NEWKIRK
INVESTMENTS

PENSACOLA AREA EDITION

Pensacola Military Relocation Guide

A guide to finding a home when your orders bring you to the Pensacola area

NEWKIRK-INVESTMENTS.COM

Inside this guide

A guide to finding a home when your orders bring you to the Pensacola area.

01 Start with your orders and your timeline

02 The installations in the Pensacola area

03 Rent, buy or live on base

04 Using your VA home loan benefit

05 Your housing allowance and your budget

06 Where people live around Pensacola

07 Schools and child care

08 Florida costs to plan for: taxes and insurance

09 Buying from a distance

10 When you PCS again: sell or rent it out

11 Your PCS home checklist

12 Who to call

This guide is general information for service members, veterans and families moving to the Pensacola area. It is not legal, tax, lending or financial advice, and Newkirk Investments is not affiliated with the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs. Benefits, allowances, loan rules and tax rules change, and they depend on your own situation, so confirm anything that affects your move with your command, your lender, the VA or a qualified professional.

01 Start with your orders and your timeline

A PCS move runs on dates you do not fully control: your report date, your household goods delivery and the end of any lease you hold now. Housing decisions go better when you work backward from those dates instead of forward from the day you start looking.

Buying a home with a loan usually takes several weeks from an accepted offer to closing. Renting can move faster, but the homes you want are often spoken for weeks ahead in the busy summer PCS season.

WHAT TO DO FIRST

- Write down your report date, the earliest date you can travel and how long you expect to be stationed here.
- Contact the housing office at your gaining installation. They can explain on-base and privatized housing, wait lists and temporary lodging.
- Decide whether you are leaning toward renting, buying or living on base. The next chapters will help.
- If buying is a possibility, talk with a lender early so you know your price range before you fall for a house.

WHERE WE COME IN

Tell us your dates and we will lay out a simple week-by-week plan for your search, whether you are already here or still at your current duty station.

02 The installations in the Pensacola area

Knowing exactly where you will work matters more than knowing the city, because the bases sit in different parts of two counties. Check your orders for the installation and the command, then look at a map before you choose a neighborhood.

Naval Air Station Pensacola
On the southwest side of Pensacola in Escambia County. Often called the Cradle of Naval Aviation, it is home to aviation training commands, the Blue Angels and the National Naval Aviation Museum.

Corry Station
A few miles north of the main base in west Pensacola. It hosts information warfare and other technical training.

Saufley Field
Northwest of Pensacola. It supports training and several tenant commands.

Naval Air Station Whiting Field
In Milton, in Santa Rosa County, northeast of Pensacola. It is a major site for primary flight training and helicopter training.

Hurlburt Field and Eglin Air Force Base
East of the Pensacola area in Okaloosa County, near Fort Walton Beach. Some families assigned there choose to live in Navarre, between the two areas.

Traffic here is shaped by water. Bridges, base gates and US Highway 98 can all slow down at the start and end of the duty day, so test your likely commute at the hours you will actually drive it.

WHERE WE COME IN

Tell us the base and the gate you expect to use. We can point you to the areas people stationed there most often choose, and the ones that look close on a map but drive longer.

03 Rent, buy or live on base

There is no single right answer. The best choice depends on how long you will be here, what you have saved, and how much work you want a home to be while you are busy with a new command.

Living on base or in privatized housing
Short commute and simple move-in. Availability and wait lists vary by rank and family size, so ask the housing office early.

Renting off base
Flexible, and a good fit for a short tour or a first look at the area. Read the lease for a military clause, and know that federal law gives service members certain rights to end a lease when they receive qualifying orders.

Buying
Can make sense when you expect to be here long enough to cover the costs of buying and selling, or when you plan to keep the home as a rental after you leave.

QUESTIONS THAT HELP YOU DECIDE

- How long are your orders, and how likely are they to change?
- If you bought, would you sell when you leave or keep the home and rent it out?
- Do you have savings for closing costs, moving costs and repairs, even if your loan needs no down payment?
- Is there a chance you will return to this area later in your career or after you separate?

WHERE WE COME IN

We will talk through the numbers with you honestly, including the times when renting is the better call. We also manage rental homes, so we can show you what keeping a home as a rental really involves.

04 Using your VA home loan benefit

The VA home loan is a benefit earned through service. The loan comes from a private lender, such as a bank or mortgage company, and the Department of Veterans Affairs guarantees part of it. That guarantee is what lets lenders offer terms many buyers could not get otherwise.

HOW IT WORKS IN PLAIN TERMS

- Many eligible buyers can purchase with no down payment, depending on their entitlement and the lender.
- VA loans do not carry monthly mortgage insurance.
- Most borrowers pay a one-time VA funding fee, which can usually be added to the loan. Some borrowers are exempt, including veterans who receive VA compensation for a service-connected disability.
- You need a Certificate of Eligibility. Your lender can usually request it for you.
- The home must be one you intend to live in as your primary residence. Ask your lender how that works if you are deployed.
- The VA orders an appraisal that also looks at basic property condition. It is not a substitute for a home inspection.

You can generally use the benefit more than once. If you still own a home bought with a VA loan elsewhere, ask a lender how much entitlement you have left.

A VA loan is one option, not the only one. A good lender will compare it with conventional and other loans for your situation. The official source for the rules is va.gov.

WHERE WE COME IN

We write offers that work with VA financing and explain to sellers why a VA buyer is a strong buyer. We can also introduce you to local lenders who handle VA loans every week.

05 Your housing allowance and your budget

Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH, is set by your duty station, your pay grade and whether you have dependents. Rates are updated each year. Look up your exact figure with the Department of Defense BAH calculator instead of relying on what a friend receives.

It is tempting to shop for a home that uses every dollar of BAH. A safer plan leaves room, because a mortgage payment is only part of what a home costs here.

FILL IN YOUR MONTHLY BUDGET

Principal and interest	$
Property taxes (monthly share)	$
Homeowners and wind insurance	$
Flood insurance	$
Association dues	$
Utilities, lawn care and pest control	$
Repair reserve	$
Total, compared with your BAH	$

WHERE WE COME IN

For any home you are serious about, we can help you gather the real figures: the current tax bill, the association dues and what the sellers have been paying for insurance.

06 Where people live around Pensacola

The Pensacola area covers Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Each part of it has its own feel, price range and drive. These are starting points, not rankings. The right area is the one that fits your base, your budget and how you like to live.

Southwest Pensacola and Perdido Key
Closest to NAS Pensacola. Established neighborhoods near the base, plus condos and homes toward the Gulf beaches at Perdido Key.

Pensacola and East Hill
Older neighborhoods near downtown, restaurants and the bayfront, with a range of home ages and styles.

Northwest Escambia: Beulah and Cantonment
Newer subdivisions and more space, north and west of the city, with access to Interstate 10.

Gulf Breeze and Midway
Across the bay from Pensacola in Santa Rosa County, between the bay and the sound. The drive to the Pensacola bases crosses the Pensacola Bay Bridge.

Navarre
Further east along US Highway 98, with beach access. Popular with families assigned to Hurlburt Field and with some who work in Pensacola.

Milton and Pace
North of the bay in Santa Rosa County, close to NAS Whiting Field, with many newer neighborhoods.

See current listings and market numbers for each community at
newkirk-investments.com/areas

WHERE WE COME IN

We know these areas street by street. Tell us what matters most to you, whether that is a short drive, a yard, the water or a newer home, and we will narrow the list.

07 Schools and child care

Public schools are run by county. Homes in Escambia County are served by Escambia County Public Schools, and homes in Santa Rosa County by Santa Rosa County District Schools. School assignment depends on the address, and zones can change, so confirm the zoned schools for any home directly with the district before you commit.

HELPFUL TO KNOW

- Each installation has a School Liaison who helps military families with enrollment, records and special programs. It is one of the most useful calls you can make.
- Florida is a member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which eases transfers of records, course placement and graduation requirements between states.
- Florida offers school choice options, including charter schools and scholarship programs. The districts and the Florida Department of Education publish the details.
- On-base Child Development Centers often have wait lists. Register through MilitaryChildCare.com as soon as you have orders.

Fair housing law does not allow real estate agents to steer buyers toward or away from an area based on who lives there, and we do not rate schools. We will always help you find the official sources so you can judge for yourself.

WHERE WE COME IN

Give us an address and we will show you where to confirm its zoned schools and how far it is from the campuses and child care you are considering.

08 Florida costs to plan for: taxes and insurance

Florida has no state income tax on wages. Two costs deserve a closer look before you buy here: property taxes and insurance.

PROPERTY TAXES

- If the home is your permanent residence, you can apply for the homestead exemption with the county property appraiser, generally by March 1 of the first year you qualify. It lowers the taxable value and limits how much the assessed value can rise each year.
- Florida offers additional property tax benefits for some veterans with service-connected disabilities and for some deployed service members. The county property appraiser can tell you what you qualify for.
- The tax bill often changes after a sale, because the value is reassessed. Do not assume you will pay what the seller paid.

INSURANCE

- Homeowners insurance on the Gulf Coast includes wind and hurricane coverage, often with a separate hurricane deductible.
- Flood damage is not covered by a homeowners policy. Check the flood zone for any home, and get a flood insurance quote even where a lender does not require it.
- A wind mitigation inspection can lower your premium if the roof and openings qualify. Insurers often ask for a four-point inspection on older homes. Get your quotes during the inspection period, before you are committed to the purchase.

WHERE WE COME IN

We check the flood zone on every home you like and flag roof age and other features that tend to move insurance quotes, so there are no surprises late in the purchase.

09 Buying from a distance

Many military buyers find and close on a home before they ever arrive. It works well when you plan for it.

1. **Get pre-approved**
   A lender reviews your income and credit and tells you what you can borrow. Sellers take offers more seriously with a pre-approval letter.

2. **Tour by video or in person**
   We walk each home live on video and show you what photos leave out: the street, road noise, the yard and the drive to the gate. If your command approves house-hunting leave, we line up showings ahead of time.

3. **Make your offer**
   Offers and most contract documents can be signed online from anywhere.

4. **Inspect**
   We attend inspections for you and go over the reports together. Typical inspections here include the home itself, termites and other wood-destroying organisms, and wind mitigation.

5. **Plan the closing**
   Ask your lender and the title company early how you will sign. Options can include a mail-away closing, remote online notarization or a power of attorney, and each has rules that take time to arrange.

WHERE WE COME IN

We act as your eyes on the ground from the first video tour to the final walk-through, and we keep the dates in your contract on track while you handle the move.

10 When you PCS again: sell or rent it out

The best time to think about your next move is before you buy. A home that would be easy to sell or easy to rent gives you choices when new orders arrive.

Selling
Start the conversation a few months before you leave. Pricing, preparation and timing the closing around your move all go more smoothly with lead time.

Renting it out
Many service members keep a home as a rental. That means finding a tenant, collecting rent and handling repairs from another state, either yourself or through a property manager.

Taxes on a sale
Federal tax rules can give service members on qualifying extended duty extra time to meet the residency test for excluding gain on the sale of a home. Ask a tax professional how this applies to you.

Your loan
If you keep a home bought with a VA loan and buy again at your next station, ask a lender about your remaining entitlement.

WHERE WE COME IN

We help owners with both paths. We can list and sell your home when you leave, or manage it as a rental so it is cared for while you serve somewhere else.

11 Your PCS home checklist

- [ ] Write down your report date and how long your orders run
- [ ] Call the housing office at your gaining installation
- [ ] Look up your BAH for the new duty station
- [ ] Decide whether to rent, buy or live on base
- [ ] Talk with a lender and get pre-approved
- [ ] Request your Certificate of Eligibility, or have your lender do it
- [ ] Map your likely commute at duty-day hours
- [ ] Choose two or three areas to focus on
- [ ] Call the School Liaison and register for child care if you need it
- [ ] Tour homes in person or by live video
- [ ] Check the flood zone and get insurance quotes
- [ ] Make an offer and schedule inspections
- [ ] Arrange how you will sign at closing
- [ ] Schedule household goods delivery around your closing or move-in date
- [ ] Apply for the homestead exemption after you move in
- [ ] Update your address with your command, your bank and the VA

12 Who to call

Keep this page handy and fill in names and numbers as you go.

WHO	WHAT THEY HELP WITH	NAME AND NUMBER
Installation housing office	On-base and privatized housing, wait lists, temporary lodging and rental referrals.	
School Liaison	Enrollment, records transfers and school options for military children.	
Lender	Pre-approval, your VA Certificate of Eligibility and loan choices.	
Real estate agent	Finding homes, video tours, offers, inspections and keeping the purchase on schedule.	
Insurance agent	Homeowners, wind and flood insurance quotes.	
Home inspector	Condition of the home, termite and wind mitigation inspections.	
Title company	The closing, title insurance and how you will sign from a distance.	
County property appraiser	Homestead exemption and veteran or service member tax benefits.	
Legal assistance office	Leases, powers of attorney and your rights under federal law.	

YOUR NEXT STEP

Start with a relocation call

Have orders to the Pensacola area, or expect them soon? Tell us your base, your report date and what you are looking for. Crystal Ilano, our REALTOR and military specialist, will walk you through the areas that fit, what homes cost there now and a plan for your search.

There is no obligation. You will come away with a clearer picture of your options, whether you end up renting, buying or living on base.

Call 386-290-5356 or visit newkirk-investments.com/contact

NEWKIRK INVESTMENTS, LLC
1230 N US Highway 1, Suite 3, Ormond Beach, FL 32174 · 386-290-5356
Kelly Bauknecht, Broker