



U.S. Army NEWS RELEASE

Army Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20310

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 2004

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY ANNOUNCES R&R LEAVE PROGRAM ONWARD TRAVEL FUNDING

On Dec. 19, 2003, Mr. Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness, approved policy to implement funding for Onward Transportation for military members on active duty (Active and Reserve Components) and Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, participating in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave Program. The Department of Army is the Executive Agent for implementation of this DoD program.

Funding for Onward Travel is authorized by federal law and implementing DoD regulations, and is responsive to the Congressional Conference Report that accompanies the Fiscal Year 2004 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense and the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. In that report, Congress recommended that \$55 million of the Army's Operation and Maintenance funds be used solely to cover additional travel costs incurred by service members and DOD civilians participating in the CENTCOM R&R Leave Program.

Under the original CENTCOM R&R Leave Program, implemented on Sept. 25, 2003, government funded travel was provided for R&R leave participants from the Aerial Point of Embarkation (APOE) in Kuwait City to one of four designated Aerial Ports of Debarkation (APODs) – Rhein Main Air Base, Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport, Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport, or Atlanta International Airport only.

Effective with the Dec. 19, Onward Travel Policy approval, Active and Reserve Component Service Members, and DOD civilians currently participating in the CENTCOM R&R Leave Program are eligible for fully funded travel to the nearest commercial airport serving their leave destination. Return travel will be funded from that same airport to the BWI APOD only and then back to the CENTCOM operations area.

Service Members who participated in the R&R Leave Program prior to Dec. 19, 2003 are not eligible for retroactive reimbursements of onward travel costs incurred.

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For more information about the Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Leave Program, media may contact Army Public Affairs, at (703) 692-2000. This document is available on Army Link, a World Wide Web site on the Internet at <http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/press/index.php>.

For updates and additional information on the CENTCOM R&R Leave Program and Onward Travel reimbursement, visit the website at:
<http://www.odcsper.army.mil/Directorates/wb/RRLeave/index.htm>.