

SUBJECT: Holiday Block Leave (HBL) Student Travel Ticket Purchasing for Fort Lee, Virginia

BACKGROUND. Holiday Block Leave (HBL) is the programmed holiday break for initial entry training (IET) students. TRADOC authorizes Commanders to allow IET Soldiers, sometimes referred to as “trainees,” the ability to go on leave during the holiday season. To assist in a safe and efficient movement of IET students from Fort Lee to their holiday destinations, Commanders conduct HBL operations. Among the challenging critical tasks of HBL operations is the transportation process, particularly the travel ticket purchasing and the coordination of services. There are several venues for trainees to purchase and coordinate travel: internet/on-line ticketing, local Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Leisure Travel Office, etc. This paper provides recommendations and guidance to assist Fort Lee AIT students in the pursuit of travel arrangements.

PURPOSE. This paper describes the major travel ticketing options available to AIT Soldiers departing Fort Lee for HBL for the December 2016-January 2017 Holiday season. Additional information on travel is available at the links below.

DISCUSSION. Most Soldiers will be authorized to travel to a holiday location for HBL. Prior to departure, Soldiers will receive training and information regarding their conduct, safety, security and medical/health resources while on leave. Soldiers will purchase tickets (see below) and their units will establish HBL plans to assist in their departure and their return. Further, Soldiers will also have the option of being picked-up from and returned to the installation by privately owned vehicles (POV). In most cases, POV drivers should be a family member and/or an individual that has been cleared/coordinated with the Soldier’s chain of command. For those Soldiers who do not want to go on leave and/or travel, they are authorized to remain on Fort Lee in barracks. Soldiers who are not on leave will typically continue to perform minor work functions and/or reinforcement training and are often able to participate in local MWR events and opportunities.

- **Ticketing:** Army established ticketing programs/options are dependent on when a Soldier is training or scheduled to train at Fort Lee. In many cases, while Soldiers are at their basic combat training (BCT) site, they are given an opportunity to purchase air, rail and/or bus tickets. If Soldiers are unable to purchase tickets at their BCT site, they will be given an opportunity to visit Fort Lee’s [MWR Leisure Travel Office](#) to purchase tickets. Soldiers can also purchase local shuttle and travel tickets through the internet. New this year, the MWR shuttle vendor is offering on-line ticket purchasing. See shuttle below for more information. Due to the fluid nature of military operations and events, Soldiers should ensure their ticket dates are able to be changed.

- **Transport Shuttle:** Regardless of the source of ticket purchase (internet, MWR BCT, MWR AIT), Soldiers are highly encouraged to purchase shuttle bus tickets, either through the new internet source or [Fort Lee MWR Leisure Travel Office](#). The shuttle bus ticket ensures Soldiers are able to have transportation to and from the Richmond International Airport (RIC), Richmond (Staples Mill) Amtrak rail station, and/or Richmond Greyhound Bus Station. Transport shuttles are meant to lessen strain on

traffic and the limited supply of taxi's and other resources (Ubers, etc.) in order to ensure timely movement of Soldiers to their transport stations. It also assists the Army and Soldier by providing another layer of security and efficiency with travel coordination and movement.

- **Travel Modes and Nodes.** The Army recommends the below travel nodes for Soldiers travelling for HBL. The Army has coordinated with these transportation modes and nodes and will assist Soldiers in their travel to and from these locations.

- **Air Travel:** Soldiers should purchase tickets for departure and return to Richmond International Airport (RIC), Richmond, Virginia. This is the single major airport for commercial travel in the local area. **Important: It is highly recommended that the Soldier include their Department of Defense (DoD) identification number when purchasing airline tickets. This number enable expedited/simplified access through travel security. The DoD ID number is found on the back the Soldier's CAC (white ID card with memory chip) and/or on the front of the Soldier's ID Card (sometimes called a benefits card).**

- **Rail Travel:** Soldiers should use the Richmond's Staples Mill AMTRAK, in Richmond, Virginia. Soldiers will have the ability to choose other area AMTRAK stations; however, the Army is not supporting other locations efforts and the Soldier will need to coordinate their arrangements.

- **Commercial Bus:** Greyhound bus is the most prominent carrier in the local area. It is recommended that Soldiers desiring bus travel, purchase tickets for service at the Richmond Greyhound station. Soldiers have the ability to choose other area Greyhound bus stations, however the Army is not supporting other locations efforts and the Soldier will need to coordinate their arrangements to these sites. **A change to this year; Greyhound will not have a depot at Ft Lee, Virginia.**

- **Privately Owned Vehicles (POV):** Soldiers may be transported from Fort Lee to their HBL location and returned via POV. As Soldiers are still in their initial training period, they are governed under some restrictions and policies. POV travel should be coordinated with the Soldier's chain of command (their leaders/supervisor) to ensure proper authorization of the person picking the Soldier up.

*****Note: The installation has force protection measures (security procedures) that require background checks for all personnel entering the installation. The Fort Lee US Army Garrison website has instructions on how to expedite the process of obtaining a gate access pass, as well as how to mitigate potential issues. <http://www.lee.army.mil/pmo/access.aspx> . To expedite entry onto Fort Lee, it is highly recommended that the POV driver submit form "FORT LEE FORM 190-3, JUL 2015, Request for Unescorted Installation Access" no earlier than 15 Nov and no later than 14 Dec to the visitor control center. Email the completed form to usarmy.lee.imcom.list.des-access-control-forms-submissions@mail.mil .**

- **Uniform.** Soldiers departing from AIT site (Fort Lee) will travel in the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) throughout their departure and their return, unless they are traveling overseas. Soldiers traveling overseas are authorized to wear appropriate civilian clothing.

CONCLUSION. To ensure AIT students' travel arrangements are coordinated and synchronized with Fort Lee HBL operations, Soldiers will need to decide what options are ideal for their travel.

Please direct comments for corrections to this document to the CASCOM G3/5/7, Training Operations and Readiness Branch. (804) 765-7166.

LINKS:

HBL information page at: <http://www.cascom.army.mil/PDF/Holiday%20Block%20Leave2.pdf> and go to the 'Important Links' on the left side and click on Holiday Block Leave or go to the [information links here](#).

From the CASCOM Home page you can also link to each of the schools by clicking on the branch insignia found on the blue line just to the right of the words "The Army's Sustainment Think Tank". For those unfamiliar with the branch insignia you can hover over each one and it will give you the name.