

Navy Family Ombudsman Program – Rest and Recuperation Leave (R&R)



BACKGROUND

Ombudsmen should be thoroughly aware of the commanding officer's policies and expectations with regard to providing support to IA and GSA spouses and family members.

GOALS

To provide information about what families should expect from R&R leave and provide suggestions for making the most of this unique opportunity.

KEY MESSAGES

- The purpose of R&R leave is to give service members rest from a combat zone.
- R&R leave is a privilege, not an entitlement. Not everyone will receive this leave.
- Successful R&R leave takes planning and communication.

COMMAND STATEMENT

Ombudsmen play an important role in the total support of IA spouses and family members. In NAVADMIN 217/08, Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Gary Roughead said, "Ombudsmen connect our commands with Navy families, they ease the unavoidable strain associated with long deployments. They keep the chain of command informed about critical issues facing our people, from housing and child care, to pay and benefits. Our Navy is nothing without our Sailors. Without ombudsmen, we would find it more difficult to do our job. The performance of our Sailors is a testament to their great success."

R&R LEAVE

What is it?

Rest and Recuperation (R&R) leave is chargeable leave available to give service members rest from a combat zone. There are two types of R&R leave:

1. A four day pass to safe locations near the theater of operations such as Camp Al Saliyah, Qatar.
2. A fifteen day pass out of the theater of operations.

R&R leave is a privilege, not an entitlement. Service members must be in theater for at least sixty days before they are allowed R&R leave. R&R leave within the last sixty days of deployment is strongly discouraged. Travel time to and from R&R leave is not charged as leave. A Sailor's command is not allowed to have more than ten percent of their personnel away at any time which may impact when, or if, a Sailor can take leave. Air travel is provided to the commercial airport closest to the R&R traveler's leave address. Leave begins to be charged the day after a Sailor arrives at the commercial airport closest to his/her leave address. Only one fifteen day trip will be authorized in a twelve month period.

Expectations of R&R Leave

Families and Sailors often view R&R leave almost as a "honeymoon period", but expectations and reality often don't mesh. Families want to make the most of the time together, but there are some barriers that can be a challenge:



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- Sailors generally return exhausted after traveling for twenty-four hours or more.
- If a Sailor has children, their needs may take precedence over the needs of the parents.
- Extended family members want to share this time together.
- Often, R&R leave comes during non-vacation time for the IA's family – children are in school and the spouse must continue to work.
- For some IAs in a leadership position they don't really get away from their responsibilities as they receive phone calls and emails from work.
- Towards the end of the R&R leave period a Sailor may begin to refocus on returning back to the job so they separate emotionally. Similarly, family members also may begin to distance themselves emotionally to prepare for the rest of the time apart.

R&R Leave Tips

- R&R leave can be a wonderful time together. Family members and Sailors should plan for R&R leave just as they plan for deployment and homecoming:
- Be aware of the challenges associated with R&R leave
- Allow time for the Sailor to rest
- "Pace" activities. Everyday does not have to be filled to the brim.
- If a family has children, be sensitive to their needs. Explain to them that their parent will be home temporarily and that they must return to duty. Expect some attention-getting behavior when the Sailor is home and some acting out behaviors as the Sailor prepares to leave. Children may respond to their parent's departure very similarly to the way they did initially.
- Limit the honey-do list.
- Be protective of time together.

Each family is unique. Sailors and their families should be honest about how they both want to spend the time together.

RESOURCES

- OPNAVINST 1750.1F - Navy Family Ombudsman Program Instruction
- IA Family Connection Newsletter
- Naval Services FamilyLine's "Guidelines for the Spouses of Individual Augmentees (IAs)", pg. 6-7
- CNIC Communication – IA Sailor and Family Handbooks
- Fleet and Family Support Program Web site: <http://www.cnic.navy.mil>; www.ffsp.navy.mil
- NAVADMIN 217/08 - Ombudsman Appreciation Day



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