DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Personnel System



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Implementation Guide for Overseas Rotations and Administrative

Return Rights December 2019

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Introduction

The Office of the DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO), in partnership with the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) is providing this guidance to exclusively implement procedures and practices for employing DoD CES civilian employees for assignment to a foreign or non-foreign area, rotating DoD CES civilian employees from foreign areas, and granting administrative return rights to DoD CES civilian employees in foreign and non-foreign areas by adopting section 1586 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.) (Reference (a)). The information contained within this guide will continue to be improved and is subject to change as additional information is incorporated.

This guide is being implemented in lieu of formal instruction to provide CES designated component organizations; Human Resources Offices; Supervisors; and Managers technically sound guidance regarding overseas matters for the CES workforce.

This guidance addresses:

1. APPLICABILITY. This guidance applies to all personnel on excepted service permanent appointments of the CES designated organization's rolls within the Department.

- 2. RELEASABILITY UNLIMITED. This guidance is approved for public release.
- 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. This guidance is effective December 13, 2019.

References:

(a) Section 1586 of Title 10, United States Code

(b) Department of State Standard Regulations (DSSR), (Government, Civilians, Foreign Areas), February 3, 2019

(c) Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), Volume 2, "Department of Defense Civilian Personnel"

(d) Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) Memorandum, Subject W19012- Tour Lengths and Tours of Duty Outside the Continental United States(OCONUS)

(e) Directive-type Memorandum (DTM)-17-004 – Department of Defense Expeditionary Civilian Workforce

(f) DoD Instruction 1315.19, Subject: "The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)," April 19, 2017

(g) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 1230, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment in Foreign Areas and Employee Return Rights," July 26, 2012

(h) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Employment and Placement," August 15, 2017

(i) DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) Handbook, current edition

Background

The Cyber Excepted Service Overseas Implementation Guide provides the affected DoD Components with the requisite guidance as adopted from Section 1586 of Title 10, U.S.C. (Reference (a)) and DoDI 1400.25, Volume 1230 (reference (f)) to effectively implement CES overseas assignments.

This guidance applies to all DoD CES positions (irrespective of organization) in the Cyber Excepted Service. This guidance does not apply to:

a) Employees covered by the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System or the Federal Wage System, or equivalent; non-appropriated fund employees; and foreign national employees employed under authority other than the CES;

b) Employees in CES-designated cyber positions who declined the voluntary opportunity to convert to the cyber excepted service;

c) Employees in cyber positions that are not CES-designated;

d) Employees in Senior Executive Service, senior level, scientific and professional, and equivalent positions, unless specifically addressed in the DoD CES policies, in accordance with DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Expected Service (CES) -Employment and Placement" (Reference (g));

e) Local or foreign nationals; and

f) Locally hired U.S. civilians accompanying military members or civilian employees stationed in the area.

If an employee declines to voluntarily convert to CES, the CES-designated position will be converted when vacated by that employee. An employee's decision to decline an offer to convert voluntarily to the excepted service will be final, although the employee may compete for other positions in CES.

Component Supplemental Guidance

DoD Components are authorized to develop and issue supplemental guidance that align to the provisions specified in the CES volumes and this guide. To eliminate redundancy and foster expediency, it is recommended that DoD Components only develop additional guidance for areas that require local organizations to administratively carry out facilitation where CES overseas rotations and administrative return rights are exercised.

Components will, at a minimum, establish supplemental guidance to the extent it further defines applicability of the intent for internal tracking and documenting of overseas agreements for participating employees. This supplemental guidance will be in accordance with required documentation of the assignment (e.g., all required agreements/statements of understanding; personnel actions and documents as required for auditing purposes; extension requests; curtailment requests, etc.).

Administrative Return Rights

1. CES employees in the excepted service employed in the contiguous United States (CONUS) or in a non-foreign area who accept a CES to CES assignment outside the U.S. shall be granted administrative return rights, by adopting the provisions in reference a. This also includes employees who are recruited from a non-foreign area for assignment to a foreign area. Administrative return rights for CES employees accepting any DoD CES assignment in a foreign area or a differing non-foreign area will remain in effect for up to five years.

2. Administrative return rights are granted for an initial tour length of one to three years and can be extended up to a maximum period of five years in the event the employee is granted an extension to the initial tour. This applies to CES employees: (1) who move to a position within the CES in the same Component or to a different DoD Component, and (2) upon initial movement and any subsequent movement in foreign areas within the five year period.

3. At the end of the five year period, an extension of administrative return rights beyond five- years is permitted only when the CONUS command is in agreement with the administrative return right extension. The servicing human resources office (HRO) must provide a written request to the CONUS command at least 10 months prior to the expiration of the employee's tour to determine whether it will approve an extension of the employee's administrative return rights beyond five years.

4. If the CONUS command chooses not to grant an extension of administrative return rights, the servicing HRO will inform the holding command of the decision. In the event the holding command approves a tour extension beyond five years, the servicing HRO must inform the employee of their options (e.g., decline the tour extension and exercise administrative return rights to the CONUS command or acknowledge administrative return rights will be terminated). Any extension of administrative return rights by the CONUS command must be documented by written approval.

5. Employees exercise their administrative return rights back to his or her former position held prior to their assignment to duty outside the U.S., unless as determined by critical mission needs, they may be returned to a like position within a CES-designated organization. If the position described by this enclosure does not exist, or with the employee's consent, the employee shall be placed in another existing or new continuous position, by adopting the provision in the DoDI 1400.25, Volume 1230 (Reference (f)):

a) For which he or she is qualified,

- b) In the same DoD Component or to a different DoD Component, and
- c) In the same geographic area as, with
- d) The rights and benefits equal to the right and benefits of, and

e) In a grade equal to the grade of the position which he or she held immediately before the assignment to duty outside the U.S.

6. An employee granted administrative return rights will sign a CES Overseas Position Administrative Return Rights Agreement (ARRA) as outlined at Appendix A acknowledging their understanding and acceptance of the conditions set forth. The completed agreement must be filed in the individual's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF). When recruiting behind the departing employee, the job opportunity announcement will include a statement specifying the position under recruitment is obligated to an overseas returnee.

7. The employee hired to the obligated position will sign a CES Obligated Position Agreement as outlined at Appendix B acknowledging their understanding of the conditions to vacate the position upon the arrival of the employee who exercised administrative return rights.

8. CES designated organizations through the Component Servicing Team will document overseas tours, administrative return rights, and obligated position information using the automated system of personnel records for each employee who accepts an overseas assignment.

9. Current CES employees in the excepted service who deploy in support of operations shall be granted administrative return rights to the position they held prior to their deployment.

10. The right to return to the position held prior or a similar position will be granted for the full period of deployment, IAW "Directive-type Memorandum (DTM)-17-004 – Department of Defense Expeditionary Civilian Workforce" (Reference (d)). The CES five-year limitation on employment in foreign areas does not apply to deployments in support of contingency operations.

Exercising Administrative Return Rights

1. Application will be made through the returning employee's overseas servicing HRO to CES's Component Service Team HR Servicing Specialist. Managers/supervisors must notify the CES Component Service Team in writing of any action that may affect overseas employees' administrative return rights.

2. These rights may be impacted by critical mission needs and may be afforded across CES designated organizations.

3. An employee must have satisfactorily completed his or her overseas tour, or have an approved curtailment from the overseas assignment for reasons acceptable to the overseas commander or designee. Acceptable reasons for release from tour of duty can be found in the JTR, Volume 2, (Reference (c)).

4. Overseas returnees must notify their CONUS command via the CES Component Service Team in writing of their intent to exercise administrative return rights up to 10 months prior to their tour expiration date.

Management-Directed Exercise of Administrative Return Rights

1. Employees may be directed to exercise administrative return rights in the following circumstances.

a) The overseas command determines the employee cannot adjust to the overseas area for reasons not related to performance.

b) When through no fault of the employee, individual skills were not properly matched with job requirements upon overseas recruitment and there are no other duties to which the employee can be reassigned.

c) The employee fails to satisfactorily complete the supervisory or managerial probationary period during initial tour.

d) An overseas command determines such action would reduce or eliminate the need for reduction in force (RIF) actions.

Employees Who Do Not Have Administrative Return Rights

1. The following employees do not have administrative return rights:

a) Employees selected for an overseas tour:

(1) after receipt of a notice of involuntary separation, including a notice of RIF;

(2) after no reply to, or a declination of, a transfer of function notice;

(3) after public announcement of the closing of the command where employed;

(4) after voluntarily transferring to, and being employed by, a non-DoD Federal agency overseas;

(5) after submitting a resignation; or

(6) after receipt of an unresolved written notice of proposed adverse action.

b) Employees hired locally in the overseas area. This includes employees who are in an approved leave status and accompany a sponsor to an overseas area with the expectation of being employed by transfer, conversion or reinstatement with no break in service.

c) Employees in Formal Mobility Programs. Such employees are covered by mandatory mobility agreements which may require assignment to a different geographic area than the one which preceded the overseas assignment.

d) Interns while enrolled/participating in a formal Intern Program, will not be considered for overseas assignments. Interns who are not in a CES tenured status are ineligible for administrative return rights.

2. For an employee who does not have administrative return rights, the employee will be required to register in the PPP, if otherwise eligible.

Establishing Tours

CES is adopting the provisions in DoDI 1400.25 Volume 1230 (Reference (f)), by requiring CES employees to be rotated from foreign areas within a set period of time to the extent consistent with the missions of the CES organizations. The rotation program is designed to increase developmental opportunities for employees in the U.S., periodically renew the knowledge and competencies of the overseas workforce, including familiarity with current strategic goals, enhance the interoperability of employees, and promote a joint perspective in the workforce.

Overseas Tours Up to Five Years

1. Initial Tours

a) Tours in the foreign area are initially established in accordance with PDTATAC W19012 (Reference (d)). Supervisors/managers may initiate a request to extend an employee's overseas tour beyond the initial tour for sound business/mission-based reasons. Requests will not be based upon personal circumstances or situations of the employee.

2. Extensions of Initial Tours

a) Upon successful completion of the initial overseas tour, designated approval authority may approve a manager's request to extend an employee's initial tour up to five years.

b) When considering tour extensions, certification must be made that the employee's performance is fully successful or better; the employee has current knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the duties of the position; the employee continues to adapt to the overseas environment; and a continuing need exists for the employee's services.

c) An extension to the initial tour may be approved for any increment up to the maximum allowed by the PDTATAC W19012 (Reference (d)), however, a single extension may not exceed a maximum of 24 months. Tour extensions are a management decision based on mission requirements and are not an employee entitlement nor should they be expected.

d) Designated approval authority may approve tour extensions as requested by management that would allow the employee to serve five continuous years in an overseas assignment.

e) An extension that would result in the employee exceeding the five year limitation, must be submitted and approved according to the information provided in the following section.

Overseas Tours Beyond Five Years

1. By adopting the five-year tour limit in DoDI 1400.25 Volume 1230 (Reference (f)), extension requests that allow employees to remain in the overseas area for more than five continuous years shall be based on a written rationale that articulates a mission-based business case for retaining the employee in the overseas location and provides a workforce succession plan for replacing the employee by the end of the subject tour extension.

2. A mission-based business case should clearly state the required skill set(s) of the position and would thereby necessitate retaining the employee in the overseas area beyond the five-year limitation.

3. At a minimum, tour extension requests will include the following information:

a) Written rationale with mission-based business case;

b) Letter from the employee's CONUS command providing discretionary extension of administrative return rights for the duration of the tour extension or a letter from the overseas command indicating the employee did not have administrative return rights or the CONUS command will not extend the administrative return rights;

- c) Workforce succession plan for filling the position; and
- d) Plan to return the employee at the end of the extension.

4. Any additional requests for tour extensions beyond the initial extension must include an updated mission-based business case that addresses unanticipated events or circumstances that resulted in the failure of the workforce succession plan submitted in the previous request for extension.

5. Authority to approve tour extensions beyond five years.

a) Supervisors who wish to extend an employee's tour beyond five years must submit a request in writing (provided in paragraph 3 above) through their chain of command to the CES Component Service Team level designee. The point of contact will coordinate in writing with the respective CES CONUS activity to obtain their recommendation.

b) The completed request will be submitted (to or through the) Component Command level for final approval/disapproval.

c) Requests should be submitted in writing at least 10 months prior to the overseas tour expiration date.

d) Request for extension should include management's justification for requesting the employee's continued presence in the overseas area based on mission critical needs of the overseas command.

Physical Presence

As adopted from the DoDI 1400.25 V1230 (Reference (f)), civilian employment in foreign areas shall be limited to a period of five continuous years unless interrupted by at least 2 years of physical presence in the U.S. or non-foreign area. The Component Command level or designee may approve, on a case-by-case basis a shorter period of physical presence in the U.S. or non-foreign area other than the 2 years required in this Policy; however, requirements of the JTR, Volume 2, (Reference (c)) must also be addressed. A request for a physical presence waiver should be made in rare cases when the overseas mission necessitates a shorter period.

Differentials and Allowances

Eligible overseas DoD civilian employees receive pay differentials and allowances that are appropriate to their places of employment and their employment conditions, in accordance with applicable regulations of the Department of State Standard Regulations (DSSR), (Government, Civilians, Foreign Areas), February 3, 2019, (Reference (b)) and JTR, Volume 2 (Reference (c)).

CES Component Servicing Team

1. In accordance with the ARRA between the CES and the Component Human Resources servicing agencies, the component servicing team shall:

a) Perform review of employee assignment documentation, determine accuracy, and prepare and forward ARRA to Component personnel for approval and documentation. Provide a copy of the completed ARRA to the employee, ensure the employee is fully informed of the duration and requirements for exercising administrative return rights.

b) Coordinate with the supporting overseas activity HRO to keep each other informed regarding any action that affects an employee's administrative return rights. By adopting the DoDI 1400.25 V1230 (Reference (f)), at minimum notifications shall be made promptly when:

(1) The position to which an employee has administrative return rights is changed, moved, or abolished;

(2) Any extension of administrative return rights is approved or disapproved;

(3) An employee's overseas tour is extended or not extended;

(4) The employee moves to another foreign area location for assignment;

(5) The employee moves to a different contiguous U.S. activity, other than that from which recruited for the overseas assignment;

(6) The employee exercises or forfeits administrative return rights IAW this Guide.

c) Maintain required records related to the employee's ARRA in their eOPF.

d) Ensure the employee's Standard Form-50 (SF-50), Notification of Personnel Action, is annotated to include the statement "Administrative Return Rights, adopted from section 1586 of title 10, U.S.C. for initial tour of (number) months, plus approved extensions."

e) Document overseas tour, administrative return rights, and obligated position information, as applicable, in the automated system of personnel records for each employee who accepts an assignment in a foreign or non-foreign area.

2. This ARRA will be in accordance with any internal guidance and must be inclusive of documentation noted in the items listed above for purposes as required for auditing. The gaining and supporting HRO have been directed to provide full and accurate information to selectees on the foreign area service assignment for which the employee is being considered. The HRO will also comply with provisions of DoD Instruction 1315.19, Subject: "The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)," April 19, 2017 (Reference (e)).

CES Supervisors and Managers (CONUS Organization)

1. Supervisors and Managers shall:

- a) Actively support this Guide and comply with provisions contained herein;
- b) Keep subordinates fully informed of the provisions of this Guide; and

c) Ensure employees are counseled concerning administrative return rights and the opportunity for self-improvement and career development.

d) Ensure the RPA is prepared and submitted by the gaining activity to the Component Servicing Team a minimum of 90 days prior to the completion of the employee's overseas tour.

e) When filling a position behind an employee who has administrative return rights, ensure the recruitment RPA and all recruitment information clearly documents that the recruitment action is against an obligated position. In collaboration with the Component Servicing Team Human Resources Offices, Supervisor and Managers may elect to fill behind obligated positions with Term or Temporary recruitment actions with the understanding that personnel in those positions will be required to sign an official statement of understanding stating as such and will be placed against an over hire position (e.g. position not on the manpower document).

CES Supervisors and Managers (Overseas Organization)

- 1. Supervisors and Managers will:
 - a) Actively support this Guide and comply with provisions contained herein;
 - b) Keep subordinates fully informed of the provisions of this Guide;

c) Provide input to CONUS command supervisors for performance ratings as applicable;

d) Foster opportunities for self-improvement and career development; and

e) Ensure communication with CONUS activity and Component Servicing Team throughout the duration of the employee's overseas tour (e.g., performance, curtailments, and extensions).

CES Overseas Employees

1. Employees will:

a. Continue to stay informed on the provisions of this Guide and follow the procedures accordingly;

b. Ensure official personnel records and any other supporting documentation accurately reflect appropriate experience, education, training, and awards;

c. Notify the local HRO and Component Service Team of any changes in assignment; and

d. Notify the local HRO, Component Service Team, and the CONUS supervisor in writing of the intent to exercise administrative return rights no later than 180 days prior to their tour expiration date.

Coordination of Administrative Return Rights

The following procedures will be used in granting administrative return rights:

1. Once the CES Component Service Team prepares the ARRA, the HR Specialist will review and sign the agreement authorizing the granting of administrative return rights and return the signed agreement to the CES Component Service Team for final processing.

2. Once the CES Component Service Team HR Specialist receives the agreement granting administrative return rights, they provide the employee with a copy of the agreement and ensure that the employee is fully informed of the duration and requirements for exercising administrative return rights. The Component Servicing HR Specialist is expected to ensure that the employee signs the agreement and places a copy of the signed agreement into the employee's eOPF. The Component Servicing HR Specialist provides a copy of the finalized agreement to the employee's overseas supervisor.

3. The Component Service Team will document in the applicable Component tracking system the obligated position details to include:

- a) position information;
- b) date position is obligated;

c) date end of position obligation (which should be no later than five years from the date of obligation unless extension(s) are approved); and

d) employee name vice the position.

Records Maintenance

The Component Service Team will document overseas tour, return rights, and obligated position information as applicable in the automated system of personnel records for each CES employee who accepts an assignment in a foreign or non-foreign area. Copies will be provided to and/or retained by the employee, manager/supervisor, Component Service Team, and in the employee's eOPF.

Appendix A Administrative Return Rights Agreement (ARRA)

Must follow and include the following (applicable organizational language optional):

- Perform review of employee assignment documentation, determine accuracy, and prepare and forward ARRA to Component personnel for approval and documentation. Provide a copy of completed ARRA to the employee, ensuring the employee is fully informed of the duration and requirements for exercising administrative return rights. An ARRA will include:
 - a) Signature by the employee serving on a DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) appointment selected for assignment to a position in a foreign area who has administrative return rights; Authorizing Management Official; and Human Resources Office;
 - b) The statement of representation (i.e. This agreement is between named CES Organization and the undersigned input of command and employee names);
 - c) The full position information and location of position;
 - d) Extension (applicable form upon approval); and
 - e) Return position rights information (i.e. administrative return rights are to the permanent position of record for which appointed to). These administrative return rights may be impacted by critical mission needs and may be afforded across CES designated organizations.
- 2. Maintain required records related to the employee's ARRA in their electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF).
- 3. Ensure the employee's Standard Form-50 (SF-50), Notification of Personnel Action, is annotated to include the statement "Administrative Return Rights, adopted by Title 10 U.S.C. 1586 for initial tour of (number) months, plus approved extensions."
- 4. Document overseas tour, administrative return rights, and obligated position information, as applicable, in the automated system of personnel records for each employee who accepts an assignment in a foreign or non- foreign area.

Appendix B Obligated Position Agreement

Must follow and include the following (applicable organizational language optional):

- 1. This is an agreement between the Cyber Excepted Service (CES) designated organization and the undersigned employee. It becomes effective when the employee accepts an appointment/assignment in a CES designated positon.
- 2. The full position information and location of position.
- 3. Signed statement of understanding from employee filling the obligated position.
 - a) I understand that I am occupying a position that another employee has obligatory rights to return. I understand that I may be required to vacate this position in the event the employee exercises his/her administrative right to return. I further understand I am subject to actions as outlined within this guide (i.e. TERM/TEMP appointment action) and in accordance with applicable regulatory guidance referenced herein.
- 4. Additional signatures for each statement of understanding will also include the Authorizing Management Official; and Human Resources Office.
- 5. Date the position obligation ends (i.e., when the five years of administrative return rights expires). The agreement may need to be updated if the administrative return rights are extended.

Appendix C

Conversion Return Rights Scenarios

Employee status	What happens at conversion?
Competitive service employee occupying an overseas position in CES designated organization scheduled to convert who does not have return rights to a position in the US	If employee chooses to opt-in: (1) Advise employee he/she is not eligible for CES admin RR and must register in the PPP for return placement/rotation back to the US (IAW the terms of the OS rotation agreement);
Competitive service employee occupying an overseas position in CES designated organization scheduled to convert who has statutory return rights to a competitive service position (not CES designated) in the US	If employee chooses to opt-in: (1) Inquire with the prior organization, if employee opts into CES, will they offer administrative RR to the prior position as eligibility for statutory RR will end? If yes – Document with a written signed admin RR agreement from CONUS command) If no – Employee will lose eligibility for statutory RR and must register in the PPP for return placement/rotation back to the US (IAW the terms of the OS rotation agreement)
Competitive service employee occupying an overseas position in CES designated organization scheduled to convert who has statutory return rights to a position in the US that is also CES designated but will convert at a later date (sometime during/after the current OS tour of the employee)	 (1) If the employee opts-in overseas, statutory RR to the CONUS CES designated position are terminated and: employee may be granted CES admin RR employee may be required to register in the PPP for return placement (2) If the employee opts-in overseas, the CONUS command may continue the position obligation by granting administrative return rights (in lieu of statutory RR) to the employee for return once the OS tour ends. (3) Upon employee executing administrative return rights, to a CONUS organization slated to convert at a later date, the CONUS organization may: Contact DoD CIO for guidance on returning the employee to the CONUS organization slated to convert at a later date. OR Effect a management directed reassignment to any CES position in the US (e.g., across component lines – DISA to Army) – no PPP exception
Employee occupying an overseas position in a CES designated organization scheduled to convert who has administrative return rights* (because they were not eligible for statutory RR) to a position (not CES designated) in the US	If employee chooses to opt-in: (1) Employee will retain administrative RR under the CES personnel system unless this change violates provisions of their administrative return rights agreement. OR (2) Advise employee they will be granted administrative RR under the CES personnel system in coordination with CONUS command

Employee status	What happens at conversion?
Employee occupying an overseas position in CES designated organization scheduled to convert who has administrative return rights (because they were not eligible for statutory RR) to a position that is CES designated in the US but will convert at a later date (sometime during the current OS tour of the employee)	If employee chooses to opt-in: (1) Employee will retain the admin RR under the CES admin RR program and rotate back to the prior position once the OS tour ends
Employee occupying an overseas position in CES designated organization scheduled to convert who has administrative return rights to a position that is CES designated in the US but will convert at a later date (sometime after the current OS tour of the employee)	If employee chooses to opt-in: (1) Employee will retain the admin RR under the CES admin RR program and rotate back to the prior position once the OS tour ends (2) The OCONUS organization may contact DoD CIO upon the employee executing administrative return rights to a CONUS organization slated to convert at a later date, to obtain additional guidance on returning the employee to the CONUS organization slated to convert at a later date OR Effect a management directed reassignment to any CES position in the US (e.g., across component lines – DISA to Army) – no PPP exception

If command choose to grant admin RR what will that look like?

- 1. Advise employee will lose eligibility for statutory RR but will be granted administrative return rights to a CES position in CONUS under the CES personnel system **or**
- 2. HR inquires with the prior organization to determine if they will continue to honor the administrative extension of statutory return rights to the prior position by offering administrative RR.
- 3. Document return rights with a written signed CES administrative return rights agreement from CONUS command
- 4. Effect a management directed reassignment to a CES position within the same command as the overseas command anywhere in the US (e.g., DISA to DISA) **or**
- 5. Effect a management directed reassignment to any CES position in the US (e.g., across component lines DISA to Army); no PPP exception

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