

Your Guide to...

Military Family Travel

Resources, Space-A, Destinations, Discounts, and more!

From the MilitaryByOwner Advertising Team





Table of Contents

Reasons to Love Military Travel

Travel Hacks

Air Travel with Kids

Travel by Train

Road Trippin'

Destinations & Discounts

Destinations Overseas

Military Lodging for Vacation Travel

Flying Space-A

Safe Travel Tips

Keep Your Home Safe While You Travel

After You Arrive

Contributors

Reasons to Love

Military Travel



Whether you're traveling in conjunction with a PCS, for leisure during the typical travel seasons of spring break and summer, or getting away in the off-season, there are lots of reasons to love military travel!

This newest e-book in the series from MilitaryByOwner was designed to give you loads of resources to use in your military family's travels, including discounts, destination ideas, lodging and travel resources, and tips for your next trip, whether it's a road trip, flight, or even journey by train.

Some benefits to traveling with a military affiliation:

- Transportation:** Use Space-A flights, discounted tickets, or stop at one of the many discounted [recreational parks](#) across the U.S.
- Accommodations:** Whether military-sponsored lodging or discounted hotels, make use of these budget-friendly benefits.
- Attractions:** MWR, ITT, Leisure Travel Office—whatever it's called in your branch of service—use it! Many commercial vendors and even National Parks offer discounts and waive fees for military.

Travel Resources for Your Trip!



Whether en route to duty station or on vacation, there are many support options!

PCS Lodging



Easy access to on and off base lodging.

USO



USO centers in airports offer service members a place to relax and assistance with travel arrangements.

Armed Forces Vacation Club



Provides access to 7-night resort stays starting at \$349* to military members. Join today-membership is free.

Information, Tickets and Travel



ITT is open to military ID card holders and offers info on local attractions, assistance with travel plans, and discount tickets. ITT also serves as a Ticket Master outlet.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation



MWR provides a complete range of community support and quality of life programs for military families.

Air BnB



Peer- to- peer short-term homestay network with properties around the world.

Military Lodging and Rec Centers



From beach cottages to mountain get-aways, these facilities are designed for recreating and often offer equipment rentals and discounts to local tours and excursions.

Travel Hacks

Before packing the car for a week's worth of driving or standing in lengthy TSA lines at the airport, read over these travel resources.

They could save you money, time, and possibly some of your sanity while traveling!

Airlines

- **Weekends** are now the new Tuesday of airline ticket buying. As of now, the cheapest flights can be found on Saturday and Sunday.
- **Watch for flash sales** on Twitter and subscribe to airlines' email lists for deals.
- **Compare airlines** for each leg of the trip. Hub cities have more inventory, which could translate to savings.



Websites and Apps

[Hopper](#) has been making the rounds for discount flight shoppers, likely because it was named the best travel app of 2015 by Apple.

[Family Vacation Critic](#) covers everything from dude ranches to all-inclusive Caribbean resorts.

Kayak's photography filled [Travel Hacker Blog](#) has a Tips and Trends section filled with hacks for all types of adventures.



Don't Leave Home Without It!

Some of our military family trip must-haves:

Snacks: The more the better, and packing your own is budget-friendly.

Wipes: Not just for diaper changes, they work on everything in a pinch!

Charged electronics: As well as portable and wall chargers.

For even more travel hacks, see the MilitaryByOwner post [Travel Hacks for Your Summer Vacation](#)

Parents are always trying to sneak in a little bit of education during vacation. Use the trapped-in-the-car/airplane hours to slip in some fun but informative movies to enhance the trip. Do a Google search for movies related to your destination!

Air Travel with Kids

Survival Tips for Parents and Fellow Passengers

There aren't many more stressful or frustrating situations than being trapped on a plane with a screaming kid for hours-- for both the parents and passengers.

Although daunting, there are techniques to ease kids into behavior that will not result in the entire plane load of people shooting hateful looks your way.

There are also a few things passengers can do to alleviate some distress.



For Moms and Dads

- ✓ Come prepared with snacks, games, and electronics.
- ✓ Allow plenty of time for TSA, boarding, potty stops, and diaper changes.
- ✓ Be respectful of other people traveling.

For Passengers

- ✓ Show kindness.
- ✓ Dig deep to find patience to endure and realize that most parents are doing all they can.
- ✓ Noise canceling headphones!
- ✓ Be respectful of others traveling.

Travel by Train

for a Relaxing Vacation

Have you ever sat parked on the interstate in holiday traffic wondering just exactly why you decided to burn your leave time (and your gas mileage) stuck in a confined space with tired, irritable children? Or maybe you're not a fan of flying?

Consider travel by train! Train travel offers you a chance to see the landscape in a new way, and sleeper and dining cars offer comfort not found on a road trip.

For more about train travel, read some experiences from MilitaryByOwner writers:

- [Travel by Train](#)
- [Train Travel with Pets: An Amtrak Update](#)

Amtrak offers a 10% military discount for their lowest available fare, including travel on the Auto Train. See [their site](#) for more information.

For Amtrak's latest info on pets, visit [All Aboard Pets](#).



Road Trippin'

Cool Stops and Side Trips!

There's no shortage of fun, odd, beautiful, and amazing things to see across this great land and there is no better time than during a road trip to take advantage of the opportunity to stop and see the sights.

If you've planned out your route and set stops for each evening, visit the Chamber of Commerce website for the area to see what type of events or entertainment may be taking place while you're there.

Stopping on side trips to see the Meteor Crater, the World's Largest Ball of Twine, or The Amazing Maize Maze may be the thing that makes this the most memorable trip of your life!



Whether you're planning your PCS route or taking a Griswold style family vacation, it can be a great opportunity to see some amazing sights across this great country.

National Parks

There are more than 2,000 federal recreation sites across the United States and the [National Park Service](#) offers a free Annual Pass to all military members and dependents.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Military Fee Waiver

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers accepts the [National Park Annual Pass for U.S. Military](#) at the more than 2,500 USACE managed recreation areas, which include boat launches and swimming areas across the United States.

Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives

Any fan of the Food Network will be familiar with Guy Fieri's show *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, which showcases the hole-in-the-wall restaurants that only the locals would know and love. A super-fan of the show has mapped out each stop that Guy has made and created a [Google map](#) that provides the name, address, phone number, web address, and quotes from what Guy had to say about the restaurant.

Destinations & Discounts



Military families have access to some of the most coveted vacation spots around the world.

Check out these destinations!

Florida: One of the most popular vacation spots for families. Walt Disney World is home to [Shades of Green](#), an Armed Services Recreation Center.

Virginia: Home to Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens and Water Country USA offer free passes through the [Waves of Honor](#) Program

California: [SeaWorld San Diego](#) offers free admission to military and dependents.

General Discounts

With airlines charging fees for checked baggage, check ahead of time to see if they waive the fees for active duty military and/or their dependents. These fees certainly can add to the bottom line of vacation expenses, so choosing an airline that doesn't charge extra fees can free up money for other items.

If your plans [don't take you far from home](#), check with your local ITT/MWR office for discounted tickets to attractions in your area.

As a general rule of thumb, try presenting your military ID when checking out at stores and restaurants or just ask if various places offer military discounts. You might just be surprised how many places will give you 10% off your purchases.

Destinations Overseas

Germany

Bask in the beauty of the Bavarian Alps in Germany.

The [Edelweiss](#) resort offers high adventure in one of the premier sporting areas in Germany with spacious guest rooms and cozy log cabins with access to wellness clubs, pools, spas, dining, and guided tours.



South Korea

If you're stationed in Asia, then the [Dragon Hill Lodge](#) in Seoul, South Korea is the perfect destination.

Located in the heart of Seoul, explore the rich and diverse culture that is South Korea. Visit museums, art exhibits, teahouses, landmarks, and more. The resort offers beautiful rooms, access to health club, pool, dining, and lounge.

Hawaii

Ah yes, **Hawaii**! What a wonderful tropical destination, but also expensive. However, again there are some great facilities to take advantage of that can make even this resort destination affordable. Another facility that is a member of the Armed Forces Recreation Centers is the [Hale Koa Hotel](#), located right on the beach at Waikiki, Oahu.

Another facility is the [Kilauea Military Camp Mountain Cottage Resorts](#) on the Big Island of Hawaii. The KMC is located in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and offers guest cottages as well as dormitories.

Military Lodging for Vacation Travel



Each branch handles their lodging policies differently, so it's important to be in direct contact with the facility to understand their rules regarding fees, reservation priorities, and cancellations.

Military lodging is typically available for:

- Military and civilian travelers on official orders
- Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, Federal Government, and DOD personnel on temporary duty
- Active duty military and families on Permanent Change of Station official orders
- Active duty and families on a space-available basis
- Military retirees and their families
- Widows/widowers/dependents of retired military personnel
- National Guard and Army Reserve Members and their families
- Other circumstances where guests may qualify for stays including medical patients or foreign military members.

Plan Ahead!

- ❖ Timing and preplanning are keys to making the best use of military lodging. During the summer PCS season, popular facilities are booked months in advance.
- ❖ Don't forget the opportunities available near military lodging. Exchanges and commissaries will save money, as will leisure ticket offices for excursions. Medical/dental care and pharmacies are available if the need arises.
- ❖ The worry of stored belongings in trailers or car storage units is also somewhat alleviated because of secure access to the base.

DoD Lodging Contacts

This is an additional list of important websites or phone numbers for each of the branches of military.

[Air Force Inns](#)

1-888-AFLODGE (1-888-235-6343)

[Army Lodging](#)

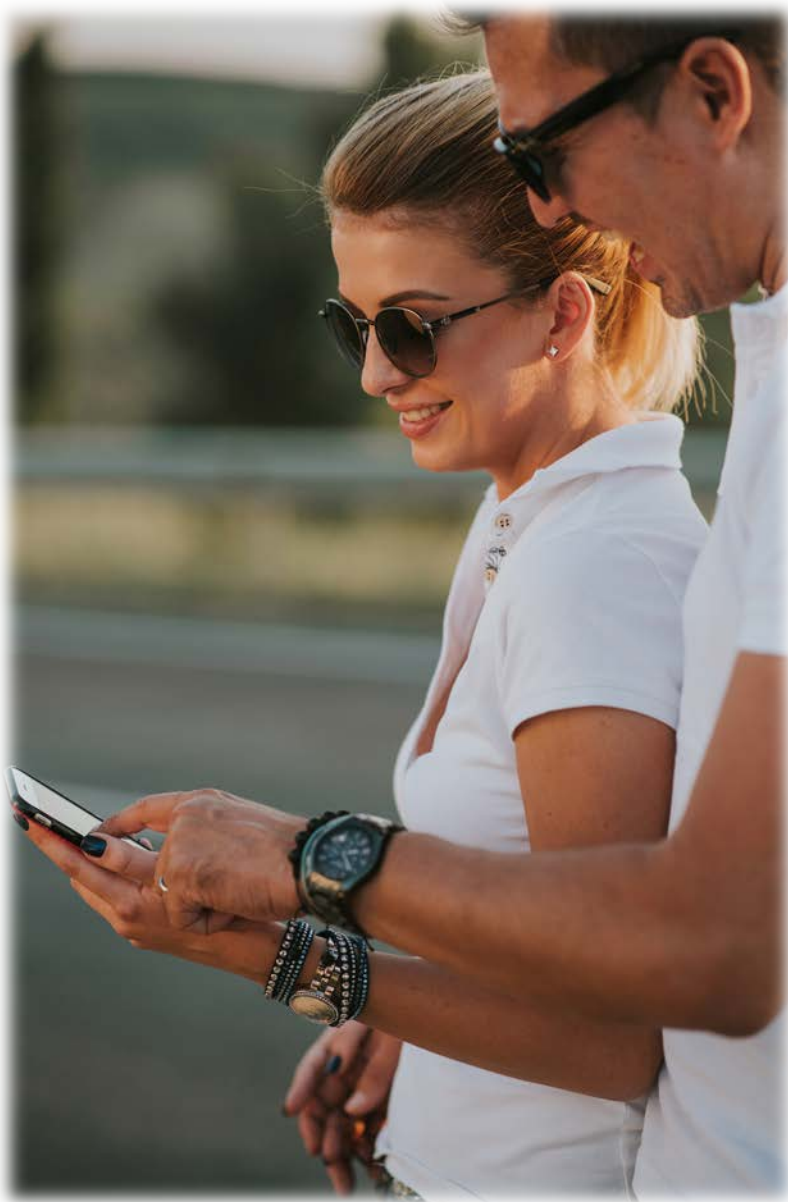
1-800-GO-ARMY-1

[Marine Corps Inns of the Corps](#)

[Navy Lodge](#)

1-800-NAVY-INN (628-9466)

[Coast Guard MWR Recreational Lodging](#)



The DoD seems to be moving in the direction of combining much of the branches' lodging information at the website [Department of Defense Lodging](#).

The Defense Travel Management Office [has more information](#) regarding the DoD Defense Lodging website.

Space Available Travel

Things to keep in mind:



Be
Flexible



Flights are not guaranteed

You could end up waiting and losing leave

You could be on a comfy plane or in a cargo hold

Your terminal may not be near your destination

Be
Patient



Seating may not be very comfortable

Temperature may not be ideal

There may be unscheduled changes

There may be long delays

Be
Prepared



Have a light meal prior to flight

Bring snacks and water

Bring entertainment

Bring ear plugs

Flying Space-A

Many factors come into play before actually boarding the plane, such as your priority level and acquiring the proper documentation. Use these resources as the go-to authorities for understanding the Space-A process.

[Air Mobility Command](#)

The official site of Space-A.

[Military OneSource](#)

A guide to understanding Space-A travel.

[Military Spouse](#)

An easy-to-read review of the process.

[Space-A Travelers of the USA](#)

Closed Facebook group (ask to join well in advance) that offers advice from regular flyers.

[SpaceA.net](#)

All-encompassing third party page about Space-A.

Thinking of flying Space-A to save some money on travel? Space-A Travel ("Space-Available") on military aircraft involves planning well in advance and having time to spare.

Fly Space-A if:

- You have ample leave.
- You have time to scour Facebook and "like" terminal pages near your preferred departure and arrival destinations.
- An air tight back-up plan in place.
- Fear of the unknown isn't a stressor.

Don't Fly Space-A if:

- You need to attend an important occasion.
- It's the [holiday season](#).
- The family will be disappointed spending part of your vacation waiting for open flights.
- Creature comforts are high priority.



SPACE A TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Access FAQ's on Air Mobility Command Website

Sign out on leave, then get your name on the list

Know your Category

Let credit card company know where you'll be

Get cash - utilize ATM's abroad

See if cell phone carrier has international plan

Pack cords, chargers, and converters

Download hotel-booking apps

Check out TripAdvisor

Get passport well in advance

Have emergency contact info to provide at check -in

When you know you have a seat, book lodging

When you know you have a seat, get rental car

TSA rules apply - no liquids over 3 ounces

Wear earplugs!

Wear appropriate clothes and close-toed shoes

Bring snacks and water

Get a tour and phrase book at the Exchange

Start looking for flight home early

Have a back up plan

Safe Travel Tips

Whether or not you're a seasoned traveler, being aware and prepared is important.

Don't get distracted. A common ploy of thieves (in other countries or here at home) is to distract you with several people begging, by holding a sign or flyer in your face, or other means. Be aware and take note of landmarks and surroundings.



Secure your cash and credit

cards. You may not love the “fashion statement” of travel wallets that strap to your body, but they're invaluable. Also, notify credit card companies and your bank if you'll be traveling overseas.

Keep electronics and valuables out of sight. When traveling by car, keep valuables under wrap, even for quick stops. Remove valuables and important documents from the car when you stop for the evening or even better, leave them at home.

Secure lodging in advance. Use [PCS Lodging to make reservations at military temporary lodging facilities or hotels](#) along your route to ensure that you always have a safe place to stop for the night. If you're traveling with pets, be sure to make reservations at pet-friendly establishments.

Blend in. While you may not look *exactly* like a local, try not to stand out. This means plainer clothes and no white socks with sandals! Also be careful of broadcasting the fact that you don't know where you are.

International travel?

Smart tips for carrying your money



Credit Cards

Best for:

Large purchases such as airline tickets, hotels, car rentals, restaurants.



Debit and ATM Cards

Best for:

Getting cash in the local currency.



Cash

Best for:

The first 24 hours of your trip, until you can get to an ATM.



Prepaid Cards and Traveler's Checks

Best for:

Emergency backup if you can't find an ATM and/or you run out of cash.

Keep Your Home Safe While You Travel

You've probably seen the well-intended Facebook posts warning family and friends to avoid sharing information about their vacations and holiday travels.

For those with a public social media profile, sharing a picture of yourself in the Bahamas is akin to laying out a welcome mat for would-be burglars. It doesn't matter that your address isn't listed on your Facebook profile; you'd be surprised what someone with limited hacking skills can find.

Then again, beyond a few anecdotes, how many burglars truly stalk Facebook accounts to find out if a home is vacant? The real dangers for the safety of your home exist in and around it. To keep your home safe during holiday travel, you'll need to do more than avoid the temptation of the immediate gratification of getting likes for your beach photos.

Don't let your mail pile up!

Either have a friend collect it or use USPS hold service.

Schedule yard maintenance.

Nothing says "we're gone" like piled up leaves or snow.

Automate lights and security systems.

Ask a neighbor to set out trash cans and pick up packages and flyers, to help make the home appear occupied.

Protect your pipes. Outside intruders aren't the only danger to your home while you're away. During winter travel, freezing presents a real danger to your water system. To help prevent water damage, turn off the main water source to your house.

Protect your electronics. Unplug your electronics and small appliances, including the television, your computer, and small kitchen appliances.



After You Arrive



Whatever your mode of travel, you've made it! Enjoy some relaxation and enjoyment.

Here are a few more resources to make this your best trip ever! And for even more information and destination ideas, visit the [Travel section](#) of MilitaryByOwner's blog.

- ✓ **USO:** With over 160 locations worldwide, there is likely a [USO near you](#). USO's not only have centers, but can also help with [local travel plans](#).
- ✓ **Uber:** Now a popular transportation alternative, download the Uber app which [connects passengers and pre-screened drivers](#).
- ✓ **Eat In!** Save some cash and sample area fare by [eating some meals in lodging](#).
- ✓ **Air BnB:** This peer-to-peer [home sharing network](#) is gaining in popularity.



Contributors



Jen McDonald is the Content Editor for MilitaryByOwner Advertising. She's the author of the book *You Are Not Alone: Encouragement for the Heart of a Military Spouse*, and has been published in several books and numerous national publications. She's been an Air Force spouse for 25+ years and regularly writes about military life, parenting, and homeschooling. See more from Jen at her site, [Jen McDonald: You Are Not Alone](#).



A long time Army spouse, **Christy Shields** has been with MilitaryByOwner since 2009 and works mainly in Customer Service and Content Management. Christy also occasionally writes for the MilitaryByOwner blog and creates supporting Infographics for various MilitaryByOwner publications and social media. Christy enjoys singing and playing the piano, reading fantasy and science fiction books, growing herbs, and hiking in the great outdoors.



Monica Schaefer has been a military spouse for 21 years and has vast experience with the unique challenges of military relocation. Having bought homes at each duty station, she understands the various aspects of buying, selling, and managing real estate. In addition to working as MilitaryByOwner's Social Media Manager, she is also a Realtor on the island of Oahu in Hawaii.



Dawn Smith is a mom to one daughter and has been married to her husband and the Army for 17 years. Not surprisingly, she has a recurring case of wanderlust and is known to report on her travels frequently. She is a writer during the day with a serious habit of HGTV/House Hunters viewing at night. Dawn is pleased to share her experiences with MilitaryByOwner and others hoping to simplify family journeys of all kinds. Follow [Dawn on Pinterest](#) for more ideas and resources.



Originally from Ireland, **Karina Gafford** has been a proud U.S. citizen since 2010. She and her husband have lived together in Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, and Texas. Karina is a Realtor with Keller Williams City View in San Antonio and an active member in her military spouse community. She's served on many military spouse committees, and is currently the co-chapter leader of the MilSpo Project in San Antonio, a non-profit that supports military spouse business owners and entrepreneurs.



Mary Ann Eckberg, originally from Nebraska, is a writer, a dreamer, an animal rescue softie, a laundry ninja, a football fanatic, and a cupcake connoisseur. Honored to be a military spouse, Mary Ann collects good friends and good memories at every assignment. Follow her adventures with blog posts at [MilitaryByOwner's blog](#).

Download the Entire Series of MilitaryByOwner E-books!

This is the ninth in the MilitaryByOwner series of E-books, covering topics such as For Sale by Owner, PCS, and property management.

**DOWNLOAD
NOW**