

Planning Your Vacation

By Michele Marie Murray

The 2006 annual Vacation Deprivation survey by Expedia.com reports that, "one-third of employed adults in the United States do not always take all of their vacation days." Among the reasons for not taking vacations, three are prevalent: 1) Procrastinating vacation planning; 2) Being too busy at work to get away, and 3) Lack of money saved to take a vacation. If you are with limited funds to take a vacation, take advantage of some vacation areas especially designed for active, Guard and Reserve service members.



Four Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRCs) are offered across the world for service members, retirees, and their families. The AFRC facilities are non-appropriated-funded entities designed to support readiness, retention and well-being. The facilities are paid for and supported exclusively with soldier dollars. Hotel rates and accommodations are based primarily on rank and family category, starting as low as \$59 per day.

The four AFRC locations are: Dragon Hill Lodge, Seoul, South Korea; Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, Garmisch, Germany; Hale Koa Hotel (Waikiki Beach), Honolulu, Hawaii; and Shades of Green (Disney World), Orlando, Fla. Although the facilities are located in completely different areas of the world, their on-site amenities are similar. Each one has diverse dining accommodations, shopping, a health and fitness gymnasium, online registration, daily off-site tours, on-site entertainment, car rentals, and rest and relaxation special packages for the mobilized service member and his/her family.

Dragon Hill Lodge – Seoul, South Korea

For those who want to get far away – a vacation in Korea may be ideal. The Yongsan Post facility is complete with restaurants and

lounges and several places to shop, from the PX to Korean gift stores. The Lodge has 394 guest rooms, and room rates start at \$59 and go up to \$273 per day depending on your leave status and rank.

For sight seeing, Korean train and bus travel is available between Yongsan and other areas of Korea departing every 20-30 minutes to Dong Daegu or Busan.

Must-see attractions in Seoul include the Myeong-dong and Apgujeong shopping districts, and the Gyeongbokgung Palace.

For more information or to make reservations, go to www.dragonhilllodge.com or call 011-82-2-790-0016.

Hale Koa Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii

The Hale Koa Hotel is an 817-room resort hotel and favorite rest and relaxation destination for U.S. military personnel. The hotel is located near the beginning of Waikiki and major shopping areas, including Ala Moana Mall, the largest outdoor shopping center in the world, and the International Marketplace.

Based on rank and room category, the daily room rate starts at \$79 and goes up to \$224. The hotel states that the best time to secure a room reservation is September through mid-December. Reservations are accepted up to 365 days in advance. Among the hotel's many amenities is its weekly traditional Hawaiian luau and hula lessons.

The Fort DeRussy Army Museum, located next door to the Hale Koa Hotel, is just one of the many local attractions, which also include Diamond Head State Monument, Lyon Arboretum, Pearl Harbor and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

For more information or to make reservations, go to <http://halekoa.com> or call (800) 367-6027.

Kilauea Military Camp (KMC)

KMC is a Joint Services Recreation Center that is surrounded by Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and near to Kilauea, the world's most active volcano.

KMC features 90 one-, two- and three-bedroom furnished cottages and apartments. It offers a variety of activities, including bowling, a cyber room, miniature golf, and hiking and sports equipment rental.

According to the KMC's website, KMC is open to all active and retired military, Reserve and Guard members, current and retired (Department of Defense) DoD civilian employees, dependents and sponsored guests.

For more information on KMC, visit www.kmc-volcano.com. To make reservations from Oahu, call 438-6707 (direct dial). From all other locations, call (808) 967-8333 or (808) 967-7315. E-mail KMC at reservations@kmc-volcano.com.

Shades of Green, Orlando, Florida

Shades of Green is known as the military resort for Walt Disney World. Shades of Green not only offers rooms ranging from \$80 to \$250 a night (depending on rank and category), but also sells discounted tickets to Orlando's many attractions and theme parks—and provides complimentary rides to the Walt Disney World Resort. The resort is surrounded by two PGA Championship Golf Courses – the Magnolia and the Palm – two of the courses in the 2006 Golf Classic.

For more information, visit www.shadesofgreen.org or call (888) 593-2242.

Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, Garmisch, Germany

Considered one of the most desirable destinations in the Bavarian Alps, Garmisch, Germany, is 56 miles from Munich. In

addition to skiing, other recreational programs available for vacationers include golfing the Alpine Course, mountain biking, guided hiking and rock climbing. The resort has 330 rooms, and room rates vary from \$84 to \$239, depending on rank and desired room.

Edelweiss Resort has a year-round Just For Kids program designed for children 5-12 years old. A weekly Kids Night Out affords parents an evening out alone.

Depending on your time of travel, guided tours can take you to see various castles, the Dachau WWII Concentration Camp Italy; Innsbruck, Austria, Switzerland and the famous Oktoberfest.

For more information, visit www.edelweisslodgeandresort.com or call 011-49-8821-9440.

How Will You Get There?

If you're considering a vacation requiring plane travel, you are entitled to

Space-Available travel (Space-A). Those flying Space-A are given seats on military flights once DoD mission requirements have been fulfilled.

The Army.com website recommends traveling during off-peak months: February, March, October and November.

Other tips for planning Space-A travel:

- Sponsors who register in person for family members traveling with them should present all required documents: identification cards, passports, immunization records, and visas when required by the DoD Foreign Clearance Guide.
- Bring money to buy a plane ticket home in case Space-A travel is unavailable.
- Take no more than two checked bags, weighing no more than 70 pounds each.
- Space-A tickets must be paid for by cash or check.

For more Space-A information, visit www.spacea.info.