**New Pentagon MWR Program Offers Sailors Leisure Travel Savings**

*By: Stephen Clutter* and *Chief Mass Communication Specialist Brian Morales, Commander, Navy Installations Command Public Affairs*

Washington, D.C. February 27, 2019—When Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) Third Class Kayla Pomroy was considering taking leave to travel from Japan to be with family in Pennsylvania this past Christmas she checked out a new website called American ForcesTravel.com.

She had heard about American Forces Travel from a family member and was impressed the moment she logged in. “The website was very easy to navigate,” said Pomroy, who is stationed on the Yokosuka-based guided missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG-63).

American Forces Travel is open to all military and military-affiliated personnel who are eligible to use Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs. First-time users will be asked to verify their eligibility through the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES). The verification process is secure and requested information will not be retained.

Priceline Partner Network (PPN) was selected as the vendor to run the military MWR online leisure travel service, which was rolled out in late January, but was live for testing starting in November, when Pomroy booked her travel.

Pomroy, who is from Philadelphia, traveled from Tokyo on Dec 14, 2018 for two weeks of leave. Her route took her through Los Angeles, Atlanta and finally, Harrisburg, Penn., where she surprised her family when she arrived.

“The day I landed, I went straight to my neighbor's house for their holiday party, Pomroy said. “My mom had absolutely no idea that I was coming home. My neighbor asked my mom to come over early to help set up, and so she did. When I heard the doorbell ring my stomach dropped, but it was in a good way.”

When her mother walked in the door, Pomroy peeked around the corner and saw her mother in the kitchen. Then the Sailor who has been in the Navy for a little more than two years ran into her mother’s arms.

“The feeling was absolutely amazing,” she recounted. “There was so much emotion, but all we could do was hug and cry. My mom is my best friend so being away for even a month is hard let alone months and months and years at a time like I am.”

Pomroy said she was surprised by how much she saved by using American Forces Travel. “All the sites that I looked on the fares were well over $1,500 most were close to $2,000,” she said. “After taxes and the protection plan I only spent $941 on the ticket round trip to come home all the way from Japan. American Forces Travel was an extremely good deal!”

That’s the kind of experience that the Navy MWR team likes to hear.

“American Forces Travel wants to provide the best value and opportunities for access to the world’s most exclusive travel deals,” said Leslie Gould, Navy MWR Recreation Program Manager.

Although not all savings are as good as Pomroy experienced, Priceline does at least match the best rates offered by airlines and other travel sites. “We have a best price guarantee for all product lines, not just airfare,” said Debbie Phillips, Technology Manager for the Commander, Navy Installation Command’s Fleet Readiness Division.

American Forces Travel is unprecedented as the only leisure travel site sponsored by the U.S. military, Gould noted. It was a result of a year-long joint service initiative among the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Forces, and Coast Guard to provide exceptional deals on flights, hotels, cruises and rental cars.

Priceline was selected among many online travel agencies as the vendor because of its experience in negotiating specials deals with travel brands worldwide and their 20 years of online travel expertise.

Pomroy said she was grateful for her experience using the new American Forces Travel website.

“Coming home like that is not a moment that everyone gets to have,” she noted, “but people need to savor those little moments. Because years down the road, I will look back at all the pictures and videos of surprising them and I will be so thankful that I got to do that.”

Another important feature to American Forces Travel is all transactions generate a commission that will support Quality of Life programs within each service branch.

Gould notes that the American Forces Travel site is in keeping with MWR’s goals to provide recreation pursuits that ultimately support resiliency, readiness, and retention.

“By providing quality and value through a leisure travel program, service members and their families can enjoy experiences and travel opportunities for rest and relaxation, which helps reduce stress and improve morale,” Gould said.

American Forces Travel is currently available to all active duty, reservists and retirees from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, as well as their eligible dependents. The verification process is currently being updated to also include civilian employees from all five services.

The site address is [https://american.forces.travel.com](http://www.american.forces.travel.com)

**Photo Cutline 1:** GSM3 Kayla Pomroy gets a hug from her mother, Devon Pomroy, after surprising her with a visit from Japan. The Yokosuka-based Sailor used a new MWR travel website to book her trip.

**Photo Cutline 2**: GSM3 Kayla Pomroy (left), with her brother, Sean Pomroy, Jr., and their mother in their new Christmas morning pajamas. Pomroy said the new MWR travel website saved her money and was easy to navigate.