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Jane Young ENTERED & WON \$50 CASH for her photo. View the photo on MilitaryShoppers.com

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# Planning to Ski this Winter?

Don't plan your excursion before reading our military savings tips. By Marguerite Cleveland

Ski Season is upon us but for those who love to ski the costs have skyrocketed in recent years with daily lift tickets crossing over the \$100 mark. Here are some tips to enjoy this fun sport without breaking the bank by using your military discount.

• Visit your military base's outdoor recreation center. If you base is located within driving distance of a local ski resort they will often have rental equipment for skiing. This is greatly discounted for what you would pay at a large resort. Also check out the monthly tours, many installations offer ski trips.

• Your installations' Leisure Travel Services (LTS) is another place you should check for discounted lift tickets. Fort Carson's LTS offers discounted Colorado Ski Resort lift tickets and passes.

• Ski Resorts Websites. Most ski resorts offer some type of military discount and some are better than others with some being extremely generous. Do an internet search for Military Appreciation Days at Ski Resorts. Quite a few have special days offering 50% off and some even offer free lift tickets.

• Season Passes. If you really love to ski and are within driving distance to a resort a season pass is the way to go. To ensure the best deal purchase in the Spring. This is the time of year most resorts offer their best deals; some even have military discounts off the price of a season pass. Many also can be used for summer activities which increases the value. This year Vail Resorts offered a \$99 military season pass to celebrate their anniversary and military heritage. Unfortunately it is too late to purchase this year but it is an example of why purchasing early and rack up huge savings.

• Smaller Resorts. This is those fun Mom and Pop type places. You won't have all the fancy chair lifts, gondolas and other amenities and some still have rope tows and t-bars but you will get amazing prices for a day of skiing. These are great for honing your skills and an economical place to learn to ski as well.

• Learn to Ski Packages. Look on resort websites for these packages. They will nclude a lesson, rental equipment and a lift ticket. Sometimes the lift ticket will have restrictions but over all a good value. Some resorts also offer a multiday package

• GROUPON and other discount sites have some deals. Looking on GROUPON in Denver, you can purchase a discounted membership to the Mountain Sports Club which will then give you discounts like BOGO on lift tickets at some resorts as well as lodging and rental discounts. Also lots of deals on ski rental and gear on GROUPON.

• Canada has what I like to refer to as the American discount which is an exchange rate very favorable to the US dollar. It works out to a 25-30% discount depending on the rate. Canada has quite a few ski resorts within driving distance of the U.S. border.

When looking for more bang for your buck always check out your military discounts. So many businesses appreciate your service and are willing to show it with a discount. This year my family will be skiing for \$99 each for the season because we planned ahead. That is less than the cost of one lift ticket at most places. One weekend trip will have little cost as we turned in hotel points for a free stay. Even though the preseason deals are long past with the tips above you won't have to pay full price to enjoy ski season in your area.

# COMMISSARY SPECIALS

# SUPER SAVINGS AT YOUR LOCAL COMMISSARY!

### Military Shoppers Travel and Rewards By Marguerite Cleveland



The stunning Skamania Lodge located on the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge is one of more than 700,000 hotels and resorts offering discounts through **Military Shoppers Travel and Rewards Program.** 

Love to travel but prices cramping your style? Did you know **Militaryshoppers.com** has a travel club that you can join for free? The **Military Shoppers Travel Club** is a program you sign up for online and you can use to receive discounts on all kinds of travel, including resort stays, flights, car rentals and activities. It allows travel businesses to show their appreciation to Active Duty military, those retired and the Guard and Reserves of all branches by providing special military discounts. In addition, the club offers contests, sweepstakes and prize drawings.

Score discounts at over 700,000 hotels in 198 countries worldwide. More than 3000 family resorts in some of the hottest vacation destinations offer discounted 7 night stays. Top names in car rentals and flight participate in the program. View the activities section to get ideas for fun things to do on your next trip.

The travel club works on a point system. Each point is worth \$1 towards a travel discount off the public rate. The amount of points you can use varies based on the property, flight etc. Each time you book through the club you earn points towards your next travel. There are three levels, Blue, Silver and Gold. The first level is Blue which is free. This level starts you out with 100 points worth \$100 USD. This is a complimentary annual award. At this level you receive discounts off Hotel nightly stays, tours, flights, car rentals, and save up to \$50 off weekly stays. You will earn 10 points for every \$100 you spend.

If you travel more frequently a premium membership might be of greater value. The Silver Level is \$4.99 per month or \$49.99 a year. This gives you similar benefits to the Blue level but at a higher reward level. Your complementary annual award points are 250 which equates to \$250 USD. You will earn 15 points per \$100 spent and you will get a discount of up to \$100 towards a weekly stay. Shopping is added to the discounts you will receive.

The best value is the Gold premium value which is \$7.99 per month or \$79.99 per year. This level gets you 500 complimentary annual award points for a \$500 USD value. You will earn 20 points per \$100 spent. The weekly stay discount is up to \$200 USD. This level adds cruise discounts and a concierge service.

Visit www.militaryshopperstravel.com or click the link on the

**www.Militaryshoppers.com** site to learn more about the travel club. With the Blue level a free option, you can sign up with your email address and look around the site to see what discounts can benefit you and your family.



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#### So Your Child Wants to Join the Military

Here's how to help them navigate the process By Marguerite Cleveland



My eldest son has decided he wants to join the Army. We are currently in the process of helping him navigate through the recruiting process and here are a few things we've learned.

#### Start Early

For high school students you must have completed your junior year and be 17 years of age to enter into what is called the Delayed Entry Program and you can only be in it for 365 days. This gives your child the best opportunity to enter the field that he wants. Parents will be actively involved in the process and required to sign paperwork if your child is 17. Once they turn 18, they can sign and navigate the process on their own.

The optimal time to begin is the summer between the Junior and Senior Year. We waited until my son's senior year had started and he ended up missing a few days of school. Have your child go to the website for the service he wishes to join and review what jobs he may be interested in and what the qualifications are. Have them think about things in their life that maybe a factor. For example someone that gets carsick might not be a good fit for the Navy. What are their interests? A more academically inclined student would do well at the Defense Language Institute learning a foreign language while a sports enthusiast might thrive with the physical challenges of an Army Ranger. Are they planning to make the military a career or serve and then go to college? Some military job training offers classes that many colleges will count as transfer credits.The Debate Surrounding Transgender Troops Serving in the U.S. Military

#### The Process

The first thing to do is take the ASVAB test which is good for all branches of the service. Many high schools offer the test. This test determines if you are eligible for the military and what jobs you are qualified for academically. Once they have test scores in hand they can look to see if they are qualified for the jobs they want.

Find A Recruiter. Ask friends and family for recommendations. Visit the branches of all services and know that you can look at more than one at a time. Each service has different bonuses and jobs available at any one time. Keep your options open and look at everything.

Get your paperwork in order. Promptly fill out and complete any forms your recruiter asks you to. Be honest with all your answers. Your recruiter can help if you don't understand a question. If your child ever had a broken bone or illness make sure you have copies of their medical records. If you aren't fit start working on achieving your fitness goals and know that there are screening weights you must meet to join the military. If your child is not a runner, they need to start. Programs like Couch Potato to 5K found online can help. Basic Training is much less stressful is you are physically fit.

No matter which branch you choose, you will go to the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) to complete the enlistment process. There you will undergo a physical and other screening and this is what ultimately determines whether or not you can join. There are 65 MEPS in the U.S and Puerto Rico and one may not be close to you. Your recruiting station will provide transportation, meals and lodging while you go through the process.

#### Enlistment

Once you complete the process at MEPS if the job is available you want, you can take your Oath of Office. At this point you will ship off to basic training or enter into the Delayed Entry Program with your training starting at a later date. For high school seniors this is two weeks after your high school graduation.

Once your child completes the process and enters into the Delayed Entry Program, they need to stay on track to graduate from High School, stay morally straight, don't get any tattoos that violate policy and stay fit. Soon they will be on their way to a bright future.







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