



MN Military Family Assistance Centers

Military Families, We Celebrate You!

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As we celebrate the holidays this year in MN we do so with many Service members deployed and many others preparing for deployments in 2019.

I remember once telling a family member that my husband was deploying again and hearing them respond with "Can't you just tell them this is not a good time, you just moved there?" I smiled, the thought of me going to his Commander and saying this was laughable, but while we military family members know this, it can sometimes be hard to explain to those not familiar

with military life. Moves, trainings, deployments, and separations are so hard on military families, so why do we do it?

Belief in something larger than ourselves? Love for our service member? Patriotism? Gumption? While I can't speak for everyone, the answer for me was YES!

As I look out at these Yellow Ribbon Events, Family Days, and FRG Meetings, I am always moved. I see strength, love, resilience and fear.

Why would fear be a moving thing?

The fear moves me because these families don't let it stop them. Their true

strength shows through again and again as they work through this fear and continue to support their service member as they continue to serve our country.

I am so thankful for our service members, but I want to take a moment in this issue to thank you, the military family. Thank you for your steadfastness, hard work, and patience.

May your Facetime be non glitching, the time differences not too extreme, and may you never have to miss a call from your soldier when it comes in.

As always, if we can help please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Ship Thrifty

FAC Contact Information

State of MN Family Assistance Center Coordinator:

From our FAC family to yours, I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and you were able to spend time with family and friends.

Reflection seems to be pretty common this time of year. It is a time for us to look at all the people, our health, our lifestyles in general and to be grateful for what we have been given. During this time of the year, I remember when my husband and two sons were all deployed to different countries around the same time and the dog and I were left to hold down the fort at home. Several people would often say to me; "how do you do it," "I could never do that," and "I feel sorry for you."

I remember thinking during this time that someone out there has it worse than me. Someone else was maybe sending off their only child on a deployment, someone has lived in a wheelchair their whole life, someone is dealing with cancer. I used that when I would feel sorry for myself or wonder why things happen the way they do. At the end of the day, I have a family and my health and I am grateful!

This year was the first in several that we were all together for Thanksgiving. I still did some reflecting this weekend and said a prayer for those that are struggling with whatever the cause. Thanksgiving is just that, a time for being thankful.



Military Family Assistance Centers of Minnesota

Centers of Minnesota

State of MN Family Assistance Center Coordinator Cont:

Remember as we go through the holiday season, that the Family Assistance Centers are here for you to get you connected to resources that can help you and your family with a variety of issues and life stressors that may occur. Please reach out if needed. We are here to help!

Nancy Launderville

Looking for things to do over Holiday Break? Here are some Military Family Specials and Discounts for Getting out and About in MN

National Parks - Free entrance pass

<http://store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html>

Active duty – Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and activated National Guard and Reserves – can obtain the new military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Annual Pass. The pass will be accepted at National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

Military members and their dependents can pick up a pass at any national park or wildlife refuge that charges an entrance fee or other selected sites. Members must show a current, valid military identification card to obtain their pass. The pass is also available to dependents of active duty personnel.

Military Personnel and Family Discounts



The Minnesota Zoo salutes our troops with special discounts and promotions throughout the year. Individuals eligible for military discounts and promotions include current, former, and retired members and family members of the US Military, National Guard, and Reserve in the United States (including Puerto Rico). Valid military ID or proof of military service is required. No other discounts apply and not valid for special programs or exhibits.

Winter Promotion

November 11, 2018 – January 1, 2019

Minnesota Zoo

Military personnel receive free admission, free parking, and half-price admission for family members.

SSA Gift Shops

Military personnel receive 20% discount on purchases, excluding promotional and clearance items.

Lancer Food Service

Military personnel receive 20% discount on food purchases, excluding free-standing kiosks and alcohol.

IMAX Theatre

Show your military ID at the IMAX Theatre box office to receive \$12 Hollywood Feature tickets or one (1) free ticket for an IMAX Documentary. No further discounts apply.

Blue Star Museums

<https://www.bluestarfam.org/support/blue-star-arts/blue-star-museums>

Blue Star Museums is a program that offers free admission to museums for all active duty, National Guard and Reserve military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Blue Star Theatres

<https://www.bluestarfam.org/support/blue-star-arts/blue-star-theatres>

Nearly two dozen theaters around the country are offering free and discounted tickets for plays, classes and other services to veterans and military families. This new program will also offer workshops and playwriting classes to veterans, job postings and casting notices on military bases.

Nickelodeon Universe at MOA

<https://nickelodeonuniverse.com/tickets/special-offers/>

\$10 off an All Day Unlimited Ride Wristband! Offer good for member of the military and up to four family members. Must show valid military ID to receive discount. Please present military ID at Guest Services located on the North side of Nickelodeon Universe® by the Carousel to receive discount. Not valid with any other offers or discounts. Wristbands valid day of purchase only.

Keeping in Touch When your Loved Ones Away



~Set up a private family photo album to share with family using apps such as Google Drive, iCloud, or 23 Snaps. This will allow you to all share pictures with just each other and stay connected.

~Write a story together. Send a Composition Book back and forth, each time each person adds a page to the story until your family has created a one of a kind epic tale!

~Have family members that lives out of state? Set up a regular time to Facetime or Sykpe. By setting up a regular “date” you will both remember to fit it in and keep in touch.

**MILITARY
ONE SOURCE**

Free tax services and support made for MilTax at Military One Source

MilTax is a benefit for military families provided by the Department of Defense. It’s available exclusively for eligible service and family members through Military OneSource. MilTax is free, easy to use tax software and support designed. This service offers so much—and at no cost! To use go to:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
or call 1-800-342-9647

Some Money/Time Savers:

CROCKPOT PULLED CHICKEN

<https://www.familyfreshmeals.com/2016/08/busy-mom-food-prep.html>

INGREDIENTS:

3 lbs boneless skinless chicken breast
½ cup low sodium chicken broth
Salt and pepper to taste
Any other seasoning you like*



DIRECTIONS:

1. Turn crockpot to low (I always use crockpot liners because they make cleanup so much simpler)
2. Pour broth in bottom of pot
3. Place chicken in pot, season
4. Cook on low for 6 hours
5. Pull chicken apart with two forks (or use automatic mixer)
6. Place back in the pot, stir, cook additional 1 hour on low.

***protip:** limit the seasonings so you have more uses for the chicken. I usually will only add garlic, and minced onion. You can always add different seasonings to it for whatever meal you end up using it for (curry powder for Indian, taco seasoning for Mexican night, oregano/basil for Italian, etc...)

Need a quick meaningful gift idea? How about Family Time Coupons?

Family Game Night

Library/Story Night

You choose Tonight's Dinner

Lego Night- build a

Silly Dance Night

Stargazing with Hot chocolate

Get Creative and have fun with it!

HELPFUL LINKS:

Simple Meal planning for single moms: <https://www.wealthysinglemommy.com/simple-meal-planning-tips-single-moms/>

Busy Moms Food Prep: <https://www.familyfreshmeals.com/2016/08/busy-mom-food-prep.html>

10 Quick Easy Dinner Ideas 2 ways: <https://www.parenting.com/gallery/quick-easy-dinner-recipes>

Military and Veterans Discount Guide: <https://dealhack.com/blog/military-discounts-guide>

Military One Source: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

**Shipthriftly DONATES
TO MILITARY FAMILIES AND
SAVES EVERYONE MONEY**

Go to



[Shipthriftly.com/MNFAC](https://shipthriftly.com/MNFAC)

Save money on shipping while supporting military personnel and their families.



Automatically support troops!

Shipthriftly donates a portion of every shipment to local military families in need.

Get It Keep Handy

MN MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE SHIPPING PROGRAM

<https://shipthriftly.com/MNFAC>

It's a Win-Win!

A portion of every shipment is donated back to our organization to provide support for local military families!



MN Military Family Assistance Center Locations

Arden Hills

Yolonda Von Itter
Yolonda.m.vonitter.ctr@mail.mil
651-282-4055

Bloomington

Kristine Deutsch
kristine.deutsch1981@gmail.com
651-282-4748

Camp Ripley

Savannah Polzin
savannah.d.polzin.ctr@mail.mil
320-616-3119

Cambridge

Sandra Schroeder
sandra.r.schroeder.ctr@mail.mil
651-282-4031

Detroit Lakes

Kristin Helmers
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651-268-8884

Duluth

Angelina Hager
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Mankato

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Montevideo

651-268-8475

Rosemount

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651-282-4749

State Office Coordinator

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651-282-4209

