give the basic tax rules that apply to all taxpayers. For information on military pensions or veterans' benefits, see Publication 525, *Taxable and Nontaxable Income*. If you need the basic tax rules or information on another subject not covered here, you can check our other free publications.

For federal tax purposes, the U.S. Armed Forces includes commissioned officers and enlisted personnel in all regular and reserve units under control of the Secretaries of the Defense, Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Armed Forces also includes the Coast Guard. It does not include members of the U.S. Merchant Marine or the American Red Cross.

Members serving in an area designated or treated as a combat zone are granted special tax benefits. In the event an area ceases to be a combat zone (by Presidential Executive Order or by statute), we will do

our best to notify you. Many of the relief provisions will end at that time.

Members serving in a **qualified hazardous duty area** designated by statute are afforded the same benefits as members serving in a **combat zone** designated by Executive Order.

Comments and suggestions. We welcome your comments about this publication and your suggestions for future editions.

You can e-mail us while visiting our web site at www.irs.gov/help/email2.html.

You can write to us at the following address:

Internal Revenue Service
Technical Publications Branch
W:CAR:MP:FP:P
1111 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20224

We respond to many letters by telephone. Therefore, it would be helpful if you would include your daytime phone number, including the area code, in your correspondence.

Useful Items

You may want to see:

Publication

- 54** Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad
- 463** Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses
- 501** Exemptions, Standard Deduction, and Filing Information
- 503** Child and Dependent Care Expenses
- 505** Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax
- 508** Tax Benefits for Work-Related Education
- 516** U.S. Government Civilian Employees Stationed Abroad
- 519** U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens
- 521** Moving Expenses
- 523** Selling Your Home
- 527** Residential Rental Property
- 529** Miscellaneous Deductions
- 553** Highlights of 2000 Tax Changes
- 559** Survivors, Executors, and Administrators
- 590** Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs) (Including Roth IRAs and Education IRAs)
- 596** Earned Income Credit (EIC)
- 970** Tax Benefits for Higher Education

Form (and Instructions)

- 1040X** Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return

- 1310** Statement of Person Claiming Refund Due a Deceased Taxpayer
- 2688** Application for Additional Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return
- 2848** Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative
- 3903** Moving Expenses
- 4868** Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return
- 8822** Change of Address
- 9465** Installment Agreement Request

See *How To Get Tax Help*, near the end of this publication, for information about getting these publications and forms.

Gross Income

Members of the Armed Forces receive many different types of pay and allowances. Some are includible in gross income while others are excludable from gross income. Includible items are subject to tax and must be reported on your tax return. Excludable items are not subject to tax, but may have to be shown on your tax return.

For information on the exclusion of pay for service in a combat zone and other tax benefits for combat zone participants, see *Combat Zone Exclusion* on page 6 and *Extension of Deadline* on page 20.

Includible Items

These items are includible in gross income, **unless** the pay is for service in a combat zone.

Basic pay

- Active duty
- Attendance at a designated service school
- Back wages
- Drills
- Reserve training
- Training duty

Special pay

- Aviation career incentives
- Diving duty
- Foreign duty (outside the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia)
- Hostile fire
- Imminent danger
- Medical and dental officers
- Nuclear-qualified officers
- Special duty assignment pay

Bonuses

- Enlistment
- Reenlistment

Other payments

- Accrued leave
- Personal money allowances paid to high-ranking officers
- Student loan repayment from programs such as the Department of Defense Educational Loan Repayment Program when year's service (requirement) is not attributable to a combat zone.

Excludable Items

These items are excludable from gross income. The exclusion applies whether the item is furnished in kind or is a reimbursement or allowance. There is no exclusion for the personal use of a government-provided vehicle.

- Special Pay**
 - Compensation for active service while in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty area.
Note: Limited amount for officers.
- Living allowances**
 - BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing)
You can deduct mortgage interest and real estate taxes on your home even if you pay these expenses with your BAH.
 - BAS (Basic Allowance for Subsistence)
 - Housing and cost-of-living allowances abroad whether paid by the U.S. Government or by a foreign government.
 - OHA (Overseas Housing Allowance)
- Family allowances**
 - Certain educational expenses for dependents
 - Emergencies
 - Evacuation to a place of safety
 - Separation
- Death allowances**
 - Burial services
 - Death gratuity payments (up to \$3,000) to eligible survivors
 - Travel of dependents to burial site
- Moving allowances**
 - Dislocation
 - Move-in housing
 - Moving household and personal items
 - Moving trailers or mobile homes
 - Storage
 - Temporary lodging and temporary lodging expenses
- Travel allowances**
 - Annual round trip for dependent students
 - Leave between consecutive overseas tours
 - Reassignment in a dependent-restricted status
 - Transportation for you or your dependents during ship overhaul or inactivation
 - Per diem
- Other payments**
 - Defense counseling
 - Disability
 - Group-term life insurance
 - Professional education
 - ROTC educational and subsistence allowances
 - Survivor and retirement protection plan premiums
 - Uniform allowances
 - Uniforms furnished to enlisted personnel
- In-kind military benefits**
 - Legal assistance
 - Space-available travel on government aircraft
 - Medical/dental care
 - Commissary/exchange discounts

Foreign Source Income

If you are a U.S. citizen with income from sources outside the United States (foreign income), you must report all that income on your tax return unless it is exempt by U.S. law. This is true whether you reside inside or outside the United States and whether or not you receive a Form W-2, *Wage and Tax Statement*, or 1099 statement from the foreign payor. This applies to earned income (such as wages and tips) as well as unearned income (such as interest, dividends, capital gains, pensions, rents, and royalties).

Certain taxpayers can exclude income earned in foreign countries. For 2000, this exclusion amount is \$76,000. However, the foreign earned income exclusion **does not** apply to the wages and salaries of military and civilian employees of the U.S. Government. Employees of the U.S. Government include those who work at Armed Forces post exchanges, officers' and enlisted personnel clubs, and embassy commissaries, and similar personnel paid from nonappropriated funds. Other foreign income earned by military personnel or their spouses may be eligible for the foreign earned income exclusion. For more information on the exclusion, get Publication 54.

Residents of American Samoa may be able to exclude income from certain possessions. This possession exclusion does not apply to wages and salaries of military and civilian employees of the U.S. Government. If you need information on the possession exclusion, get Publication 570, *Tax Guide for Individuals With Income From U.S. Possessions*.

Community Property

The pay you earn as a member of the Armed Forces may be subject to community property laws depending on your marital status, your domicile, and the nature of the payment. The community property states are Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Marital status. Community property rules apply to married persons whose domicile during the tax year was in a community property state. The rules may affect your tax liability if you file separate returns or are divorced during the year.

Domicile. Your domicile is the permanent legal home you intend to use for an indefinite or unlimited period, and to which, when absent, you intend to return. It is not always where you presently live.

Nature of the payment. Active duty military pay is subject to community property laws. Armed Forces retired or retainer pay may be subject to community property laws.

For more information on community property laws, get Publication 555, *Community Property*.

Adjustments to Income

Adjusted gross income is your total income minus certain adjustments. The following two adjustments are of particular interest to members of the Armed Forces.

Individual Retirement Arrangements

For purposes of a deduction for contributions to a traditional individual retirement arrangement (IRA), Armed Forces members (including reservists on active duty for more than 90 days) are considered to be active participants in an employer-maintained retirement plan.

Generally, you can deduct the lesser of the contributions to your traditional IRA for the year or the general limit (or spousal IRA limit, if applicable). However, **if you or your spouse were covered by an employer retirement plan** at any time during the year for which contributions were made, you may not be able to deduct all of the contributions. The Form W-2 you or your spouse receives from an employer has a box used to indicate whether you were covered for the year. The "Pension Plan" box should have a mark in it if you were covered.

Individuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces or in support of the U.S. Armed Forces in designated combat zones have additional time to make a qualified retirement contribution to an IRA. For more information on this extension of deadline provision, see *Extension of Deadline*, later. For information on IRAs, get Publication 590.

Moving Expenses

To deduct moving expenses, you generally must meet certain time and distance tests. However, members of the Armed Forces who move because of a permanent change of station do not have to meet these tests. Moving expenses are reported on Form 3903.

Permanent change of station. A permanent change of station includes:

- A move from home to the first post of active duty,
- A move from one permanent post of duty to another, and
- A move from the last post of duty to your home or to a nearer point in the United States. The move must occur within one year of ending your active duty or within the period allowed under the Joint Travel Regulations.

Spouse and dependents. If a member of the Armed Forces deserts, is imprisoned, or dies, a permanent change of station for the spouse or dependent includes a move to the place of enlistment or to the member's, spouse's, or dependent's home of record or a nearer point in the United States.

If the military moves you, your spouse, and your dependents to or from separate locations, the moves are treated as a single move to your new main job location.

Reimbursements. Do not include in income the value of moving and storage services provided by the government in connection with a permanent change of station. Similarly, do not include in income amounts received as a dislocation allowance, temporary lodging expense, temporary lodging allowance, or move-in housing allowance. Generally, if the total reimbursements or allowances that you receive from the government because of the move are more than your qualified moving expenses, the excess is included in your wages on Form W-2. However, if any reimbursements or allowances (other than dislocation, temporary lodging, temporary lodging expense, or move-in housing allowances) exceed the cost of moving and the excess is not included in your Form W-2, the excess must be included in gross income on line 7 of Form 1040.

Use Form 3903 to deduct qualified expenses that exceed your reimbursements and allowances (including dislocation, temporary lodging, temporary lodging expense, or move-in housing allowances that are excluded from gross income.)

If you must relocate and your spouse and dependents move to or from a different location, do not include in income reimbursements, allowances, or the value of moving and storage services provided by the government to move you and your spouse and dependents to and from the separate locations.

Do not deduct any expenses for moving services that were provided by the government, or that were reimbursed to you, that you did not include in income.

Deductible moving expenses. If you meet the requirements discussed earlier, you can deduct the reasonable unreimbursed expenses that are incurred by you and members of your household.

You can deduct expenses (if not reimbursed or furnished in kind) for the following items.

- 1) Moving household goods and personal effects, including expenses for hauling a trailer, packing, crating, in-transit storage, and insurance. You cannot deduct expenses for moving furniture or other goods you bought on the way from the old home to the new home.
- 2) Travel and lodging expenses from the old home to the new home, including automobile expenses (either actual expenses or 10 cents per mile) and air fare. You cannot deduct any expenses for meals. You cannot deduct the cost of unnecessary side trips or lavish and extravagant lodging.



You can only include the cost of storing and insuring household goods and personal effects within any period of 30 consecutive days after the day your things are moved from your former home and before they are delivered to your new home.

Member of your household. A member of your household is anyone who has both your former home and your new home as his or her main home. It does not include a tenant or employee unless you can claim that person as a dependent.

Foreign moves. A foreign move is a move from the United States or its possessions to a foreign country or from one foreign country to another foreign country. It is not a move from a foreign country to the United States or its possessions.

For a foreign move, the deductible moving expenses described earlier are expanded to include the reasonable expenses of:

- Moving your household goods and personal effects to and from storage, and
- Storing these items for part or all of the time the new job location remains your main job location. The new job location must be outside the United States.

Reporting moving expenses. Figure moving expense deductions on Form 3903. Carry the deduction from Form 3903 to line 26, Form 1040.

More information. For more information, get Publication 521 and Form 3903 instructions.

Combat Zone Exclusion

If you are a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who serves in a combat zone (defined later), you can exclude certain pay from your income. You do not have to receive the pay while you are in a combat zone, are hospitalized, or in the same year you served in a combat zone. However, your entitlement to the pay must have fully accrued in a month during which you served in the combat zone or were hospitalized as a result of wounds, disease, or injury incurred while serving in the combat zone. Enlisted personnel, warrant officers, and commissioned warrant officers can exclude the following amounts from their income. (Officer personnel are discussed later.)

- Active duty pay earned in any month you served in a combat zone.
- Imminent danger/hostile fire pay.
- A reenlistment bonus if the voluntary extension or reenlistment occurs in a month you served in a combat zone.
- Pay for accrued leave earned in any month you served in a combat zone. The Department of Defense must determine that the unused leave was earned during that period.
- Pay received for duties as a member of the Armed Forces in clubs, messes, post and station theaters, and other nonappropriated fund activities. The pay must be earned in a month you served in a combat zone.
- Awards for suggestions, inventions, or scientific achievements you are entitled to because of a submission you made in a month you served in a combat zone.
- Student loan repayments that are attributable to your period of service in a combat zone (provided a full year's service is performed to earn the repayment).

Retirement pay and pensions do not qualify for the combat zone exclusion.

Partial (month) service. If you serve in a combat zone for one or more days during a particular month, you are entitled to an exclusion for that entire month.

Combat Zone

A combat zone is any area the President of the United States designates by Executive Order as an area in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat. An area usually becomes a combat zone and ceases to be a combat zone on the dates the President designates by Executive Order.

The Kosovo area. By Executive Order No. 13119 and Public Law 106–21, the following locations (including air space) were designated as a combat zone and a qualified hazardous duty area beginning March 24, 1999.

- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro)
- Albania
- The Adriatic Sea
- The Ionian Sea—north of the 39th parallel (including all of the airspace in connection with the Kosovo operation.)

Persian Gulf area. By Executive Order No. 12744, the following locations (and airspace) were designated as a combat zone beginning January 17, 1991.

- The Persian Gulf,
- The Red Sea,
- The Gulf of Oman,
- The part of the Arabian Sea that is north of 10 degrees north latitude and west of 68 degrees east longitude,
- The Gulf of Aden, and
- The total land areas of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

This publication refers to the above areas as the Persian Gulf area combat zone.

Qualified hazardous duty area. Beginning November 21, 1995, a “qualified hazardous duty area” in the former Yugoslavia is treated as if it were a combat zone. The qualified hazardous duty area includes:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Croatia, and
- Macedonia.

Members of the Armed Forces deployed overseas away from their permanent duty station in support of operations in a qualified hazardous duty area, or performing qualifying service outside the qualified hazardous duty area, are treated as if they are in a combat zone solely

for the purposes of the extension of deadlines. These personnel are not entitled to other combat zone tax benefits.

Note. If you satisfy additional requirements, you may be entitled to full combat zone tax benefits. See *Qualifying service outside combat zone*, later.

Serving in a Combat Zone

Service in a combat zone includes any periods you are absent from duty because of sickness, wounds, or leave. If, as a result of serving in a combat zone, a person becomes a prisoner of war or is missing in action, that person is considered to be serving in the combat zone so long as he or she keeps that status for military pay purposes.

Note. You are considered to be serving in a combat zone if you are either assigned on official temporary duty to a combat zone or you qualify for hostile fire/imminent danger pay while in a combat zone.

Qualifying service outside combat zone. Military service outside a combat zone is considered to be performed in a combat zone if:

- 1) The service is in direct support of military operations in the combat zone, and
- 2) The service qualifies you for special military pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

Military pay received for this service will qualify for the combat zone exclusion if the other requirements are met.

Nonqualifying presence in combat zone. The following military service does not qualify as service in a combat zone:

- 1) Presence in a combat zone while on leave from a duty station located outside the combat zone,
- 2) Passage over or through a combat zone during a trip between 2 points that are outside a combat zone, and
- 3) Presence in a combat zone solely for your personal convenience.

Amount of Exclusion

If you are an enlisted member, warrant officer, or commissioned warrant officer and you serve in a combat zone during any part of a month, all of your military pay for that month is excluded from your income. You can also exclude military pay earned while you are hospitalized as a result of wounds, disease, or injury incurred in the combat zone. The exclusion of your military pay while you are hospitalized does not apply to any month that begins more than 2 years after the end of combat activities in that combat zone. Your hospitalization does not have to be in the combat zone.

If you are a commissioned officer (other than a commissioned warrant officer), you may exclude your pay according to the rules just discussed. However, the amount of your exclusion is limited to the highest rate of enlisted pay (plus imminent danger/hostile fire pay

you received) for each month during any part of which you served in a combat zone or were hospitalized as a result of your service there.

Hospitalized while serving in the combat zone. If you are hospitalized while serving in the combat zone, the wound, disease, or injury causing the hospitalization will be presumed to have been incurred while serving in the combat zone unless there is clear evidence to the contrary.

Example. You are hospitalized for a specific disease in a combat zone where you have been serving for 3 weeks, and the disease for which you are hospitalized has an incubation period of 2 to 4 weeks. The disease is presumed to have been incurred while you were serving in the combat zone. On the other hand, if the incubation period of the disease is one year, the disease would not have been incurred while you were serving in the combat zone.

Hospitalized after leaving the combat zone. In some cases the wound, disease, or injury may have been incurred while you were serving in the combat zone, even though you were not hospitalized until after you left.

Example. You were hospitalized for a specific disease 3 weeks after you left the combat zone. The incubation period of the disease is from 2 to 4 weeks. The disease is presumed to have been incurred while serving in the combat zone.

Form W-2. The wages shown in box 1 of your 2000 Form W-2 should not include military pay excluded from your income under the combat zone exclusion provisions. If it does, you will need to get a corrected Form W-2 from your finance office.

You cannot exclude as combat pay any wages shown in box 1 of Form W-2.

Alien Status

For tax purposes, an alien is an individual who is not a U.S. citizen. An alien is in one of three categories: resident, nonresident, or dual-status. Determining the correct status is crucial in determining what income to report and what forms to file.

Most members of the Armed Forces are U.S. citizens or resident aliens. However, if you have questions about your alien status or the alien status of your dependents or spouse, you should read the information in the following paragraphs and get Publication 519.

Under peacetime enlistment rules, you generally cannot enlist in the Armed Forces unless you are a citizen or have been legally admitted to the United States for permanent residence. If you are an alien enlistee in the Armed Forces, you are probably a resident alien. If, under an income tax treaty, you are considered a resident of a foreign country, see your base legal officer. Other aliens who are in the United States only because of military assignments and who have a home outside the United States are nonresident aliens. Guam and Puerto Rico have special rules. Residents

of those areas should contact their taxing authority with their questions.

Resident Aliens

You are considered a U.S. resident alien for tax purposes if you meet either the **green card test** or the **substantial presence test** for the calendar year (January 1 – December 31). These tests are explained in Publication 519. Generally, resident aliens are taxed on their worldwide income and file the same tax forms as U.S. citizens.

Treating nonresident alien spouse as resident alien.

A nonresident alien spouse can be treated as a resident alien if **all** the following conditions are met.

- 1) One spouse is a U.S. citizen or resident alien at the end of the tax year.
- 2) That spouse is married to the nonresident alien at the end of the tax year.
- 3) You both choose to treat the nonresident alien spouse as a resident alien.

Making the choice. Both you and your spouse must sign a statement and attach it to your joint return for the first tax year for which the choice applies. Include in the statement:

- 1) A declaration that one spouse was a nonresident alien and the other was a U.S. citizen or resident alien on the last day of the year,
- 2) A declaration that both spouses choose to be treated as U.S. residents for the entire tax year, and
- 3) The name, address, and taxpayer identification number (social security number or individual taxpayer identification number) of each spouse. If the nonresident alien spouse is not eligible to get a social security number, he or she should file Form W-7, *Application for IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number* (ITIN). ITINs may be available through the nearest overseas base legal office or U.S. consulate.

 **Once you make this choice, the nonresident alien spouse's worldwide income is subject to U.S. tax. If the nonresident alien spouse has substantial foreign income, there may be no advantage to making this choice.**

Ending the choice. Once you make this choice, it applies to all later years unless one of the following situations occurs.

- You or your spouse revokes the choice.
- You or your spouse dies.
- You and your spouse become legally separated under a decree of divorce or separate maintenance.
- The Internal Revenue Service ends the choice because of inadequate records.

For specific details on these situations, get Publication 519.

If the choice is ended for any of these reasons, neither spouse can make the choice for any later year. This applies to a divorced individual who previously made the choice and later remarries.

Choice not made. If you and your nonresident alien spouse do not make this choice:

- You cannot file a joint return. You can file as married filing separately or head of household if you qualify.
- You can claim an exemption for your nonresident alien spouse if he or she has no gross income for U.S. tax purposes and is not another taxpayer's dependent (see *Exemptions*, later).
- The nonresident alien spouse generally does not have to file a federal income tax return if he or she had no income from sources in the United States. If a return has to be filed, see the next discussion.
- The nonresident alien spouse is not eligible for the earned income credit if he or she has to file a return.

Nonresident Aliens

An alien who does not meet the requirements for resident alien, as discussed earlier, is a nonresident alien. If required to file a federal tax return, nonresident aliens must file either Form 1040NR, *U.S. Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return*, or Form 1040NR-EZ, *U.S. Tax Return for Certain Nonresident Aliens With No Dependents*. See the form instructions for information on who must file and filing status.

Nonresident aliens generally must pay tax on income from sources in the United States. A nonresident alien's income that is from conducting a trade or business in the United States is taxed at graduated U.S. tax rates. Other income from U.S. sources is taxed at a flat 30% (or lower treaty) rate. For example, dividends from a U.S. corporation paid to a nonresident alien generally are subject to a 30% (or lower treaty) rate.

Dual-Status Aliens

An alien may be both a nonresident and resident alien during the same tax year, usually the year of arrival or departure. Dual-status aliens are taxed on income from all sources for the part of the year they are resident aliens. Generally, they are taxed only on income from sources in the United States for the part of the year they are nonresident aliens.

Exemptions

Exemptions reduce your income before you figure your tax. For 2000, you generally can deduct \$2,800 for each exemption you claim for yourself, your spouse, and each person who qualifies as your dependent. If another taxpayer can claim an exemption for you or your spouse, you cannot claim the exemption on your tax return. If you can claim an exemption for a dependent, that dependent cannot claim an exemption on his or her tax return.

To claim an exemption for a dependent on your tax return, you must list either the social security number (SSN), individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN),

or adoption taxpayer identification number (ATIN)) for each person for whom you claim an exemption.



If you do not list the dependent's SSN, ITIN, or ATIN, the exemption may be disallowed.

Dependents

You can claim an exemption for your dependent if all five of the following tests are met:

- 1) Member of household or relationship test.
- 2) Citizen or resident test.
- 3) Joint return test.
- 4) Gross income test.
- 5) Support test.

For specific information on these tests, get Publication 501.

To meet the member of household or relationship test, the person must either:

- 1) Be related to you in one of the ways listed under *Relatives who do not live with you*, in Publication 501, or
- 2) Be a member of your household for the entire year.

Even if the other dependency tests are met, you are not allowed an exemption for your dependent if he or she files a joint return.

To meet the gross income test, the person must have gross income of less than \$2,800. This test does not apply if the person is your child and is either under age 19 at the end of the year, or a full-time student under age 24 at the end of the year.

The citizen or resident test and the support test are of special interest to members of the Armed Forces.

Citizen or Resident Test

To be considered your dependent, the person must be a U.S. citizen or resident, or a resident of Canada or Mexico.

Your child. Children are usually citizens or residents of the country of their parents.

Child born in a foreign country. If you were a U.S. citizen when your child was born, the child may be considered a U.S. citizen for tax purposes. This applies even if the other parent was a nonresident alien (see *Alien Status*, earlier) and the child was born in a foreign country.

Child living abroad. You can claim your child's exemption if the child is a U.S. citizen and meets the other tests. It does not matter that the child lives abroad with the nonresident alien parent.

Legally adopted child. If you are a citizen or national of the United States and you legally adopt a child who is not a U.S. citizen or resident, you can claim the child's exemption if:

- 1) The other tests are met,
- 2) The child had your home as his or her main home for the year, and

- 3) The child was a member of your household for the year.

Example. Sergeant John Smith is a U.S. citizen and has been in the U.S. Army for 16 years. He is stationed in Germany. He and his wife, a German citizen, have a 2-year-old son who was born in Germany and who has dual citizenship—U.S. and German. Sergeant Smith's stepdaughter, a German citizen whom Sergeant Smith has not adopted, also lives with them. Only his son can be considered a U.S. citizen for whom a dependency exemption can be claimed. His stepdaughter does not qualify as a U.S. citizen or resident.

Support Test

To be considered your dependent, the person must receive more than half his or her support from you during the year. To figure if you provided more than half the support of a person, you must first determine the total support provided from all sources for that person.

Total support includes amounts spent to provide food, lodging, clothing, education, medical and dental care, recreation, transportation, and similar necessities.

Generally, the amount of an item of support is the cost to provide it. If the item is property or lodging, the amount of the item is the rent paid or its fair rental value.

Expenses that are not directly related to any one member of a household, such as the cost of food for the household, must be divided among members of the household.

Divorced or separated parents. Different rules apply to the support test for children of divorced or separated parents. These rules are discussed in Publication 501.

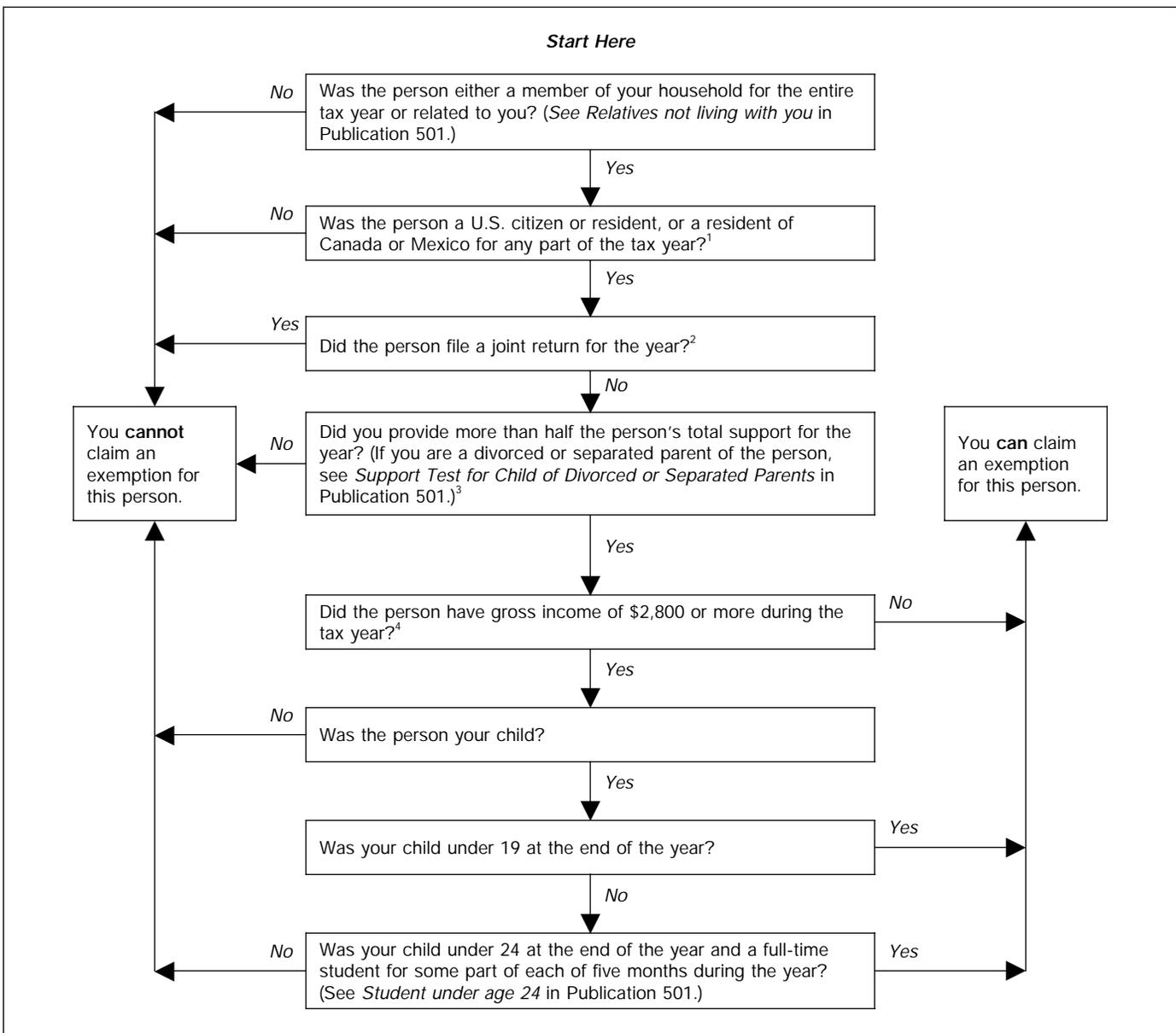
Dependency allotments. You can authorize an allotment from your pay for the support of your dependents. The amount is considered as provided by you in figuring whether you provide more than half the dependent's support.

If an allotment is used to support persons other than those you name, you can claim their exemptions if they otherwise qualify as your dependent.

Example. Army Sergeant Jeff Banks authorizes an allotment for his widowed mother. She uses the money to support herself and Jeff's 10-year-old sister. If that amount provides more than half their support, Jeff can claim an exemption for each of them, if they otherwise qualify, even though he only authorized the allotment for his mother.

Dependent in the Armed Forces. Generally, an exemption cannot be claimed for a person who is in the Armed Forces or is at one of the Armed Forces academies for the entire year because the support test will not have been met. However, if your dependent receives only partial support from the Armed Forces, you can still claim the exemption if you provided more than half his or her support and the other tests are met.

Figure A: Can You Claim a Dependency Exemption?



¹ If the person was your legally adopted child and lived in your home as a member of your household for the entire tax year, answer "yes" to this question.
² If neither the person nor the person's spouse is required to file a return but they file a joint return to claim a refund of tax withheld, you may answer "no" to this question.
³ Answer "yes" to this question if you meet the multiple support requirements under *Multiple Support Agreement* in Publication 501.
⁴ Gross income for this purpose does not include income received by a permanently disabled individual at a sheltered workshop. (See *Disabled dependents* in Publication 501.)

Example. Leslie James is 18 and single. She graduated from high school in June 2000 and entered the U.S. Air Force in September 2000. Leslie provided \$4,400 (her wages of \$3,400 and \$1,000 for other items provided by the Air Force) for her support that year. Her parents provided \$4,100. Her parents cannot claim a dependency exemption for her for 2000 because they did not provide more than half her support.

for at least 2 years, and lived in the home as your main home for at least 2 years.

Note. The maximum amount of gain that you can exclude will be reduced if you do not meet the ownership and use tests due to a move to a new permanent duty station.

For married individuals filing jointly who do not qualify for the \$500,000 exclusion for gain on a sale of a home because they do not satisfy the two-year ownership test, the two-year use test, and the prohibition on any other sale or exchange of a residence within the last two years, the limit on the amount of excludable gain should be calculated separately for each spouse. In that case, the maximum exclusion for the couple is equal to the sum of the exclusions to which the spouses would otherwise be entitled if they had not been married.

For sales **before May 7, 1997**, different rules applied. Under those rules, you had to buy and live in a

Sale of Home

You generally can exclude up to \$250,000 of gain (\$500,000 if married filing a joint return) realized on the sale or exchange of a main home in 2000. The exclusion is allowed each time you sell or exchange a main home, but generally not more than once every two years. To be eligible, during the 5-year period ending on the date of the sale, you must have owned the home

new home within a specified replacement period in order to postpone paying tax on all or part of the gain from the sale of your main home.

For more information on both the old and new laws, see Publication 523.

Property used for rental or business. You may be able to exclude your gain from the sale of a home that you have used as a rental property or for business. But you must meet the ownership and use tests discussed in Publication 523.

Itemized Deductions

To figure your taxable income, you must subtract either your standard deduction or your itemized deductions from adjusted gross income. For information on the standard deduction, get Publication 501.

Itemized deductions are figured on Schedule A (Form 1040). This chapter discusses itemized deductions of particular interest to members of the Armed Forces. For information on other itemized deductions, get the publications listed below.

- Publication 502, *Medical and Dental Expenses*
- Publication 526, *Charitable Contributions*
- Publication 547, *Casualties, Disasters, and Thefts (Business and Nonbusiness)*
- Publication 550, *Investment Income and Expenses*

Miscellaneous Itemized Deductions

You must reduce the total of most miscellaneous itemized deductions by 2% of your adjusted gross income. For information on deductions that are not subject to the 2% limit, get Publication 529.

Employee Business Expenses

Deductible employee business expenses are miscellaneous itemized deductions subject to the 2% limit. For information on employee business expenses, get Publication 463.

Generally, you must file Form 2106, *Employee Business Expenses*, or Form 2106-EZ, *Unreimbursed Employee Business Expenses*, to claim these expenses. You do not have to file Form 2106 or Form 2106-EZ if you are claiming only unreimbursed expenses for uniforms, professional society dues, and work-related educational expenses (all discussed later). You can deduct these expenses directly on Schedule A (Form 1040).

Reimbursement. Generally, to receive advances, reimbursements, or other allowances from the government, you must adequately account for your expenses and return any excess reimbursement. Amounts that are not excess reimbursements that you receive under an accountable plan are not included on your Form W-2. Your reimbursed expenses are not deductible.

If your expenses are more than your reimbursement, the excess expenses are deductible (subject to the 2%

limit) if you can prove them. You must file Form 2106 to report these expenses.

You can use the shorter Form 2106-EZ if you meet both of the following conditions.

- 1) You were not reimbursed for your expenses, or, if you were reimbursed, the amount you received was included in your income in box 1 of your Form W-2.
- 2) If you claim car expenses, you use the standard mileage rate.



For 2000, the standard mileage rate is 32.5 cents a mile for all business miles driven. This rate is adjusted periodically for inflation.

Travel expenses. You can deduct unreimbursed travel expenses only if they are incurred while you are traveling away from home. To be deductible, your travel expenses must be work related. You cannot deduct any expenses for personal travel, such as visits to family while on furlough, leave, or liberty.

Away from home. Home is your permanent duty station (which can be a ship or base), regardless of where you or your family live. You are away from home if you are away from your permanent duty station substantially longer than an ordinary day's work and you need to get sleep or rest to meet the demands of your work while away from home.

Examples of deductible travel expenses include:

- Expenses for business-related meals (generally limited to 50% of your unreimbursed cost), lodging, taxicabs, business telephone calls, tips, laundry, and dry cleaning while you are away from home on temporary duty or temporary additional duty, and
- Expenses of carrying out official business while on "No Cost" orders.



You cannot deduct any expenses for travel away from your tax home if the period of temporary employment is for more than one year. This rule may not apply if you are participating in a federal crime investigation or prosecution. For more information, see Publication 463 and the Form 2106 instructions.

Reservists. You can deduct travel expenses if you are under competent orders, with or without pay, and away from your main place of business overnight to perform drills and training duty.

If you are called to active duty, you can deduct travel expenses if you keep your regular job while on active duty, return to your job after release, and are stationed away from the general area of your regular job or business. However, you can deduct these expenses only if you pay for them at your official military post and only to the extent the expenses exceed BAH and BAS.

Local transportation expenses. Local transportation expenses are the ordinary and necessary costs you have to get from one workplace to another while not traveling away from home and for certain other business-related local transportation. For example,

these expenses include the costs of transportation by air, bus, rail, taxi, and driving and maintaining your car, but do not include meals and lodging. If you must go from one workplace to another while on duty (for example, as a courier or to attend meetings) without being away from home, your unreimbursed transportation expenses are deductible. However, the expenses of getting to and from your regular place of work (commuting) are not deductible.

Temporary work location. If you have a regular place of business and commute to a temporary work location, you can deduct daily transportation expenses for travel between:

- Your home and any temporary work location within the city or general area where you normally work (your tax home) or outside that area,
- Your home office and any other work location (regular or temporary) in the same trade or business if your home office qualifies as your principal place of business (tax home).

Generally, if your employment at a work location is realistically expected to last (and does in fact last) for 1 year or less, the employment is temporary. If your employment at a work location is realistically expected to last for more than 1 year or if there is no realistic expectation that the employment will last for 1 year or less, the employment is not temporary, regardless of whether it actually lasts for more than 1 year. If employment at a work location initially is realistically expected to last for 1 year or less, but at some later date the employment is realistically expected to last more than 1 year, that employment will be treated as temporary (unless there are facts and circumstances that would indicate otherwise) until your expectation changes.



*If you do **not** have a regular place of business, but you ordinarily work in the metropolitan area where you live, you can deduct daily transportation expenses between your home and a temporary work site outside your metropolitan area. However, you cannot deduct daily transportation costs between your home and temporary work sites within your metropolitan area.*

Uniforms. You usually cannot deduct the expenses for uniform cost and upkeep. Generally, you must wear uniforms when on duty and you are allowed to wear them when off duty.

If military regulations prohibit you from wearing certain uniforms off duty, you can deduct the cost and upkeep of the uniforms, but you must reduce your expenses by any allowance or reimbursement you receive.

Expenses for the cost and upkeep of the following articles are deductible.

- Military battle dress uniforms and utility uniforms if you cannot wear them off duty.
- Articles not replacing regular clothing, including insignia of rank, corps devices, epaulets, aiguillettes, and swords.

- Reservists' uniforms if you can wear the uniform only while performing duties as a reservist.

Professional dues. You can deduct dues paid to professional societies directly related to your military position. However, you cannot deduct amounts paid to an officers' club or a noncommissioned officers' club.

Example. Lieutenant Margaret Allen, an electrical engineer at Maxwell Air Force Base, can deduct professional dues paid to the American Society of Electrical Engineers.

Educational expenses. You can deduct work-related educational expenses if they meet certain rules.

Qualifications. You can deduct the costs of qualifying education. This is education that meets at least one of the following two tests.

- 1) The education is required by your employer or the law to keep your present salary, status, or job. The required education must serve a bona fide business purpose of your employer.
- 2) The education maintains or improves skills required in your present work.

Even if the above requirements are met, you cannot deduct expenses for education necessary to meet the minimum educational requirements of your present trade or business. Also, you cannot deduct expenses for a program of study that can qualify you for a new trade or business.

Example 1. Lieutenant Colonel Mason has a degree in financial management and is in charge of base finances at her post of duty. She took an advanced finance course. She already meets the minimum qualifications for her job. By taking the course, she is improving skills in her current position. The course does not qualify her for a new trade or business. She can deduct educational expenses that are more than the educational allowance she received.

Example 2. Major Williams worked in the military base legal office as a legal intern. He was placed in "excess leave status" by his employer to attend law school. He paid all his educational expenses and was not reimbursed. After obtaining his law degree, he passed the state bar exam and worked as a judge advocate. His educational expenses are not deductible because the law degree qualified him for a new trade or business, even though the education maintained and improved his skills in his work.

Travel expenses. You cannot deduct the cost of travel that is itself a form of education, even if it is directly related to your duties in your work or business. However, if your educational expenses qualify as a deduction, travel for that education, including transportation, meals (subject to the 50% limit), and lodging, can be deducted. Educational services provided in kind, such as base-provided transportation to or from class, are not deductible.

If you need more information on educational expenses, get Publication 508.

Earned Income Credit

After you have figured your taxable income and tax liability, you can determine if you are entitled to any tax credits. Most tax credits do not have special rules for members of the Armed Forces. However, the earned income credit may be of interest to you.

The earned income credit (EIC) is a special credit for certain persons who work. The credit reduces the amount of tax you owe (if any) and is intended to offset some of the increases in living expenses and social security taxes.



If you claim the EIC and it is later disallowed, you may have to complete an additional form if you want to claim the credit in a following year. See chapter 5 in Publication 596 for more information, including how to claim the EIC after disallowance.

Persons With a Qualifying Child

If you have a qualifying child, you must meet all the following rules to claim the earned income credit.

- 1) You must have earned income during 2000.
- 2) Your earned income and modified adjusted gross income (AGI) must each be less than:
 - a) \$27,413 if you have one qualifying child, or
 - b) \$31,152 if you have more than one qualifying child. If you do not have a qualifying child and earn less than \$10,380, see *Persons Without a Qualifying Child*, later.
- 3) Your filing status cannot be “married filing separate return.”
- 4) You (or your spouse, if filing a joint return) cannot be a qualifying child of another person.
- 5) Your qualifying child cannot be the qualifying child of another person with a higher modified AGI.
- 6) You cannot file Form 2555, *Foreign Earned Income*, or Form 2555-EZ, *Foreign Earned Income Exclusion*, to exclude income earned in foreign countries, or to deduct or exclude a foreign housing amount. See Publication 54 for more information.
- 7) You must be a U.S. citizen or resident all year unless:
 - a) You are married to a U.S. citizen or a resident alien, and
 - b) You choose to be treated as a resident alien for the entire year. See Publication 519 for more information.
- 8) Your investment income must be \$2,400 or less during the year. For most people, investment income is taxable interest and dividends, tax-exempt interest, and capital gain net income.
- 9) You must have a valid social security number for yourself, your spouse (if filing a joint return), and any qualifying child.

Qualifying child of more than one person. If you and someone else have the same qualifying child, the person with the higher modified AGI is the only one who may be able to claim the credit. The person with the lower modified AGI cannot claim the credit. This is true even if the person with the higher modified AGI does not claim the credit or does not meet all the rules to claim the credit.

Modified AGI for most people is the amount on line 33, Form 1040, or line 19, Form 1040A. See Publication 596 if you file Schedule E or you are claiming a loss from the rental of personal property not used in a trade or business.

Qualifying child of another person. If you are a qualifying child of another person, you cannot claim the credit—no matter how many qualifying children you have.

How to report. If you meet all these rules, fill out Schedule EIC and attach it to either Form 1040 or Form 1040A. Also complete the worksheet in the instructions for Form 1040 or Form 1040A to figure the amount of your credit. If you have a qualifying child, you cannot claim the credit on Form 1040EZ.

Enter “NO” directly to the right of line 60a (Form 1040) or next to line 38a (Form 1040A) if you cannot claim the credit because:

- 1) Your total taxable and nontaxable earned income was \$27,413 or more if you have one qualifying child (or \$31,152 or more if you have more than one qualifying child),
- 2) You were a qualifying child for another person in 2000,
- 3) Your qualifying child was also the qualifying child of another person whose modified AGI is higher than yours, or
- 4) You, your spouse, or qualifying child does not have a valid social security number.

Social security number. You must provide a correct and valid social security number (SSN) issued by the Social Security Administration for yourself, your spouse, and any qualifying child. If a social security card for you, your spouse, or your qualifying child says, “Not valid for employment,” you cannot get the credit.

If you need to get an SSN, file Form SS-5 with your local Social Security Administration office. It takes approximately two weeks to receive an SSN. If the filing deadline is approaching and you do not have an SSN, you can:

- 1) Request an automatic extension to August 15 using Form 4868, or
- 2) File the return on time without claiming the credit. After you receive the SSN, file an amended return (Form 1040X) claiming the credit and attach a filled-in Schedule EIC.



If an SSN for you, your spouse, or your qualifying child is missing from your tax return, or is incorrect, you may not get the credit.

Married persons. Married persons usually must file a joint return to claim the earned income credit. Even though you are married, you may file as head of household and claim the credit on your return if:

- 1) Your spouse did not live in your home at any time during the last 6 months of the year,
- 2) You paid more than half the cost to keep up your home for the entire year, and
- 3) You and your child lived in the same main home for more than half the year. You also must be entitled to claim an exemption for your child.

You will meet (3), even if you cannot claim your child, if:

- You gave that right to the other parent by filling out Form 8332, *Release of Claim to Exemption for Child of Divorced or Separated Parents*, or similar written statement, or
- There is a pre-1985 agreement (decree of divorce or separate maintenance or written agreement) granting the exemption to your child's other parent.

Qualifying Child

You have a qualifying child if your child meets three tests:

- 1) Relationship,
- 2) Residency, and
- 3) Age.

Relationship test. To meet the relationship test, the child must be your:

- Son, daughter, or adopted child (or a descendant of your son, daughter, or adopted child—for example, your grandchild),
- Stepson or stepdaughter, or
- Eligible foster child.

Married child. Generally, a married child can be your qualifying child only if you can claim an exemption for the child. If you cannot claim an exemption for your married child, he or she can still be your qualifying child if the only reason you cannot claim the exemption is one of the following.

- 1) You gave the right to claim the child's exemption to your child's other parent by filling out Form 8332, or a similar written statement, or
- 2) You gave the right to claim the child's exemption to your child's other parent in a pre-1985 agreement (such as a separation agreement or divorce decree).

If you need more information about either of these exceptions or when you can claim an exemption for your child, see Publication 501, or Publication 504, *Divorced or Separated Individuals*.

Residency test. To meet the residency test:

- A qualifying child must have lived in your home for more than half the year (for the whole year if your child is an eligible foster child), and
- The home must be in the United States. U.S. military personnel stationed outside the United States on extended active duty are considered to be living in the United States.

Birth or death of a child. The child is considered to have lived with you for all of 2000 if:

- The child was born or died during the year, and
- The child lived with you for the part of the year he or she was alive.

Temporary absences. Count time that you or the qualifying child is away from home on a temporary absence due to a special circumstance as time lived at home. Examples of special circumstances include:

- Illness,
- Attending school,
- Business,
- Vacation, or
- Military service.

You may be eligible for the earned income credit if you are absent temporarily only because of military service. To be eligible for the credit, you must plan to return to your main home where your qualifying child lives at the end of your assignment. Service in a combat zone is a temporary absence.

Age test. The age test is met if your child is:

- 1) Under age 19 at the end of the year,
- 2) A full-time student under age 24 at the end of the year, or
- 3) Permanently and totally disabled at any time during the tax year, regardless of age.

Persons Without a Qualifying Child

If you do not have a qualifying child, you can take the credit if you meet all the following rules.

- 1) You must have earned income during 2000.
- 2) Your earned income and modified adjusted gross income must each be less than \$10,380.
- 3) Your filing status cannot be "married filing separate return."
- 4) You (or your spouse, if filing a joint return) cannot be a qualifying child of another person. See *Qualifying child of another person*, earlier.

- 5) You (or your spouse if filing a joint return) must be at least age 25 but under age 65 at the end of your tax year.
- 6) No one else is able to claim an exemption for you as a dependent on his or her return.
- 7) Your main home must be in the United States for more than half the year. U.S. military personnel stationed outside the United States on extended active duty are considered to live in the United States.
- 8) You cannot file Form 2555, *Foreign Earned Income*, or Form 2555-EZ, *Foreign Earned Income Exclusion*.
- 9) You must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year unless:
 - a) You are married to a U.S. citizen or a resident alien, and
 - b) You choose to be treated as a resident alien for the entire year.
- 10) Your investment income must be \$2,400 or less during the year. For most people, investment income is taxable interest and dividends, tax-exempt interest, and capital gain net income.
- 11) You (and your spouse, if filing a joint return) must have a valid SSN. In either case, you can use only a valid SSN issued by the Social Security Administration. If a social security card for you or your spouse says, "Not valid for employment," you cannot get the credit.

- Housing and subsistence allowances and in-kind equivalents received by military members,
- Combat zone excluded pay (box 13, code Q of your Form W-2),
- Earnings from self-employment, and
- Anything else of value, even if not taxable, that you received for providing services.

For purposes of the earned income credit, the term "housing and subsistence allowances" means the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) received by military personnel (with respect to grade and status) and the value of meals and lodging furnished in kind to military personnel residing on military bases. To calculate the value of meals and lodging furnished in kind, you may assume that the value is equal to the combined BAH and BAS that the military member would have received had he or she been entitled to the allowance. Earned income that is not taxable, such as combat pay, BAH, BAS, and certain in-kind equivalents, is reported in box 13, Code Q, of Form W-2.

Earned income does **not** include:

- Interest and dividends,
- Social security and railroad retirement payments,
- Workfare payments,
- Pensions or annuities,
- Veterans' benefits (including VA rehabilitation payments),
- Variable housing allowances,
- Workers' compensation, or
- Unemployment compensation.

How to report. If you meet all these rules, fill out the worksheet in your tax forms instructions for EIC to figure the amount of your credit.

Enter "NO" directly to the right of line 60a (Form 1040), next to line 38a (Form 1040A), or to the right of the word "below" on line 8 (Form 1040EZ) if you cannot claim the credit because:

- 1) Your total taxable and nontaxable earned income was \$10,380 or more,
- 2) You (and your spouse if filing a joint return) were under age 25 or age 65 or more,
- 3) Your home was not in the United States for more than half the year,
- 4) You were a qualifying child of another person in 2000, or
- 5) You or your spouse did not have a valid SSN.

Example 1. Corporal John Andrews and his wife Doris will file a joint return for 2000. They have two children—Mark who is age 3 and Connie who was born in May of 2000. Their total earned income is \$23,650 (basic pay \$16,104, BAH \$4,896, BAS \$2,650). John and Doris qualify for the earned income credit.

Example 2. Staff Sergeant Brad Wilson and his wife Judy will file a joint return for 2000. They have two children—Angela who is 6 years old and Eric who is 4 years old. Their total earned income is \$34,054 (basic pay \$25,140, which includes \$7,780 nontaxable pay for service in a combat zone, plus BAH \$6,264 and BAS \$2,650). Even though the Wilsons' modified AGI is \$17,360, they do not qualify for the earned income credit because their total earned income is not less than \$31,152.

Earned Income

For purposes of the earned income credit, earned income includes:

- Wages, salaries, and tips,
- Long-term disability benefits you received before minimum retirement age,
- Salary deferrals and reductions,

Military members should receive a *Leave and Earnings Statement* at the end of the year that includes some of the pertinent allowance information. You should refer to that statement or your Form W-2 when determining earned income for EIC purposes. You can also contact your legal assistance office or unit tax advisor if you need additional help.

Advance Earned Income Credit

You must meet all the following rules to qualify for the advance earned income credit in 2001. You must:

- 1) Work and expect that your earned income and modified AGI will each be less than a certain amount. The amount in 2000 was \$27,413. The amount for 2001 will be higher. See Form W-5, *Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate*, for the 2001 amount.
- 2) Have a qualifying child.
- 3) Meet all the rules explained in the instructions for Form W-5.

If you expect to qualify for the earned income credit for 2001, you can choose to get part of the credit in advance by giving a completed 2001 Form W-5 to your appropriate finance office. The credit will be included regularly in your pay.

If you received advance earned income credit payments in 2000, you must file either Form 1040 or Form 1040A for 2000 to report the payments.

IRS Will Figure Your Credit for You

There are certain instructions you must follow before the IRS can figure the credit for you. See Publication 967, *IRS Will Figure Your Tax*.

Child Tax Credit

The child tax credit is a credit that can reduce your tax. If you have children, you may be able to take a child tax credit on your tax return for each of your qualifying children.



*The child tax credit is **not** the same as the credit for child and dependent care expenses. See Publication 503 for more information on the credit for child and dependent care expenses.*

Qualifying Child

A qualifying child for purposes of the child tax credit must be all of the following.

- 1) Under age 17 at the end of 2000.
- 2) A citizen or resident alien of the United States.
- 3) Claimed as your dependent.
- 4) Your:
 - a) Son or daughter,
 - b) Stepson or stepdaughter,
 - c) Adopted child,
 - d) Grandchild, or
 - e) Eligible foster child.

Adopted child. A child placed with you by an authorized placement agency for legal adoption is an adopted child even if the adoption is not final.

Authorized placement agency. An authorized placement agency includes any person authorized by state law to place children for legal adoption.

Grandchild. A grandchild is any descendant of your son, daughter, or adopted child and includes your great-grandchild, great-great-grandchild, etc.

Eligible foster child. An eligible foster child is any child you cared for as your own and who:

- Is **(1)** your brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister; **(2)** a descendent (such as a child including an adopted child) of your brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister; or **(3)** a child placed with you by an authorized placement agency, and
- Lived with you for all of 2000. A child who was born or died in 2000 is considered to have lived with you for all of 2000 if your home was the child's home for the entire time he or she was alive during 2000.

Amount of credit. The maximum amount of credit that you can claim is \$500 for each qualifying child.

Limits on the credit. Your credit may be limited.

You must reduce your child tax credit if either (1) or (2) applies:

- 1) The amount on line 42 (Form 1040) or line 26 (Form 1040A) is less than the credit. If the amount is zero, you cannot take this credit because there is no tax to reduce. But if you have three or more qualifying children, you may be able to take the **additional child tax credit**. See *Additional Child Tax Credit*, later.
- 2) Your modified AGI is above the amount shown below for your filing status.
 - Married filing jointly— \$110,000
 - Single, head of household, or qualifying widow(er)— \$75,000
 - Married filing separately— \$55,000

Modified AGI. For purposes of the child tax credit, your modified AGI is your AGI plus the following amounts that may apply to you.

- Any amount excluded from income because of the exclusion of income from Puerto Rico.
- Any amount on lines 43 and 48 of Form 2555, *Foreign Earned Income*.
- Any amount on line 18 of Form 2555-EZ, *Foreign Earned Income Exclusion*.
- Any amount on line 15 of Form 4563, *Exclusion of Income for Bona Fide Residents of American Samoa*.

If you do not have any of the above, modified AGI is the AGI amount on line 34 (Form 1040) or line 20 (Form 1040A).

Claiming the credit. To claim the child tax credit, you must file Form 1040 or Form 1040A. You must provide the name and identification number (usually a social security number) on your tax return for each qualifying child.

Answer the *Questions* in your form instructions for line 47 (Form 1040) or line 30 (Form 1040A) to find out which child tax credit worksheet you can use to compute the credit.



If you answer "Yes" to question 1, 2, or 4 in your Form 1040 instructions or question 1 or 3 in your Form 1040A instructions, you must complete the Child Tax Credit Worksheet in Publication 972, Child Tax Credit.

Additional child tax credit. This credit is for certain people who have three or more qualifying children, as defined earlier. The additional child tax credit may give you a refund even if you do not owe any tax.

How to claim the additional child tax credit. To claim the additional child tax credit, follow the steps below.

- 1) Make sure you figured the amount, if any, of your child tax credit. See *Claiming the credit*, earlier.
- 2) Use Form 8812, *Additional Child Tax Credit*, to see if you can take the additional child tax credit only if:
 - a) You answered "Yes" on line 4 or line 5 of the *Child Tax Credit Worksheet*, **and**
 - b) The amount on line 1 of your *Child Tax Credit Worksheet* is \$1,500 or more.
- 3) If you have an additional child tax credit on line 9 of Form 8812, carry it to line 62 (Form 1040) or line 39 (Form 1040A).

More information. For more information on the child tax credit, see the instructions for Form 1040 or Form 1040A.

Decedents

If a member of the Armed Forces dies, a surviving spouse or **personal representative** handles duties such as filing any tax returns and claims for refund of withheld or estimated tax. A personal representative can be an executor, administrator, or anyone who is in charge of the decedent's assets.

This section discusses the special tax provisions that apply to individuals who:

- 1) Die while serving in a combat zone or from wounds, disease, or injury incurred while serving in a combat zone, or
- 2) Die from wounds or injury incurred in a terroristic or military action outside the United States while a U.S. employee.

For other information concerning decedents, get Publication 559.

Combat Zone Forgiveness

If a member of the U.S. Armed Forces dies while in active service in a combat zone or from wounds, disease, or other injury received in a combat zone, the decedent's income tax liability is forgiven for the tax year in which death occurred and for any earlier tax year ending on or after the first day the member served in a combat zone in active service. Any forgiven tax liability that has already been paid will be refunded, and any unpaid tax liability at the date of death will be forgiven.

In addition, any unpaid taxes for prior years will be forgiven and any prior year taxes paid after the date of death will be refunded.

This provision also applies to a member of the Armed Forces serving outside the combat zone if the service:

- 1) Was in direct support of military operations in the zone, and
- 2) Qualified the member for special military pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

For a description of the combat zone, see *Combat Zone*, earlier.

Missing status. The date of death for a member of the Armed Forces who was in a missing status (missing in action or prisoner of war) is the date his or her name is removed from missing status for military pay purposes. This is true even if death actually occurred earlier.

Terroristic or Military Action Forgiveness

Tax liability is forgiven for an individual who:

- 1) Is a military or civilian U.S. employee at death, and
- 2) Dies from wounds or injury incurred while a U.S. employee in a terroristic or military action outside the United States.

The forgiveness applies to the tax year death occurred and for any earlier tax year beginning with the year before the year in which the wounds or injury occurred. A **terroristic or military action** is any terroristic activity outside the United States primarily directed against the United States or its allies or any military action outside the United States involving the U.S. Armed Forces resulting from violence or aggression against the United States or its allies.

Any multinational force in which the United States participates is considered an ally of the United States.

Example. Army Private John Kane died in 2000 of wounds incurred outside the United States in a terroristic attack in 1999. His income tax liability is forgiven for all tax years from 1998 through 2000. Refunds are allowed for the tax years for which the period for filing a claim for refund has not ended.

Claims for Tax Forgiveness

If either of the tax-forgiveness provisions applies to a prior year's tax that has been paid and the period for filing a refund claim has not ended, the tax will be refunded. If any tax is still due, it will be canceled. Generally, the period for filing a claim for credit or refund of income tax is 3 years from the time the return was filed or 2 years from the time the tax was paid, whichever is later.

If death occurred in a combat zone or from wounds, disease, or injury incurred in a combat zone, the deadline for filing a claim for credit or refund is extended using the rules discussed later under *Extension of Deadline*.

Procedures for claiming forgiveness. If the individual died in a combat zone or as a result of a terroristic or military action outside the United States, use the following procedures for filing a claim for income tax forgiveness.

- 1) File Form 1040 if a tax return has not been filed for the tax year. Form W-2 must accompany the return.
- 2) File Form 1040X if a tax return has been filed. A separate Form 1040X must be filed for each year in question.

These returns and claims must be filed with the Internal Revenue Service Center, P.O. Box 12267, Covington, KY 41012, Attn: Stop 537.

All returns and claims must be identified by writing "Kosovo Operation—KIA," "Desert Storm—KIA," or "Former Yugoslavia—KIA" in bold letters on the top of page 1 of the return or claim. On Forms 1040 and 1040X, the phrase "Kosovo Operation—KIA," "Desert Storm—KIA," or "Former Yugoslavia—KIA" must be written on the line for "total tax." If the individual was killed in a terroristic action outside the United States, put "KITA" on the front of the return and on the line for "total tax."

An attachment that includes a computation of the decedent's tax liability before any amount is forgiven and the amount that is to be forgiven should accompany any return or claim. For joint returns, see *Joint returns*, later.

Necessary documents. The following documents must accompany all returns and claims for refund:

- 1) Form 1310, *Statement of Person Claiming Refund Due a Deceased Taxpayer*, and
- 2) A certification from the Department of Defense or the Department of State.

For military and civilian employees of the Department of Defense, certification must be made by the Department on Form DoD 1300, *REPORT OF CASUALTY*. For civilian employees of all other agencies, certification must be a letter signed by the Director General of the Foreign Service, Department of State, or his or her delegate. The certification must include the deceased individual's name and social security number, the date of injury, the date of death, and a statement that the

individual died in a combat zone or from a terroristic or military action outside the United States. If the individual died as a result of a terroristic or military action, the statement must also include the fact that the individual was a U.S. employee at the date of injury and at the date of death.

If the certification has been received but there is not enough tax information to file a timely claim for refund, file Form 1040X with Form 1310. Include a statement saying that an amended claim will be filed as soon as the necessary tax information is available.

Joint returns. Only the decedent's part of the joint income tax liability is eligible for the refund or tax forgiveness. To determine the decedent's part, the person filing the claim must:

- 1) Figure the income tax for which the decedent would have been liable as if a separate return had been filed,
- 2) Figure the income tax for which the spouse would have been liable as if a separate return had been filed, and
- 3) Multiply the joint tax liability by a fraction. The top number of the fraction is the amount in (1), above. The bottom number of the fraction is the total of (1) and (2).

The amount in (3) is the decedent's tax liability that is eligible for the refund or tax forgiveness. If you are unable to complete this process, you should attach a statement of all income and deductions, indicating the part that belongs to each spouse. The IRS will make the proper allocation.

Residents of community property states. If the member of the Armed Forces was domiciled in a community property state and the spouse reported half the military pay on a separate return, the spouse can get a refund of taxes paid on his or her share of the pay for the years involved. The forgiveness of unpaid tax on the military pay would also apply to the half owed by the spouse for the years involved.

Filing Returns

This section discusses the special procedures for military personnel when filing federal tax returns. For information on filing returns for those involved in a combat zone, see *Extension of Deadline*, later.

Where To File

Send your federal tax return to the Internal Revenue Service Center for the place where you live. For example, Sgt. Kane, who is stationed in Maine but whose permanent home address is in California, should send her federal return to the service center for Maine. The instructions for Forms 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ give the addresses for the service centers. If you are overseas and have an APO or FPO address, file your return with the Internal Revenue Service Center, Philadelphia, PA 19255-0215.

When To File

Most individual tax returns cover a calendar year, January through December. The regular due date for these tax returns is April 15 of the following year. If April 15 falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, your tax return is considered timely filed if it is filed by the next business day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. For 2000 tax returns, the due date is April 16, 2001, because April 15 falls on a Sunday.

Extensions

You can receive an extension of time to file your return. Different rules apply, depending on whether you live within the United States or outside the United States.

Within the United States. You can receive an automatic 4-month extension to file your return if by the regular due date you do any of the following.

- File a paper Form 4868.
- File Form 4868 electronically by phone or over the Internet.
- Pay part or all of your estimate of tax due electronically by using a credit card. (If you use this option, you do not have to file Form 4868.)

The extension of time to file is automatic, and you will not receive any notice of approval. However, your request for an extension will be denied if it is not made timely. The IRS will inform you of the denial.



You cannot use the automatic extension if (1) you choose to have IRS figure the tax or (2) you are under a court order to file your return by the regular due date.

Payment of tax. An extension of time to file does not mean you have an extension of time to pay any tax due. You must estimate your tax due. You do not have to send in any payment of tax due when you file Form 4868. However, if you pay the tax after the regular due date, you will be charged interest from the regular due date to the date the tax is paid. You also may be charged a penalty for paying the tax late unless you have reasonable cause for not paying your tax when due.

If you file Form 4868 electronically, you can make your tax payment by authorizing a direct debit (automatic withdrawal) from your checking or savings account or by using a credit card.

For more details on how to pay the tax due, see the Form 4868 instructions.

When you file your return. Enter the amount you paid on line 63, Form 1040. On Form 1040A, include the amount in the total on line 40. On Form 1040EZ, include the amount in the total on line 9. To the left of line 40 or line 9, enter "Form 4868" and show the amount paid.

Outside the United States and Puerto Rico. If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, you can qualify for an automatic extension of time until June 15 without filing Form 4868 (or making a payment) if either of the following situations applies to you.

- 1) You live outside the United States and Puerto Rico and your main place of business or post of duty is outside the United States and Puerto Rico, or
- 2) You are in military or naval service on an assigned tour of duty outside the United States and Puerto Rico for a period that includes the entire due date of the return.

You will be charged interest on any amount not paid by the regular due date until the date the tax is paid.

If you use this automatic extension, you must attach a statement to the return showing that you met the requirement.

You can request an additional 2-month extension to file by August 15 by filing a paper Form 4868 by June 15. Write "Taxpayer Abroad" across the top of Form 4868.

Joint returns. For married persons filing a joint return, only one spouse needs to meet the requirements to take advantage of the automatic extension to June 15.

Separate returns. For married persons filing separate returns, only the spouse who meets the requirements qualifies for the automatic extension to June 15.

Additional extension beyond August 15. You can request an extension beyond the 4-month extension by filing Form 2688 or by writing a letter to the IRS. Except in undue hardship cases, this additional extension will be granted only if Form 4868 has already been filed. Form 2688 or your letter will not be considered if it is filed after the extended due date. If you file Form 2688 and are granted an extension and the IRS discovers that the information you gave was false or misleading, the extension is void. You may then be subject to a penalty for filing late.



If you are unable to pay the tax owed by the end of the extension period, you may want to file Form 9465 to arrange an installment payment agreement with the IRS that reflects your ability to pay the tax owed.

Signing Returns

Generally, you must sign your return. However, if you are overseas or incapacitated, you can grant a **power of attorney** to an agent to file and sign your return.

A power of attorney can be granted by filing Form 2848. These forms are available at your nearest legal assistance office. While other power of attorney forms may be used, they must contain the information required by Form 2848.

In Part I of the form, you must indicate that you are granting the power to sign the return, the form number, and the tax year for which the form is being filed. Attach the power of attorney to the tax return. If you are acting on behalf of someone serving in a combat zone, see

Filing Returns for Combat Zone/Qualified Hazardous Duty Area Participants, later.

Joint returns. Generally, joint returns must be signed by both spouses. However, when a spouse is overseas, in a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area, in a missing status, incapacitated, or deceased, a power of attorney may be needed to file a joint return.

Spouse overseas. If one spouse is overseas on military duty, there are two options when filing a joint return. One spouse can prepare the return, sign it, and send it to the other spouse to sign early enough so that it can be filed by the due date. Or, the spouse who expects to be overseas on the due date of the return can file Form 2848 specifically designating that the spouse who remains in the United States can sign the return for the absent spouse.

Spouse in combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area. If your spouse is unable to sign the return because he or she is serving in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area or is performing qualifying service outside of a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area, such as the Persian Gulf Area or Yugoslavia, or a qualified hazardous duty area (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Macedonia), and you do not have a power of attorney or other statement, you can sign for your spouse. Attach a signed statement to your return that explains that your spouse is serving in a combat zone.

Spouse in missing status. The spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is in a missing status in a combat zone can still file a joint return. A joint return can be filed for any year beginning not more than 2 years after the end of the combat zone activities. A joint return filed under these conditions is valid even if it is later determined that the missing spouse died before the year covered by the return.

Spouse incapacitated. If your spouse cannot sign because of disease or injury and he or she tells you to sign, you can sign your spouse's name in the proper space on the return, followed by the words "by [your name], Husband (or Wife)." Be sure to sign your name in the space provided for your signature. Attach a dated statement, signed by you, to your return. The statement should include the form number of the return you are filing, the tax year, the reason your spouse could not sign, and that your spouse has agreed to your signing for him or her.

Spouse died during the year. If one spouse died during the year and the surviving spouse did not remarry before the end of the year, the surviving spouse can file a joint return for that year, writing in the signature area, "Filing as surviving spouse." If an executor or administrator has been appointed, both he or she and the surviving spouse must sign the return filed for the decedent.

Refunds

In general, military personnel follow the same rules as other taxpayers concerning tax refunds. See your tax form instructions for information on what to do if you do not receive an expected refund and how to call to check on your refund status.



Use Form 8822 to notify the IRS if you move or change your address after filing your return. See How To Get Tax Help, near the end of this publication for information about getting this form.

Extension of Deadline



Certain periods of time are disregarded when determining whether certain tax matters have been taken care of on time. For ease of understanding, this publication refers to these provisions as "extensions of deadlines." These deadline extensions should not be confused with other parts of the tax law that refer to extensions of time for performing acts.

Extension. The deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes, filing claims for refund, and taking other actions with the IRS is automatically extended if you serve in the Armed Forces in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area, or have qualifying service outside of a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area. See *Qualifying service outside combat zone*, earlier. Additionally, if you are deployed overseas away from your permanent duty station in support of operations in a qualified hazardous duty area, but outside the qualified hazardous duty area, you also receive these extensions (but not other combat zone benefits). The deadline for IRS to take certain actions, such as collection and examination actions, is also extended. See *Combat Zone*, earlier, for the beginning dates for the Kosovo area combat zone, the Persian Gulf area combat zone, and the qualified hazardous duty areas.

Your deadline for taking actions with the IRS is extended for 180 days after the later of:

- 1) The last day you are in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area or have qualifying service outside of the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area (or the last day the area qualifies as a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area), or
- 2) The last day of any continuous qualified hospitalization (defined later) for injury from service in the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area or while performing qualifying service outside of the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area.

In addition to the 180 days, your deadline is also extended by the number of days that were left for you to take the action with the IRS when you entered a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area (or began performing qualifying service outside the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area). If you entered the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area (or began performing qualifying service outside the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area) before the period of time to take the action began, your deadline is extended by the entire period of time you have to take the action. For example, you had 3½ months (January 1 – April 15, 2000) to file your 1999 tax return. Any days of this 3½ month period that were left when you entered

the combat zone (or the entire 3½ months if you entered the combat zone by January 1) are added to the 180 days when determining the last day allowed for filing your 1999 tax return.

Example 1. Captain Margaret Jones entered Saudi Arabia on December 1, 1998. She remained there through March 31, 2000, when she departed for the United States. She was not injured and did not return to the combat zone. The deadlines for filing Captain Jones' 1998, 1999, and 2000 returns are figured as follows.

The 1998 tax return deadline is January 10, 2001.

This deadline is 285 days (180 plus 105) after Captain Jones' last day in the combat zone (March 31, 2000). The 105 additional days are the number of days in the 3½ month filing period that were left when she entered the combat zone (January 1 – April 15, 1999).

The 1999 tax return deadline is January 11, 2001. The deadline is 286 days (180 plus 106) after Capt. Jones' last day in the combat zone (March 31, 2000).

The 2000 tax return deadline is not extended because the 180-day extension period after March 31, 2000, ends on September 27, 2000, which is before the start of the filing period for her 2000 return (January 1 – April 16, 2001).

Example 2. Petty Officer Leonard Brown's ship entered the Persian Gulf on January 5, 1999. On February 15, 1999, Leonard was injured and was flown to a U.S. hospital. He remained in the hospital through April 21, 2000. The deadlines for filing Petty Officer Brown's 1998, 1999, and 2000 returns are figured as follows.

The 1998 tax return deadline is January 29, 2001.

Petty Officer Brown has 281 days (180 plus 101) after his last day in the hospital (April 21, 2000) to file his 1998 return. The 101 additional days are the number of days in the 3½ month filing period that were left when he entered the combat zone (January 5 – April 15, 1999). January 27, 2001, falls on a Saturday so the return must be filed by January 29, 2001.

The 1999 tax return deadline is February 1, 2001.

Petty Officer Brown has 286 days (180 plus 106) after April 21, 2000, to file his 1999 tax return. The 106 additional days are the number of days in the 2000 filing period that were left when he entered the combat zone.

The 2000 tax return deadline is not extended because the 180-day extension period after April 21, 2000, ends on October 18, 2000, which is before the start of the filing period for his 2000 return (January 1 – April 16, 2001).

Example 3. You generally have 3 years from April 15, 1997, to file a claim for refund against your timely filed 1996 tax return. This means that your claim normally must be filed by April 15, 2000. However, if you served in a combat zone from November 1, 1999, through March 23, 2000, and were not injured, your

deadline for filing that claim is extended 347 days (180 plus 167) after you leave the combat zone. This extends your deadline to March 5, 2001. The 167 additional days are the number of days in the 3-year period for filing the refund claim that were left when you entered the combat zone on November 1 (November 1, 1999 – April 15, 2000).

Missing status. Time in a missing status (missing in action or prisoner of war) counts as time in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty area.

Support personnel. The deadline extension provision also applies if you are serving in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty area in support of the Armed Forces. This includes Red Cross personnel, accredited correspondents, and civilian personnel acting under the direction of the Armed Forces in support of those forces.

Qualified hospitalization. The hospitalization must be the result of an injury received while serving in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty area. Qualified hospitalization means:

- 1) Any hospitalization outside the United States, and
- 2) Up to 5 years of hospitalization in the United States.

Actions extended. The actions to which the deadline extension provision applies include:

- Filing any return of income, estate, or gift tax (except employment and withholding taxes),
- Paying any income, estate, or gift tax (except employment and withholding taxes),
- Filing a petition with the Tax Court for redetermination of a deficiency, or for review of a Tax Court decision,
- Filing a claim for credit or refund of any tax,
- Bringing suit for any claim for credit or refund,
- Purchasing a replacement home to postpone paying tax on the gain on the sale (before May 7, 1997) of your old home,
- Making a qualified retirement contribution to an IRA,
- Allowing a credit or refund of any tax by the IRS,
- Assessment of any tax by the IRS,
- Giving or making any notice or demand by the IRS for the payment of any tax, or for any liability for any tax,
- Collection by the IRS of any tax due, and
- Bringing suit by the United States for any tax due.

If the IRS takes any actions covered by these provisions or sends you a notice of examination before learning that you are entitled to an extension of the deadline, contact your legal assistance office. No penalties or interest will be imposed for failure to file a return or pay taxes during the extension period.



Even though the deadline is extended, you may want to file a return earlier to receive any refund due. See Filing Returns, earlier.

Spouses. Spouses of individuals who served in a combat zone are entitled to the same deadline extension with two exceptions.

- 1) The extension does not apply to a spouse for any tax year beginning more than 2 years after the date the area ceases to be a combat zone.
- 2) The extension does not apply to a spouse for any period the qualifying individual is hospitalized in the United States for injuries incurred in a combat zone.

Not in a combat zone. If you are a reservist called to active duty or a regular military member but are not in a combat zone, you may still qualify to defer the payment of back taxes. To qualify, you must be serving your initial period of service, and you must show that your ability to pay the back taxes has been materially impaired.

Initial period of service. The initial period of service is defined as the period of active duty following recall to active duty from an inactive reserve or National Guard unit. For regular military personnel, it is the period following induction or first enlistment in the Armed Forces or the first period of reenlistment for a person who has been out of the service for a year or more. For an officer, the initial period of service is limited to two years of active service after one of the above occurrences.

Material impairment. To indicate material impairment, you must show that your income dropped as a result of going into military service.

Request for deferment. If you have a current payment agreement, you must make a written request for deferment to the IRS office where you have the agreement.

If you have received a notice requesting payment, you must make a written request for deferment to the IRS office that issued the notice.

If you do not have a current payment agreement, you must wait until you receive a notice asking for payment before you request a deferral.

Your request must include your name, social security number, monthly income and source of income before military service, current monthly income, military rank, date you entered military service, and date you are eligible for discharge. If possible, enclosing a copy of your orders would be helpful.

The IRS will review your request and advise you in writing of its decision. Should you need further assistance, you can call the IRS at **1-800-829-1040** to discuss your situation.

If your request for deferment is granted by the IRS, you will be able to defer payment of back taxes until 6 months after the end of your initial period of service.

Maximum rate of interest. Section 526 of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Relief Act limits the maximum interest rate you can be charged to 6% per year for obligations or liabilities incurred before your entry into active service.

The reduced rate applies only if your service materially affects your ability to pay. This rate applies only to that interest charged during the period of your active duty.

To substantiate your claim for this reduced interest rate, you must furnish the IRS a copy of your orders or reporting instructions that detail the call to active duty.

Filing Returns for Combat Zone/Qualified Hazardous Duty Area Participants

You can choose to file your return before the end of your extension period. File your return in accordance with instructions provided by the Armed Forces.

If you are acting on behalf of someone serving in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area and you do not have a power of attorney from that person specifying that you can handle federal tax matters, the IRS will accept a general power of attorney or other statement signed by that person that authorizes you to act on his or her behalf. A copy must be attached to the tax return.

If it is not possible for the spouse of someone serving in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area to obtain that person's signature on a joint return, power of attorney form, or other signed authorization to act on his or her behalf, the IRS will accept a written statement explaining that the husband or wife is serving in a combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area. The statement must be signed by the spouse filing the tax return and attached to the return.

Outside the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area. If you do not qualify for the deadline extension provision, your 2000 return is due by the regular due date, April 16, 2001 (June 15, 2001, if you are stationed outside the United States and Puerto Rico on April 15). Interest on any unpaid tax will be charged from April 15.

There are other provisions that extend the time for filing your return. See *Extensions*, earlier.

How To Get Tax Help

You can get help with unresolved tax issues, order free publications and forms, ask tax questions, and get more information from the IRS in several ways. By selecting the method that is best for you, you will have quick and easy access to tax help.

Contacting your Taxpayer Advocate. If you have attempted to deal with an IRS problem unsuccessfully, you should contact your Taxpayer Advocate.

The Taxpayer Advocate represents your interests and concerns within the IRS by protecting your rights and resolving problems that have not been fixed through normal channels. While Taxpayer Advocates cannot change the tax law or make a technical tax decision, they can clear up problems that resulted from previous contacts and ensure that your case is given a complete and impartial review.

To contact your Taxpayer Advocate:

- Call the Taxpayer Advocate at **1-877-777-4778**.
- Call the IRS at **1-800-829-1040**.
- Call, write, or fax the Taxpayer Advocate office in your area.
- Call **1-800-829-4059** if you are a TTY/TDD user.

For more information, see Publication 1546, *The Taxpayer Advocate Service of the IRS*.

Free tax services. To find out what services are available, get Publication 910, *Guide to Free Tax Services*. It contains a list of free tax publications and an index of tax topics. It also describes other free tax information services, including tax education and assistance programs and a list of TeleTax topics.



Personal computer. With your personal computer and modem, you can access the IRS on the Internet at **www.irs.gov**. While visiting our web site, you can select:

- *Frequently Asked Tax Questions* (located under *Taxpayer Help & Ed*) to find answers to questions you may have.
- *Forms & Pubs* to download forms and publications or search for forms and publications by topic or keyword.
- *Fill-in Forms* (located under *Forms & Pubs*) to enter information while the form is displayed and then print the completed form.
- *Tax Info For You* to view Internal Revenue Bulletins published in the last few years.
- *Tax Regs in English* to search regulations and the Internal Revenue Code (under *United States Code (USC)*).
- *Digital Dispatch* and *IRS Local News Net* (both located under *Tax Info For Business*) to receive our electronic newsletters on hot tax issues and news.
- *Small Business Corner* (located under *Tax Info For Business*) to get information on starting and operating a small business.

You can also reach us with your computer using File Transfer Protocol at **ftp.irs.gov**.



TaxFax Service. Using the phone attached to your fax machine, you can receive forms and instructions by calling **703-368-9694**. Follow the directions from the prompts. When you order forms, enter the catalog number for the form you need. The items you request will be faxed to you.



Phone. Many services are available by phone.

- *Ordering forms, instructions, and publications.* Call **1-800-829-3676** to order current

and prior year forms, instructions, and publications.

- *Asking tax questions.* Call the IRS with your tax questions at **1-800-829-1040**.
- *TTY/TDD equipment.* If you have access to TTY/TDD equipment, call **1-800-829-4059** to ask tax questions or to order forms and publications.
- *TeleTax topics.* Call **1-800-829-4477** to listen to pre-recorded messages covering various tax topics.

Evaluating the quality of our telephone services. To ensure that IRS representatives give accurate, courteous, and professional answers, we evaluate the quality of our telephone services in several ways.

- A second IRS representative sometimes monitors live telephone calls. That person only evaluates the IRS assistor and does not keep a record of any taxpayer's name or tax identification number.
- We sometimes record telephone calls to evaluate IRS assistors objectively. We hold these recordings no longer than one week and use them only to measure the quality of assistance.
- We value our customers' opinions. Throughout this year, we will be surveying our customers for their opinions on our service.



Walk-in. You can walk in to many post offices, libraries, and IRS offices to pick up certain forms, instructions, and publications. Also, some libraries and IRS offices have:

- An extensive collection of products available to print from a CD-ROM or photocopy from reproducible proofs.
- The Internal Revenue Code, regulations, Internal Revenue Bulletins, and Cumulative Bulletins available for research purposes.



Mail. You can send your order for forms, instructions, and publications to the Distribution Center nearest to you and receive a response within 10 workdays after your request is received. Find the address that applies to your part of the country.

- **Western part of U.S.:**
Western Area Distribution Center
Rancho Cordova, CA 95743-0001
- **Central part of U.S.:**
Central Area Distribution Center

P.O. Box 8903
Bloomington, IL 61702-8903

- **Eastern part of U.S. and foreign addresses:**
Eastern Area Distribution Center
P.O. Box 85074
Richmond, VA 23261-5074



CD-ROM. You can order IRS Publication 1796, *Federal Tax Products on CD-ROM*, and obtain:

- Current tax forms, instructions, and publications.
- Prior-year tax forms, instructions, and publications.

- Popular tax forms which may be filled in electronically, printed out for submission, and saved for recordkeeping.
- Internal Revenue Bulletins.

The CD-ROM can be purchased from National Technical Information Service (NTIS) by calling **1-877-233-6767** or on the Internet at **www.irs.gov/cdorders**. The first release is available in mid-December and the final release is available in late January.

IRS Publication 3207, *The Business Resource Guide*, is an interactive CD-ROM that contains information important to small businesses. It is available in mid-February. You can get one free copy by calling **1-800-829-3676**.

Index

A	
Accrued leave payments	3
Active duty pay	3
Advance earned income credit	16
Alien status:	
Dual	8
Nonresident	8
Resident	8
Aliens	7
Amount of exclusion:	
Form W-2	7
Hospitalized after leaving the combat zone	7
Hospitalized while serving in the combat zone	7
Officers	7
Assistance (See Tax help)	
Attendance at a designated service school pay	3
Aviation career incentives pay	3
<hr/> <hr/>	
B	
Back wages pay	3
Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)	4
Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)	4
Basic pay:	
Active duty pay	3
Attendance at a designated service school pay	3
Back wages pay	3
Drills pay	3
Reserve training pay	3
Training duty pay	3
Bonuses:	
Enlistment bonus	3
Reenlistment bonus	3
Burial services	4
Burial site	4
<hr/> <hr/>	
C	
Child tax credit	16
Children:	
Born in a foreign country	9
Legally adopted child	9
Living abroad	9
Claims for tax forgiveness	18
Combat zone compensation ...	4
Combat zone exclusion	6
Combat zone forgiveness:	
Joint returns	18
Missing status	17
Residents of community property states	18
Combat zone:	
Persian Gulf area	6
Qualified hazardous duty area	6
The Kosovo Area	6
Comments	3
Commissary/exchange discounts	4
Community property	4
Credit:	
Advance earned income credit	16
Child tax credit	16
Earned income	13
<hr/> <hr/>	
D	
Death allowances:	
Burial services	4
Burial site	4
Death gratuity payments	4
Decedents	17
Deductions, itemized	11
Deductions, miscellaneous itemized	11
Defense counseling payments	4
Dependents:	
Allotments for	9
Disability payments	4
Dislocation allowances	4
Diving duty pay	3
Domicile	4
Drills pay	3
<hr/> <hr/>	
E	
Earned income:	
Advance earned income credit	16
Credit	13
Definition of	15
Educational expenses	12
Educational expenses for dependents	4
Emergencies	4
Employee business expenses:	
Reimbursed	11
Unreimbursed	11
Enlistment bonus	3
Evacuation	4
Exemptions	8
Expenses:	
Educational	12
Employee business	11
Moving	5
Professional dues	12
Reservists	11, 12
Transportation	11
Travel	11
Uniforms	12
Extension of deadline:	
Actions extended	21
<hr/> <hr/>	
F	
Filing returns for combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area participants	22
Not in a combat zone	22
Qualified hospitalization	21
Spouses	22
Support personnel	21
<hr/> <hr/>	
F	
Family allowances:	
Educational expenses for dependents	4
Emergencies	4
Evacuation	4
Separation	4
Filing returns:	
Additional extension of time to file	19
Combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area participants	22
Extension of time to file	19
Incapacitated	20
Joint returns	19
Missing status	20
Outside the combat zone/qualified hazardous duty area	22
Power of attorney	19
Refunds	20
Separate returns	19
Signing returns	19
Spouse deceased	20
When to file	19
Where to file	18
Foreign duty pay	3
Foreign income	4
Foreign moves	6
Forms:	
1040	6, 11, 18, 19
1040A	18, 19
1040EZ	18, 19
1040NR	8
2106	11
2106-EZ	11
2688	19
2848	19, 20
3903	5, 6
4868	19
8822	20
W-2	7
Free tax services	22
<hr/> <hr/>	
G	
Gross income:	
Excludable items:	
Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)	4
Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)	4

Group-term life insurance pay-ments	4
Personal money allowances paid to high-ranking officers	3
Professional education pay-ments	4
ROTC educational and subsistence allowances ..	4
Student loan repayments	3
Survivor and retirement pro-tection plan premiums	4
Uniform allowances	4
Uniforms furnished to enlisted personnel	4
Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)	4

P	
Per diem	4
Permanent change of station ..	5
Personal money allowances paid to high-ranking officers	3
Personal representative	17
Power of attorney	19
Professional dues	12
Professional education payments	4
Publications (See Tax help)	

Q	
Qualified hazardous duty pay ..	4
Qualifying child	16

R	
Real estate taxes	4
Reenlistment bonus	3
Reimbursements:	
Employee business ex-penses	11
Moving and storage	5
Uniforms	12
Reserve training pay	3
Reservists:	
Deductible travel expenses	11
Uniforms	12
ROTC educational and subsistence allowances	4

S	
Sale of home	10
Separate returns	19
Separation	4
Serving in a combat zone:	
Nonqualifying presence	7
Qualifying service outside combat zone	7
Space-available travel on gov-ernment aircraft benefits	4
Special duty assignment pay ..	3
Special pay:	
Aviation career incentives pay	3
Combat zone compensation	4
Diving duty pay	3
Foreign duty pay	3
Hostile fire pay	3
Imminent danger pay	3

Medical and dental officers pay	3
Nuclear-qualified officers pay	3
Qualified hazardous duty pay	4
Special duty assignment pay	3
Storage	4
Student loan repayments	3
Suggestions	3
Survivor and retirement pro-tection plan premiums	4

T	
Tax help	22
Taxpayer Advocate	22
Temporary lodging	4
Temporary work location	12
Terroristic or military action forgiveness	17, 18
Training duty pay	3
Travel allowances:	
Dependent students	4
Dependent-restricted status ..	4
Overseas tours	4
Per diem	4
Ship overhaul or inactivation	4
Travel expenses	11
TTY/TDD information	22

U	
Uniform allowances	4
Uniforms	12
Uniforms furnished to enlisted personnel	4
