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Via Rail gives free summer travel to soldiers, families

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OTTAWA - The federal government and Via Rail will announce Monday they will provide members of the Canadian Forces and veterans free train passes this summer.

"Our Armed Forces personnel do so much for us. It's nice to be able to give back to them and allow their families an opportunity to explore Canada," a senior government official said.

Members of the Forces and retired veterans will be able to travel in economy class for free during a six-week period, beginning on July 1, the source said. Discounts rates will apply to first class and sleeper car travel, as well as for members of their families.

This is the third time the program is being offered.

In previous years, members of the Armed Forces fighting in Afghanistan have questioned why they are excluded from the deal while Department of National Defence civilians were snatching up seats.

The source said the government was aware of the problem and was working to address it.

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