

MILITARYSPOUSE[®]

SIMPLIFYING YOUR CRAZY, WONDERFUL MILITARY LIFE

2019 *SPRING SAVINGS GUIDE*

- *TRAVELING/VACATIONS*
- *OUR MILITARY PETS*
- *CLEANING YOUR HOME*
- *MILITARY WEDDINGS*





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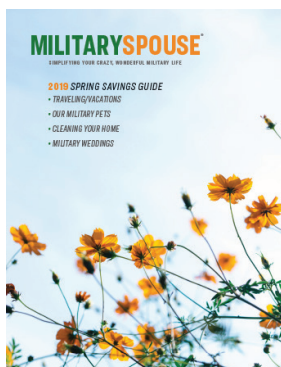
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MILITARYSPOUSE®

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Masaaki Komori



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Military Spouse® Team

Managing Editor

Janine Boldrin

Lead Art Director

Joe Maiocco

Digital Marketing Specialist

Kariah Manwaring

Customer Service Manager

Courtney Miller

Contributing Writers

Christina Anderson

Jan Wesner Childs

Valli Vida Gideons

Natalie Hayek

Wendi Iacobello

Christa Paustenbaugh

Beth Penn

Leadership

President

Sean McAllister

VP Business Development

Scott Shaw

For more information about advertising opportunities, please contact:

Darryl L. Williams

Sales Manager

e: darryl.williams@victory.com

p: 412-758-7601

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MilitarySpouse.com / **Email:** customer_service@militaryspouse.com



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8 US Vacation Destination Ideas

Wondering where to go when it's time to take a break? Try one of these military-friendly locations.

By Military Spouse Team

Romantic trip? Girls weekend away? Or a family vacation? Here are eight places you'll want to consider visiting for their high levels of fun and great military discounts:

1 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS, ORLANDO, FLA.

universolorlando.com/military

Many military families love Walt Disney World, but have you given its neighbor a try? If you have older kids (or are a kid at heart), Universal Studios is full of high-thrill rides, Harry Potter experiences, and engaging shows. Visit your local Information, Tickets, and Travel (ITT) office for special military packages.

2 BRANSON, MO.

branson.com/veterans-in-branson

Family friendly entertainment, outdoor adventure, plus plenty of military discounts make this a top American destination. A perfect pit stop during a cross-country move, Branson is also a destination you'll want to go out of the way for if you're a fan of live entertainment.

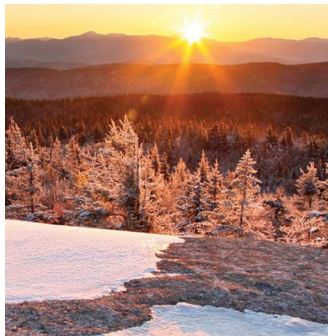


Photo by Visit Adirondacks

3 THE ADIRONDACKS, N.Y.

visitadirondacks.com

If camping or hiking is your thing, take time to go to the beautiful Adirondack region to explore

some of the most breathtaking scenery in the Northeast. Snowmobiling, skiing, fishing, rock climbing, and so much more! Don't forget the crown jewel of the region: Lake Placid.

Photo by Visit San Juans



4 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

visitsanantonio.com

"Big city, big family fun" is the tagline of this area that is famous for its history and pedestrian promenade, the miles-long River Walk. The number of nearby military installations means lots of military discounts for local attractions including SeaWorld and the San Antonio Botanical Garden.

5 PIGEON FORGE, TENN.

pigeonforge.com/pigeon-forge-military-discounts

Stay overnight in one of the many local cabins and hike through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for a scenic stay. Or head off to Dollywood theme park and a trip downtown for attractions

Photo by Troy Jarrell



and shows kids adore. This area of the country, made extra famous by Dolly Parton's love for her hometown, can be a budget-friendly option if you search the region's military discount page.

6 SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASH.

visitsanjuans.com

A great place to go if you're stationed in the Pacific Northwest. Accessible via ferry, you will get double the beauty while you sit back and enjoy the views on your way to the islands. Try the San Juan Islands for a romantic getaway where you'll find great food and quiet spaces to spend time together.

7 ACADIA NATIONAL PARK, MAINE

nps.gov/acad

Lobster! Need we say more about Maine except to say that a stay near Acadia National Park can be either romantic or family fun-filled, depending on the activities you choose to explore. Nearby Bar Harbor may be an expensive town, but the local bus makes it easy (and free!) to get to and from many of the local hotels, downtown, and the park. While in Maine, be sure to visit the L.L. Bean flagship store in Freeport.

Photo by Drew Hayes



8 NASHVILLE, TENN.

visitmusiccity.com

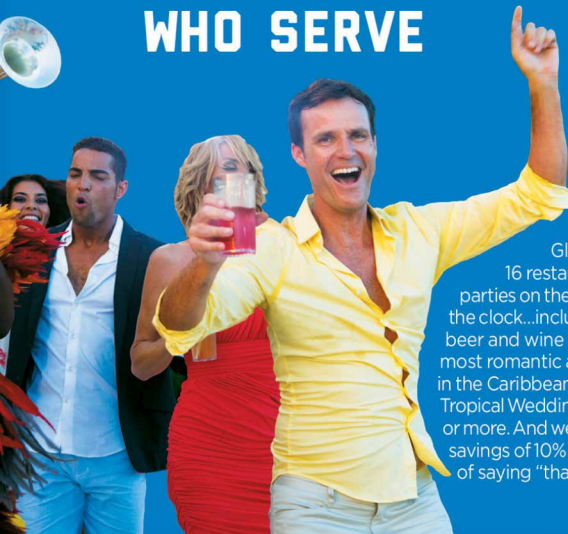
Clean and accessible, Nashville's music will bring you to this city, but the people and food will keep you there for days! From museums to food markets to the honky-tonks and amazing restaurants, Nashville has a lot to offer for a friends weekend away or a family trip. Music City hosts year-round events and is very military friendly with Fort Campbell less than an hour away. ★



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WHO SERVE,
 it's our **PLEASURE TO**
SERVE YOU.



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 WHO SERVE**



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VOTED WORLD'S BEST 23 YEARS IN A ROW
 At The World Travel Awards



Cultural Immersion

Find out how my family makes the most of an overseas assignment.

By Christa Paustenbaugh, *Marine Corps Spouse*

GO WHERE THE LOCALS GO

We have learned quickly that in order to get the true feel and taste for a new destination, we need to go where the locals go. Sure, we always make time for the top tourist attractions in a new city, but we also look forward to those off the beaten path attractions as well; these experiences are normally the ones we come away loving the most from our travels.

One way to immerse ourselves while we travel is by using an apartment for our accommodations versus a hotel. This gives the advantage of literally living among local residents for a few days. There are many reputable websites to arrange these accommodations, putting hundreds of apartments at our fingertips.

Once we have found a suitable place to stay, we ask for recommendations from the owner of the home or assistant at the apartment. In our experience, they have always given excellent recommendations for local restaurants, shops and lesser-known attractions. On one occasion, an owner gave us a brief tour of the area around our apartment, including a stop in the local bakery where he gets his bread each day.

THEN GET LOST!

My other favorite way to immerse myself in the local culture is to get lost. Sounds a little crazy, right? It's worth it, trust me.

I'm an early riser by nature so when we travel I like to head outside in the morning to photograph the city while it is quiet. I weave my way through local streets and window shop along the way, taking note of shops to return to later in the day or before we leave. I duck into bakeries and coffee shops that are off the main tourist routes and strike up conversations when possible.

I prefer the morning for this type of walk because I get to see, hear and feel things before the hustle and bustle of the day begins; however, I have gone out to get lost in the afternoon as well as after a morning of touring the main attractions. Either time of day, it's a great way to see the city from a different point of view. It is also in these behind-the-scenes locations that I get some of my favorite photos of the trip to hang on our walls. ★



While stationed in Okinawa for two years, our family loved the chance to travel around Japan and to nearby foreign countries. We loved eating the local food, seeing the sights and immersing ourselves in all the things that make the cities and countries we visited wonderful. Now that we are on our second overseas assignment, we try to travel as much as possible and experience all that we can at our new home in Germany. The key to having a great overseas experience? For my family, it means immersing ourselves in the local culture. >>





Need more ideas on how to immerse yourself in the local culture?

TRY THESE 8 TIPS!

1 Eat the local cuisine. Research, or better yet, ask a local where the best local specialty dishes can be found. Great eateries are often found on a street and restaurant away from the touristy areas.

2 Learn how to cook the local cuisine.

Find a local cooking class and learn how to make one or more famous local dishes.

3 Attempt the language. It is always appreciated to at least attempt the local language with a few basic phrases. We often ask how to properly pronounce these phrases or a better way to say them and it has nearly always been well received and local residents are happy to educate us.

4 Attend a local festival or event. Prior to traveling, research any local festivals, parades or events that will take place and attend them. This gives a unique look into area celebrations and customs, and are great memories to take home.

5 Find a unique or small group tour. Rather than ride in a gondola, learn how to row one; instead of joining a large bus tour, find a bike tour that takes you beyond the main attractions, or learn how to make and pick out “legitimate” gelato. Use the tour as a chance to ask questions.

6 Attend a sporting event. Go to a soccer game, baseball game, or sailing competition. Sports are often a huge part of an area’s culture and you can interact with the local population and hopefully celebrate with them after a win!

7 Utilize public transportation. If available, use the bus and subway systems. They are normally less expensive and gives a more personal look at life in your visiting city.

8 Buy meaningful souvenirs. After getting lost and aimlessly wandering the local shops and streets, we often find one unique piece that will remind us of our travels. A painted tile from a Greek rooftop, wine that was bottled with the assistance of a local monk, hand-crafted pottery and other handicrafts made by local artisans. Ask questions because there is often a story that goes along with these beautiful pieces. ★



Travel & Vacation Discounts

Take these discounts into consideration when planning your next trip!

CELLULAR

ATT: 15% off the monthly service charge on qualified plans including AT&T unlimited plans.

BOOST MOBILE: Boost Mobile allows service men and women to suspend their service while deployed overseas and keep their accounts and phone numbers active.

SPRINT: Sprint is honored to offer active duty, reserve and veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces savings through the Sprint WorksSM Program.

T-MOBILE: 50% off all T-Mobile services for Veterans family plan.

U.S. CELLULAR: 15% discount off their calling plan charges on individual single line and/or family plans.

VERIZON: \$15 off unlimited plans, 15% discount off other plans, discounted accessories (up to 25%), free 2-day shipping, and deployment suspensions to name a few.

Sandals

SANDALS: Up to 75% off on all-inclusive luxury resort packages for military families! That's 65% off as the current promotion plus an extra 10% for being military!

FLYING ALLEGiant

AIRLINES: Active Duty personnel get up to 3 checked bags free.

AMERICAN AIRLINES:

American Airlines offers free checked baggage (up to 5 bags for work-related travel, 3 bags for all other travel) to active military members and their dependents. Government or military discount fares may also be available depending on the flight.

DELTA: Active military members and their dependents can receive military fare discounts for both work and personal flights. The discount varies depending on the flight. Delta also offers military discounts for their Delta Vacations. Both military members and their dependents will get free checked baggage; 5 bags when on travel orders, 2 bags for personal travel.

JETBLUE: Those enrolled in Veterans Advantage will get a 5% discount on everyday JetBlue travel to 85+ destinations. Visit the site for policies on free bag checks as well!

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES:

Must call 1-800-I-FLY-SWA. This discount requires that you present a military I.D.

UNITED: United is proud to provide Veterans Advantage[®] members with up to a 5% discount on tickets for United-and United Express[®]-operated flights purchased on united.com.

VIRGIN ATLANTIC:

Virgin offer members of the Armed Forces serving and retired, MOD Civil Servants and their dependents discounted fares to worldwide destinations.



BEACHES: In appreciation of your services and commitment, Beaches Resorts would like to extend a great offer just for you! Save an additional 10% on top of all our special promotions.

TRAVEL & LODGING

AMTRAK: 10% off for active duty service members and their dependents.

ARMED FORCES VACATION

CLUB: Free membership in which you receive exclusive vacation discounts directly to your inbox.

AVIS: U.S. military veterans, active duty military, National Guard & Reservists and family can enroll in Veterans Advantage and receive membership discounts from our nation's top brands, and up to 25% off from Avis.

BEACHES: 10% discount

BEST WESTERN: 10% discount.

BUDGET: 25% car rentals for family members of veterans.

CHOICE HOTELS: Save up to 20% by booking in advance using our Pay Now and Save rate at participating hotels.

HERTZ: Discounts up to 25% off at participating locations.

HILTON HOTELS & RESORTS: Discounts vary according to location.

LA QUINTA INN: La Quinta Returns Military Rewards provides benefits and discounts exclusively to the military, veterans and their families for 12% off best available rates, and we provide onsite recognition of our military guests upon check-in.

MARRIOTT: Discount available, need to check rate guidelines for qualification.

MOTEL 6 AND STUDIO 6: Motel 6 are proud to offer all active and retired military personnel and their families up to a 10% discount* off their already-low rates at all of our 1,400+ locations.

NATIONAL: National car rental offers discounted rates for U.S. Government travelers on official business with authorized travel orders.

RED ROOF: 10% off your room rate.

SIXT: Offers a standard 5% military discount on car rentals.

SANDALS: Up to 75% off on all-inclusive luxury resort packages for military families! That's 65% off as the current promotion plus an extra 10% for being military!

THRIFTY: Free one-care class upgrade.

WYNDHAM HOTELS: Up to 20% discounts when enrolled in their in VetRewards program.



VACATION

BLUE STAR MUSEUMS: Blue Star Museums have offered free admission to the nation's active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve.

BEACHES: 10% discount

BIG BEAR MOUNTAIN

RESORT: Located in Calif. 25% off Bike Park lift tickets, Scenic Sky Chair, and Basecamp activities 15% off bike rentals at Snow Summit 20% off green fees at Bear Mountain Golf Course

BRECKENRIDGE: Located in Colo. Exclusive pass for military families. Visit for more details.

CEDAR POINT: Located in Ohio. Cedar Point is pleased to provide discounted admission for all active, retired and

honorably-discharged members of our Armed Forces. Proper ID required to validate. Up to six (6) tickets can also be purchased for immediate family members at our daily military discount ticket rate of \$44.

DISNEY: Enjoy specially priced theme park tickets in 2019. Contact your participating U.S. military base ticket office.

DOLLYWOOD: Located in Tenn. 30% discount on one-day admission

GREAT WOLF LODGE: Water park/themed hotels at locations all across the country. Up to 30% off for Military (active or retired).

HERSHEY PARK:

Located in Pa. Check with your local military base for discounted Hershey Park tickets.

KILLINGTON

RESORT: Located in Vt. Up to 50% off. Must purchase at ticket window (present military ID).

KINGS DOMINION:

Located in Va. Active and retired military can purchase discounted single day general admission tickets.

LEGOLAND: Located in [Florida](#) and [California](#). Deeply discounted tickets are available at each military base's Information, Tickets and Travel (ITT) office that include a 2nd day FREE!

OKEMO MOUNTAIN

RESORT: Located in Vt. Must purchase at ticket window (present military ID).

SHADES OF GREEN:

Save 3% to 12% with military rates and military discounts. Pay no tax. The price you see is the price you pay. Email them in advance for discount.

SANDALS: Up to 75% off on all-inclusive luxury resort packages for military families! That's 65% off as the current promotion plus an extra 10% for being military!

SIX FLAGS: discounted admission tickets at MWR/ITR/ITT offices. 20% military discount off the one-day General Admission ticket (at Guest Service Center).

UNIVERSAL

HOLLYWOOD: Located in Calif. For the best discount, visit your local MWR/ITR/ITT office.

UNIVERSAL

ORLANDO: Located in Fla. For the best discount, visit your local MWR/ITR/ITT office.

VAIL RESORTS:

Located in Colo. Several discount options for military families. Visit link for details.

VETTIX: Vet Tix provides tickets to all branches of currently-serving Military and Veterans, including immediate family of troops KIA.

Flying With Fido

Learn how to keep down the cost of a long-distance move with a pet.

By Natalie Hayek, *Air Force spouse*

Did you know?
The costs associated with shipping your pet during a PCS are tax deductible! Refer to IRS form 521 for instructions on listing your pet as part of your "household goods and personal effects."

Photos by Andy Ormish

For military families with pets, receiving orders across the country or to an overseas location can quickly lead to panic.

Many military families wonder if they can afford the staggering cost of flying their four-legged friends, and some must consider re-homing their pet.

The fact is, flying pets is a complicated, expensive process. Air Force spouse Chantel Bergeron felt the pressure when she and her husband moved to Hawaii in 2017.

"Everything was so stressful," she said, noting that airlines were quoting them over \$1,000 to transport their dogs.

"But my big dog is my rock," she said. "I couldn't imagine leaving him."

Soon Chantel learned about Operation Military Pets, a program of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), which gave her an \$875 grant to offset her pet's travel costs.

As it turns out, the SPCA is just one of several military-friendly organizations that ease the financial burden of transporting pets. So before you empty your savings to PCS your pet, consider this list of money-saving options.

AIR TRANSPORTATION DISCOUNTS

American Airlines provides a 50 percent military discount to transport pets, with both accompanied and unaccompanied options.

- Priority Parcel Service provides accompanied service to domestic locations.
- ExpediteFS provides accompanied service to large pets going to domestic locations, and to all pets going to international locations.
- American Cargo provides unaccompanied service to domestic and international locations.
- Learn more at bit.do/AmerAirCargo

Island Pet Movers assists military families who PCS to and from Hawaii. They coordinate all aspects of your pet's move, and provide numerous accommodations for military families.

- Administrative fees are discounted. Families with a deployed service member receive an additional discount.
- If applicable, discounts through their partners in ground and air transportation will be passed to military families.
- Personalized support and guidance can help military families find alternative routes and avoid making costly mistakes when preparing permits and other necessary documents.
- Learn more at islandpetmovers.com >>



Patriot Express, also known as “the rotator,” is a plane chartered by the Air Force’s Air Mobility Command. It transports service members and their families on official orders to overseas destinations. Pet transportation costs are generally lower than those of other carriers.

- Fees range from \$125 to \$375 per kennel, depending on the combined weight of the pet and its kennel.
- Only dogs and cats are allowed. Limit two per family.
- Learn more at bit.do/amctravel

Pet Air Carrier assists families through the entire process of preparing for and transporting their pets.

- For outbound international flights, management fees are discounted \$125 for the first pet and \$25 for each additional pet. Discounts increase by \$25 if military families complete travel health certificates on their own.
- For flights returning to the United States and proceeding on domestically, management fees are discounted \$50 for the first pet and \$25 for each additional pet.
- Learn more at petaircarrier.com

United Airlines offers military discounts through its PetSafe program, which transports pets to domestic and international destinations.

- Domestic PetSafe flights longer than three hours require a “comfort stop,” so pets can eat, exercise and eliminate. Military families are allowed to provide this care at the airport, saving them \$50 to \$150 in third-party fees.
- International PetSafe flights don’t require military families’ pets to clear customs through a third-party broker. This accommodation saves military families \$100 to \$200.
- Learn more at bit.do/unitedairtravel

If ever there is a time when military families need the companionship and emotional support of their pets, it’s during a PCS. Thanks to organizations like these, the high cost of PCSing with pets doesn’t have to compel families to sever ties with their furry family members. ★

ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Dogs on Deployment

Dogs on deployment provides financial support to military members through its Pet Chit program.

- Pet Chits are granted only to ranks E6 and below.
- Awarded funds are paid directly to the service provider, not the military family.
- Learn more at bit.do/dogsdeployreg

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)

SPCA provides grants to military families through Operation Military Pets. Grants are given to families who are PCSing overseas, including to Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico.

- Applications must be submitted three months in advance, between the 1st and 15th of each month.
- Pet transportation fees must be quoted by the airlines as \$600 or higher.
- Learn more at bit.do/spcamilpets

5 Awesome Things I Learned From My Dog

By Wendi Iacobello, Army Spouse

1

WARM WELCOME

Dogs view time in a different manner than humans, but one thing remains constant: their adoration for you when you walk through your door. Whether you are gone an hour, a day, or weeks, a dog welcomes you with the same excitement and love every time. Even if the day's problems are piling up, try to start off with a kiss, hug, or even a smile when you reunite with your family members.

► **Greet each other with love.**

2

WANT TO HANG AT THE PARK?

Most dogs are not afraid to walk right up to each other and say hello. Military spouses can learn tremendously from that friendly move. The military community is made up of such a diverse group of men and women from cultures all around the world. If we embrace each other and our differences, we can learn and build friendships in the process. All it takes is getting out of your comfort zone and giving friendship a chance.

► **Embrace the chance to meet people from all over.**

3

YOU LIKE SNUGGLES? SO DO I

Dogs are completely satisfied as long as they are beside you. We need to look at that example and live by it. Contentment should be more simplistic and exist solely by being close to one another. Snuggling and being beside your loved ones is important. We need to be more mindful about technology and put it aside so we can enjoy being beside each other free from distractions.

► **Take time to get physically close to each other and talk (instead of being on your phone).**

4

LET'S GO FOR A WALK

Dogs do not hold grudges, they don't think about yesterday, or even tomorrow. They are constantly living in the current moment. Military life tends to change rapidly. We should live in each moment with our families as often as we can, since deployments and temporary duty assignments (TDYs) may be right around the corner. Memories are what binds us together when distance becomes a part of our world.

► **Be present in the current moment.**

5

I NEED A NEW BED AND A TOY AND A... WAIT, I JUST NEED YOU

Dogs truly make a house a home. Their love, companionship, playfulness, and zest for life makes a military family's home more special. The foundation on which we build our homes and the memories made are what service members have to take with them when they are away. It is what carries us as milspouses through all of the tough times. We should always strive to fill our homes with as much positive and loving energy that dogs fill it with. After all, a house becomes a home when it is filled with love, comfort, and laughter.

► **Remember that the material things in your home are not as priceless as the love and life that fills it. ★**

Photo by Jari Orielo



Pet Discounts

Give your pets the treats they deserve!

BEST FRIENDS PET HOTEL:

10% off boarding, grooming, doggy day-camp and training at all Best Friends Pet Care locations (in store).

CANYON PET LODGE:

15% off. Inquire for discount (based in Puyallup, WA)

DOG.COM:

30% off \$69. Code: SPDG30

DOGS ON DEPLOYMENT:

A 501(c)(3) national non-profit which provides an online network for service members to search for volunteers who are willing to board their pets during their owner's service commitments.

EMBRACE PET

INSURANCE: 5% off a new or existing policy

ENTIRELY PETS:

Save 15% Off Flea & Tick Products at Entirely Pets. Code: FLEABGONE

GUARDIAN ANGELS FOR SOLDIER'S PET:

Participate in their pet foster care program!

PET AIR CARRIER:

\$125 discount for the first pet and a \$25 discount for each additional pet from our management fee for international shipments.

PETSMART: 10% on grooming, training & pet lodging (selective times of the year). Just show ID at one of our stores!

PET CARE RX: 25% off on orders of \$48 or more. Code: CARE25

PLUSH PAWS PRODUCTS:

15% discount on your order.

SITTERCITY.COM:

Sittercity is partnered with the Department of Defense in providing free membership to Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve families. Take advantage of this great program to find pet sitters and house sitters to care for your pets when you're away from home.

ULTIMATE BARK CONTROL:

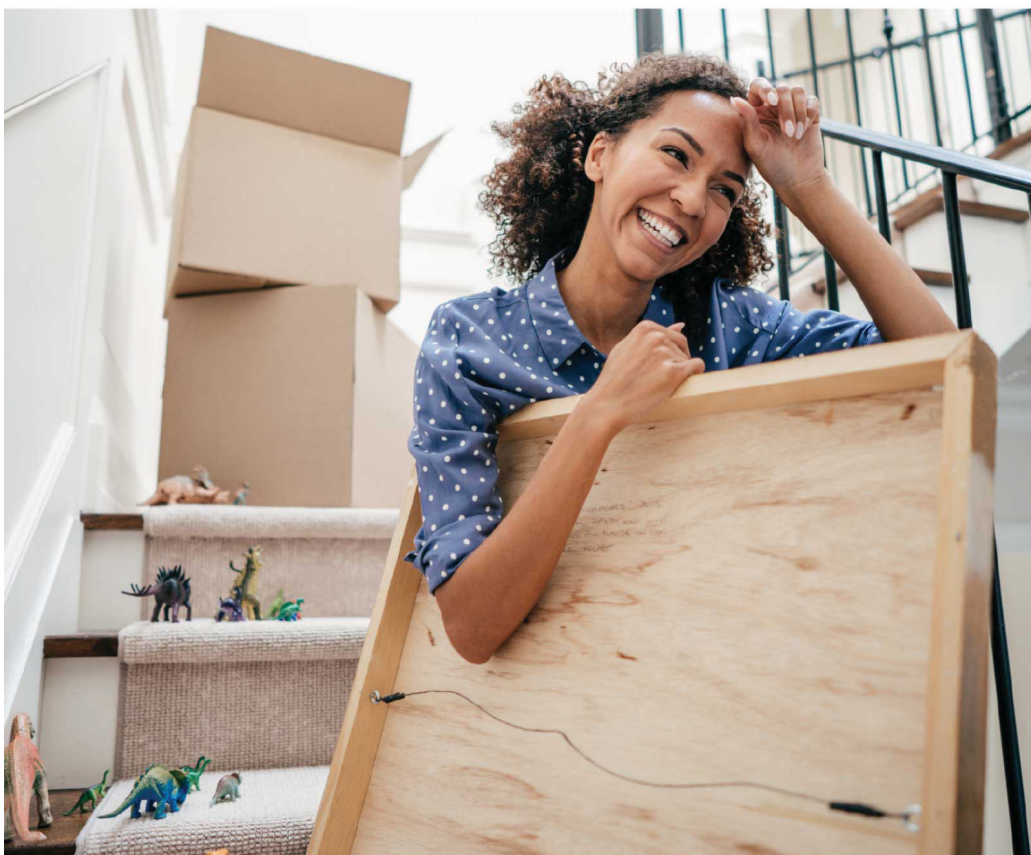
Save \$20 Off the Dog Silencer Max. Code: FXSAVE10DSM

USAA: 15% discount off of pet insurance.

WAG!: 5 Dog walks for just \$19. ★

4 Simple Tips for Straightening Up Your Spaces

By Valli Vida Gideons, Marine Corps Spouse at mybattlecall.com



I SAT ON THE FLOOR OF MY BRAND NEW CLOSET, HALF THE SIZE OF THE PREVIOUS ONE, AND WEPT.

My heart was racing and I felt an overwhelming feeling of panic while drowning in the piles around me. This was our third move in three short years, and we had already accumulated so much stuff. Even though we were still considered newlyweds, the stuff was piling up. His. Mine. And ours.

The mountains of clothes, sweaters, shoes, boots, belts, uniforms... was all too much. I wanted to retreat. To erase it all. I could hardly breathe. I didn't know where to begin.

MOST PEOPLE DON'T MOVE EVERY 12 TO 36 MONTHS

They rarely, if ever, view the contents of their entire house piled on every countertop, bed, free space on the floor. The experience of managing an 18-wheeler rolling up to a new home and having to navigate how to make all the stuff fit, can be overwhelming. Moreover, the constant relocating used to leave me wondering how all the mountains of things made their way into our home.

Many years since that day on the floor of my closet, I've started to see the art of PCSing as an opportunity to take stock of our things and reduce the amount of stuff. More importantly, it's allowed me, whether I like it or not, to take an honest inventory of what I value. This didn't happen overnight, but with practice and a plan, it's become much more tolerable and a lot less painful.



BEING NEAT MAKES ME FEEL MORE IN CONTROL

First, I think I developed a bit of a minimalist sensibility, growing up as the daughter of a pilot in the Air Force. Dating back to the time I shared a bedroom with my sister, her side was cluttered with things while I had few carefully placed items. Fast forward to today—you might walk into my house and think I am a neat freak. I own it. I like to keep my kitchen island free of clutter and everything has a place.

I think the need to create organization within my home stems from often feeling out of control of many of the things that can't be regulated. Often, as a military family, we have little to no say over: timelines, relocation, family separations. Our home is one place we can manage. >>



DON'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT PCS TO PURGE

Through the years I have created strategies to make the moving process less painful. First, I recommend doing your purge before you are scheduled to move or every quarter. It makes the other end a lot less stressful, knowing your contents are freshly cleaned out and organized.



START WITH ONE DRAWER, CLOSET, CABINET AT A TIME

Inspiring music blasting, I roll my sleeves up and dedicate a solid block of time for this project. After removing all the contents from the space I am working on, I have a trash bag and bin on hand. Then, placing things into piles: Keep. Toss. Donate. I trust my initial instinct.

Once the items are placed into one of the three categories, I give it one more run-through. Often, I find once I am in the rhythm of sorting, I am more willing to give up items I initially wanted to keep. When this process is complete, I replace the items in the “keep” pile into the space (or put them in another location that makes more sense). Then, I immediately place the donate items into my car and haul it away.

Kids are also never too young to help in this process. My children have become experts at letting go of things they no longer use or have outgrown. I think by developing this skill at a young age, they are less likely to become attached to things.



KEEP CONTAINERS AND STORAGE SOLUTIONS ON HAND

Boxes, crates, and baskets can help keep things separated based on their purpose. I have a basket for beach gear, a drawer with dividers for baking supplies, and a mobile bin for cleaning supplies. Categorizing items helps to keep things organized by function and allows for better space utilization.



LESS CLUTTER GIVES YOU SPACE TO THINK

Whether you start with a single drawer or the entire garage, purging a space can free up mind space and remove mental clutter. Stuff accumulates quickly without regularly taking inventory of what is occupying your space. If I value something, I think it deserves to have a space that reflects that meaning. If you are holding on to things for fear of hurting someone's feelings, or it once meant something but no longer serves you, donate it. Allow someone else to get use out of it rather than storing it in a garage or attic space.

The thing I have discovered from over 20-plus years of military life is most things don't have value. What matters are the people and the experiences we share. The longer we have been married, the more I want things in our home that tell a story and have meaning. This is when a house truly becomes a home. ★



4 Simple Ways to Decrease the Clutter

Bonus? Your next move will be easier.

By Beth Penn

When orders arrive and you have to move, wouldn't you love to have less stuff to worry about packing and unpacking? Less stress

when moving is achievable when you change up your relationship to stuff. I'm not referring to a one-weekend purge fest. A transformation that takes place over time is more realistic. A good place to start is by focusing on what you bring into your home. Here are **four areas** of your life where you can start to adjust your approach to stuff:

1 KITCHEN BASICS

Even the most celebrated culinary masters don't have every kitchen tool or gadget. They often make do with what they have on hand. They know that extra tools aren't necessary. For instance, Dana Shultz of The Minimalist Baker, a website devoted to simple cooking, goes without a KitchenAid stand mixer. One would think that her job

requires her to have one. Instead, she uses a hand mixer! It's less than half the size of a large stand mixer and takes up less space.

For me, I got rid of a toaster and toaster oven many moons ago. This allowed me to free up counter space while simply relying on my oven to pull double duty.

A FEW OTHER ITEMS I HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITHOUT:

BAKING SHEETS

I use my large Pyrex casserole dish instead.

SINGLE USE GADGETS

Put that chef's knife to use!

MEAT THERMOMETER

Instead, I use some simple hacks I learned online to know if my meat is done.



Photos provided by Beth Penn



Photo provided by Beth Penn

"It's not about the dress you wear but the life you lead in the dress." ~ Diana Vreeland

2 CLOTHES THAT COUNT

When I have more clothes to choose from, I often try everything on but end up wearing the same thing. My solution? To invest in fewer but nicer clothes so that, even if I am wearing a similar version of the outfit from the day before, it's quality and feels great to wear. Does that mean designer jeans? Not necessarily.

I encourage you to do a little research and start to notice clothing companies that you want to support. Perhaps their clothes are Made in the USA or created using sustainable methods. I find that if I can be a more responsible and thoughtful consumer, I'm more apt to take care of what I own. Also, if I have created an outline in my mind of how I want to look and combine that with the businesses that I want to support, I won't be swayed to go buy things last minute at the mall.

CLOTHING COMPANIES I ADORE:

EVERLANE

They partner with ethical factories and are completely transparent about the how much their clothes cost to make.

ALTERNATIVE APPAREL

The coziest sweatshirt I own (and can wear to a meeting) is from Alternative Apparel. Their sustainable clothing practices and ethically manufactured threads make this clothing brand one to covet.

THREDUP

Thredup is a fabulous resource for supporting secondhand clothes and reusing resources. And it's affordable!

3 SKIP THE SHOPPING TRIP

Raise your hand if the first thing you do after moving into a new house is to visit your local discount store retailer. A new house needs new towels, pillows, trash cans and the like. But does it? Homeowners often don't unpack all the moving boxes before bringing in more stuff.

When we recently moved into our home, I made a list of things to buy at Target. But as I was wandering the aisles, I thought to myself, do I really need more towels? More pillows? I put the products back and left the store without purchasing anything.

Here's a trick: I thought about what would have happened if I had purchased the home decor. I could foresee myself bringing the purchases home with every intention of purging my old towels and pillows, and then figuring out a million reasons why I shouldn't throw out the old stuff. So instead of buying new, I thought about how we had made do with what we owned up until that moment. This gave me the confidence to not acquire anything new.

THE NEXT TIME YOU ARE ABOUT TO PURCHASE A BIG TICKET ITEM, THINK FIRST:

CAN I BORROW THIS?

Reach out to friends through social media to see if someone has what you need.

WHERE CAN I RENT THIS?

You might be surprised how easy and affordable renting equipment is especially if you only need to use it once.

IF I DO BUY THIS, CAN I FIND IT USED?

My go-to places to check out include Craigslist, my local Facebook mom's group, and Nextdoor, a social networking app.

4 LESS TOYS, MORE JOY

Well-meaning parents and grandparents love to buy toys for their loved ones. It makes sense. We get joy from giving and kids genuinely like receiving gifts. But there's a way to give without spending money on toys that contribute to clutter: the gift of an experience.

My favorite experience presents are those that can be used more than once, such as museum memberships and theme park yearly passes. But a concert ticket or enrollment in a class are also novel and just as appreciated.

This year, my family intends to donate to charities in the name of each relative. This type of giving not only teaches children to care and respect for the few things that they have, but help them not get caught up in the trap of accumulating stuff as they get older.

GIFTS THAT DON'T TAKE UP SPACE (EXCEPT ROOM IN YOUR HEART):

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Heifer International allows you to gift a cow, a pig or a flock of ducks to those in need. This provides the recipient with both food and reliable income. Agricultural products, such as milk, eggs and honey, can be traded or sold at market. Ask grandma to get the kids a cow!

ASK FAMILY TO CREATE A DAY TO SPEND TOGETHER

The goal isn't to spend a ton of money or come up with most unique day out. The idea here is to spend quality time while doing something fun. Create the day together and split the cost as a holiday gift to each other.

DONATE TIME

Pair up with a loved one to donate your time to a great cause. Whether you're passing out food at a shelter or picking up trash on the side of the road, giving back feels great. A child can gather items for their favorite nonprofit cause (think: animal shelters) instead of getting a ton of stuff to clutter their room. ★

Cleaning Discounts

Keep the homefront impeccable with these online deals!

BED BATH AND BEYOND:

Spring Cleaning Deal! Up to \$100 Off Dyson Vacuums.

CLEANITSUPPLY.COM:

\$10 off order of \$50 - THANKYOU10.

COSTCO:

Military offer worth \$55 in savings when you sign up for a membership.

DELTASONIC:

Free car wash and interior cleaning - 34276.

GROVE COLLABORATIVE:

Claim Your Exclusive Free Grove Collaborative Gift Set Today!

HOME DEPOT:

10% discount.

J DOG JUNK REMOVAL:

Veteran and Milspoused owned franchise with amazing service!

JOANN:

15% discount

(in store, present military dependent ID) or enroll online.

LOWES:

10% military discount

MICHAELS: 15% off (in store, present military ID).

OVERSTOCK.COM: Free Club O Gold membership (worth \$19.95) to active military and veterans. The membership can save you an average of \$55 per year.

PIER 1:

10% off.

POTTERY BARN: 15% military discount with military ID.

SAM'S CLUB: \$15 or a \$25 e-gift card for active duty and former military and their spouses who purchase membership.

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS: 15% off discount on Paints, Stains and Painting Supplies (in store, present military ID).

STANLEY STEEMER: \$25 off upholstery cleaning.

WILLIAMS-SONOMA:

15% discount (10% discount on electrics) in store, present military ID.

YANKEE CANDLE: 10% military discounts both in stores and online.

ZORO.COM: 20% off \$200+ on cleaning and organizing categories - SPRNGCLEAN. ★

How'd You Save For That...

...Second Honeymoon!?!

By Jan Wesner Childs, *Army Spouse (ret.)*



ARE YOU DREAMING OF A SECOND HONEYMOON? OR MAYBE A REDO OF YOUR FIRST ONE THAT WAS HIT BY MURPHY'S LAW OF DEPLOYMENT?

That's exactly what happened when Darcy Gonzales and her husband, Jason, got married in 2001.

In a story familiar to many military families, Darcy and Jason had to adjust their plans thanks to last-minute deployment orders. "We were going to go to Hawaii for our honeymoon," Darcy recalled with a sigh.

Instead, they moved the wedding up, and canceled the hotel reservations and plane tickets. Their dream honeymoon was a bust. They spent a couple of nights in a hotel in Savannah, where they were married, and then Jason went off to war. He returned seven months later and the couple revamped their honeymoon plans into a tour of Ireland. And now, Jason and Darcy are finally planning that trip to Hawaii, with a second honeymoon to celebrate their 20th anniversary.

"I think it's important to spend time together in a stress-free zone where you can just relax, nobody's cooking, nobody's cleaning, it's just the two of you," she said. "In the reality of life, it's never just the two of you."

HOW DID THEY PAY FOR THEIR TRIP?

The Gonzales quit grabbing coffee at a shop and instead bought coffee in bulk (Hawaiian coffee, no less!). Darcy tried to pay for everything in cash and, when she did charge something, she paid the bill right away. All that being said, she pointed out that a second, or first, honeymoon doesn't have to be fancy. On their newlywed trip to Ireland, the Gonzales traveled on military Space-A flights and discount airlines, and stayed in hostels and bed and breakfasts.

Brittany Tores, a relationship and emotional health coach and counselor, thinks second honeymoons are a great way to reconnect, but also believes it doesn't have

to cost a ton of money to spend time with your honey. She encourages couples to redefine or reinvent what "honeymoon" means. It could be Cancun for one couple, or a tent next to a mountain stream for another.

Tores served in the Marine Corps and is also a military spouse, so she understands the challenges of building and maintaining a strong military marriage. Even just the process of planning a second honeymoon, or any other trip or project, can be a bonding experience for couples, Tores said. She emphasizes that memories, good or bad, are the building blocks of any relationship, especially one as intimate as a marriage.

"They are the emotional anchors," Tores said of a couple's memories together. "In every interaction or moment we spend together with our partner, whether we realize it or not, we are making memories.">>

Photo by Bree Ethan Synik

Tores also recommends trying something new together. Ballroom dancing, for example, can lead to some great memories, and at the same time provide interesting insight into a couple's dynamics.

"The chances that you and your spouse are both going to be

equally awkward about it are high," Torres said. "It teaches you who's leading, who's following, when you need to lead, when they need to lead."

Whatever the budget, whatever the location, whatever the activity, the important thing is to spend time together doing some-

thing you both enjoy.

"In the daily life you lose each other," Darcy Gonzales said, adding that's even more true in military marriages. "It's hard to have just a moment. You've got to add that spark back in, too." ★



DREAMING OF YOUR OWN SECOND HONEYMOON BUT WONDERING HOW YOU'LL PAY FOR IT? HERE ARE SOME EASY WAYS TO HELP MAKE ANY TRIP MORE AFFORDABLE:

► **Look for military discounts and specials.** Even if a hotel or attraction doesn't advertise a discount, call them and ask.

► **Stay in military lodging.** It might not be the fanciest, but you'll find lodging in some of the most unexpected places, and you don't necessarily have to stay on base. The Hale Koa in Hawaii is probably the most famous military lodging, but there's also hundreds of smaller and lesser known facilities around the world, ranging from campgrounds to

apartments to hotels. In Hawaii, for example, you can also stay at cabins on Kauai or Oahu. In Florida, there's a campground and cottages at Blue Angel Recreation Area in Pensacola, or three-bedroom townhouses at Trumbo Point in Key West. Don't forget to check lodging on Coast Guard bases, too! They are often among the hidden gems. Another pro tip: There are websites that list military lodging and let you make reservations online, but your best bet is to Google military lodging in the area where you are traveling and then call the facility directly.

► **Set up a separate honeymoon savings account.** Put your tax refund, extra income from this year's military pay increase, or any other windfall, large or small, into the account.

► **Ask family and friends** if they know of anyone who has a beach condo, mountain cabin or any other accommodation they might rent to you at a discount.

► **Travel in the off-season.**

► Finally, and we know it's a bit of clichéd advice, but it really does help to **cut down** on daily coffee runs, eating lunch out and other unnecessary food expenses. Every day that you don't indulge in a treat or a meal out, transfer the amount of money you would have spent into your honeymoon account. You'll be surprised at how quickly your "earnings" grow! ★

An Engaged Deployment

He left soon after he proposed. Now I'm planning the big day back home.

By Christina Anderson,
Marine Corps Fiancee

After many years searching, I finally found the man I want to marry. And he is a Marine.

One month after Bill proposed, he told me that he was going to deploy to Bahrain. I will never forget that moment. All of the excitement of planning a wedding flew out the window, as I never anticipated a deployment so soon into our relationship.

The idea of being separated during this time was overwhelming, but I realized my biggest role as a military fiancée was to support the man I love. I was quickly “thrown into the fire” of military life, and it was time to step up to the plate to manage things while he was away.

Bill deployed on my 30th birthday. His deployment pushed me to learn, to plan, and to recognize a strength in me I didn't know I had. Although we expected certain challenges would follow, we knew we would overcome them. We both had our own “roles” for the next seven months, and I wasn't going to let him down.

I DO. I WILL. AND I AM

Bill and I were fortunate to have had some time to make major wedding decisions together before he left. Since we had met at church, it was obvious that we would be married in the same place that brought us together. Before Bill left, we chose the date, venue, photographer, and wedding party. We even took our engagement photos earlier than most couples, which ended up being a huge morale boost for me. I cherished having beautiful pictures of us to look at when I missed him. I also had to accept that there would be a plethora of wedding preparations that would occupy me and make the time apart go by faster.

Everyday was another day closer to seeing him, so why waste the time sulking? I used the months I had alone to focus on personal goals to

push me forward; some little, some great. Seeing all of my little achievements was a huge reminder that I was capable of getting through the deployment.

I set goals for myself at the gym that allowed me to look back at the progress I was gaining each week. Bill is a personal trainer, and he had introduced me to the world of fitness. It became something that we enjoyed sharing together. When Bill was gone, I continued going to the gym rather than becoming sedentary. Not only did each workout relieve deployment stress, but it reminded me of him. Music and art have always been passions of mine, so I also spent time enjoying painting and making music. I even wrote and recorded a song for him and sent it to him in a care package for his birthday. >>





Photo provided by Christina Anderson

LOVE LETTERS

When I wasn't wedding planning and working on my own personal goals, I focused on showing Bill love and support in the only ways that I could. With a lack of everyday communication, I mailed him letters and the occasional care package to remind him that I was always thinking about him.

While all these coping mechanisms were great, my faith in God and His plan for us gave me peace and endurance during the hardest times. For me, faith was more than praying that I could get through the time apart, but trusting that our relationship would be refined and fortified for a life as husband and wife. If we could endure this then we could overcome anything!

If I needed to keep Bill in the loop about our wedding, we had the internet as a vehicle for communication. My mother also helped me with checking things off of the planning list and keeping preparations going despite my moments of missing Bill. Having a wedding to plan took my focus off of the temporary struggle and more on our future.

SHINING BRIGHT

I connected with other military couples online and learned about their own stories. It really helped remind me that I was not alone, and that was monumental for me. I wanted to be a part of the online presence too, so I posted a wedding countdown photo on social media. My story caught the attention of Fox News, and they asked me to share my military engagement experience on live television. As someone who is very reserved and shy, I knew being on live television was going to be difficult, but I loved the opportunity to share my support for my fiancé. The best part was Bill being able to watch the show live from a base in the Middle East!

After 34 weeks of deployment, Bill and I are reunited and looking forward to our September wedding. This experience has made me proud to be able to call myself a military spouse. The persistence, trust, and anticipation we shared will make our big day all the more rewarding. The biggest adventure of our lives is about to begin and we can't wait! ★

Wedding Discounts

The big day can be expensive, let us help you with these offers!

ALLUREZ: 5% military discount on engagement rings, wedding bands, pendants, earrings, and all other fine jewelry.

ARTHUR'S JEWELERS: 10% discount.

BANANA REPUBLIC: 15% off with military ID.

BRIDES ACROSS AMERICA: Offers free wedding dresses for military and first responder brides

COLE HANN: 20% off.

DREAMSTONE: Coupon - USTROOPS.

EXPRESS: At select in-store locations.

LARSON JEWELERS: 5% off (email military ID).

NATIONAL TUXEDO RENTALS: 5% off tuxedo rentals.

PARTY CITY: 10% off with military ID.

SHOES.COM: 20% discount and free shipping.

SINCE1910: 10% on engagement rings and wedding bands but not the center diamonds.

TIFFANY & CO.: 10% off engagement rings and wedding bands.

WEDDING RINGS DEPOT: 10% off wedding rings by using the code - MILITARY.

ZALES: 10% discount. ★



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