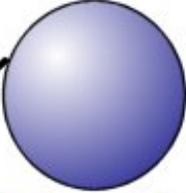


WELCOME TO

*Diego*   
GARCÍA





## **WELCOME ABOARD**

## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

You have been selected to join one of the Navy's finest operational commands anywhere in the world: Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station, Far East Detachment Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory (B.I.O.T.). If you're looking for a professional challenge, a close-knit team, unbelievable recreational facilities and exquisite natural beauty, then you are coming to the perfect place!

This Welcome Aboard Package will help in your preparation, travel and check-in processes. It is designed to give you an overview of specific items and information to make your transition and stay here safe and worry-free.

You should be notified of your assigned sponsor via record Naval message. Your sponsor will be able to provide you specific answers to questions you may have concerning your arrival and subsequent tour on "The Footprint of Freedom." Make sure to establish contact with me as soon as possible.

Diego Garcia is continuously experiencing rapid growth and change. Facilities are always being established to meet both your professional and personal needs. Living and working conditions are outstanding, and we all work hard to keep them that way. Recreational opportunities are numerous and we are constantly expanding facilities to make life more comfortable.

On behalf of everyone on Diego Garcia, I hope you have a safe and pleasant journey to the "Best Kept Secret in the Navy." We are looking forward to having you as part of the DG Team.

### **Officer in Charge**

Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station,  
Far East Detachment Diego Garcia  
British Indian Ocean Territory

## **DIEGO GARCIA, A BRITISH TERRITORY**

As a British Territory, all civilian and military personnel residing on the island come under British Indian Ocean Territory (B.I.O.T.) law and administration. These laws often differ from those in the USA, so attending Island Indoctrination to learn more is required.

Although it is a British Territory, there are fewer than 50 British personnel (or Brits as they are commonly known) on the island. The majority of these personnel form Naval Party 1002 (NP 1002). Split between Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel, the Naval Party forms the civil administration on Diego Garcia. Its members are tasked with either policing the locality or carrying out the duties of Port/Airport Customs officers. In addition, the Royal Marines form a detachment that provides security for the Chagos Archipelago.

The figurehead for the B.I.O.T. Administration, and Commanding Officer of NP 1002, is a Royal Navy Commander. As the British Representative (BRIT REP), he represents the British Foreign Office for this territory. To that end, he fulfills a number of functions that include the Magistrate, Coroner and Register of Marriages.

The Brit Rep and his team take a great deal of interest in conservation issues. Diego Garcia and the other islands within the Chagos Archipelago are largely unspoiled and will remain so. On Diego Garcia the East Point Plantation area remains completely untouched since the days of the early copra plantation. Development and construction are not permitted in this area and so it serves as a beautiful retreat. Please remember that entrance to the plantation is restricted and therefore requires a pass from the B.I.O.T. Police Station.

The British wish you an enjoyable stay on Diego Garcia. On your arrival, please familiarize yourself with the B.I.O.T. rules and regulations and try to preserve the island as the tropical paradise that it is.

**BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE**  
U.S. Navy Support Facility, Diego Garcia  
British Indian Ocean Territory

## ISLAND HISTORY

Diego Garcia was discovered by Portuguese explorers in the early 1500s. It is the largest of fifty-two islands which form the Chagos Archipelago, located in the heart of the Indian Ocean. The island's name is believed to have come from either the ship's captain or the navigator on that early voyage of discovery.

A tropical footprint-shaped island just 7 degrees south of the equator, Diego Garcia is heavily vegetated. The island covers 6,720 acres in area with a maximum height of 22 feet and an average elevation of four feet above sea level. The shoreline is about 40 miles long and the island encloses a lagoon 6.5 miles wide and 13 miles long.

In 1965, with the formation of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), Diego Garcia was under the administrative control of the British government of the Seychelles. In 1976, the Seychelles gained independence from England and the BIOT became a self-administering territory under the East African Desk of the British Foreign Office. The Crown's representative on island, the British Representative (BRITREP), acts as both Justice of the Peace and Commanding Officer of the Royal Naval Party 1002.

Until 1971, Diego Garcia's main source of income was from the profitable copra oil plantation. At one time, copra oil from here and the other "Oil Islands" provided fine machine oil and fuel to light European lamps. During the roughly 170 years of plantation life, coconut harvests on Diego Garcia remained fairly constant, at about four million nuts annually. The plantation years ended with the arrival of the U.S. military construction.

On March 24, 1971 construction began on a U.S. Naval Communication Facility. This construction was accomplished by units of the U.S. Naval Construction Force (Seabees).

Naval Communications Station Pre-commissioning Detachment arrived to prepare for operations in December of 1972 and on March 20, 1973 the U.S. Naval Communications Stations, Diego Garcia, was commissioned. The communications facility was later changed to Naval Computer and Telecommunication Station (NCTS) in October of 1991.

A major change to the island organizational structure occurred with the establishment of the Navy Support Facility (NSF) on October 1, 1977. Commanding Officer, NSF, assumed all duties and responsibilities previously assigned to the Island Commander. The nucleus for NSF came from the original Communication Station enlisted and officer allowances. All billets, other than those dedicated to communications support, were transferred to CO, NSF, who is responsible for maintaining and operating facilities and providing services and materials in support of several tenant shore activities and units of the operating forces. Following the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979, Diego Garcia saw the most dramatic build-up of any location since the Vietnam War era. In 1986, Diego Garcia became fully operational with the completion of a \$500 million construction program.

The 1990, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait marked the most intense operational period in Diego Garcia's history. From 1 August 1990 to 28 February 1991, NAVSUPFAC Diego Garcia achieved and maintained the highest degree of operational readiness and provided levels of support which outstripped all contingency planning. As the base population doubled almost overnight, with the deployment of a Strategic Air Command Bombardment Wing and other aviation detachments, workload base-wide increased from 300-2000% over peacetime levels with no personnel augmentation. Diego Garcia became the only U.S. Navy base that launched offensive air operations during Operation Desert Storm and Diego Garcia remains a vital link in our defense structure.

# **TRANSFERRING TO DIEGO GARCIA**

## **Before You Transfer**

Completely read your orders! You are not authorized excess baggage! Free baggage allowance is 2 pieces of checked baggage, each piece not to exceed 62 linear inches nor 70 lbs., and 1 carry-on bag not to exceed 45 linear inches. If you have more you will be charged a non-reimbursable fee! This applies to Commercial and Government Air. If you have more you must contact Your Personal Property Transportation and Household Goods Office (Household Goods Help Line 1-800-444-7789).

It is recommended you complete the Naval Leadership course for advancement to your next pay grade. Naval Leadership courses are not available on Diego Garcia.

## **Japan**

If you are scheduled for a flight to Narita-Tokyo, for a bus trip to Yokota AFB and an overnight stay at the Kanto Lodge, you must immediately make a reservation or you will not get a room upon arrival! For reservations call DSN 224-2018 or 224-2009, FAX 225-3499. The average cost of a room out in town is approximately \$100 U.S., however you will need YEN or a credit card.

When you arrive at Narita-Tokyo you will have to go through customs and then go to the Northwest counter at the main entrance. There will be a sign up list to catch the bus to Yokota. The Northwest Airlines counter attendant usually knows nothing about the bus transportation!

After completing Japanese Immigration and Customs formalities, exit into the arrival lobby (remember, this is based on arrival at Terminal One.) Turn right, (regardless of the exit from Customs) and walk along the main lobby corridor. You will see a small coffee/snack stand on the left at the end of the main lobby. Just past this "cafe" you will enter the next (central) section of the building.

At the far end of the room, at the end of the long counter, you will find the DoD Transportation Liaison desk identified by a small sign. The liaison occasionally escorts groups to the parking area, so please wait. A sign at the desk will explain departure times to the various bases in the area and the location of the parking area. A phone is available to contact your duty station or sponsor. A phone number list for each base/operator is also available.

When you arrive at the Kanto Lodge and check in call the AMC Terminal and confirm your arrival time. Sign up for a ride to the terminal at the Lodge's front desk.

## **Singapore**

If you are flying on AMC (government air) you will arrive at Paya Lebar Royal Singapore Air Force Base. Customs will check for passports, however PCS personnel only need orders. The delay is normally 4 hrs or less. If you do not leave before 2000 the AMC representatives will make arrangements for you to stay at the Sling Inn where we have a government contracted cost of \$80 U.S. The average cost of a room in town is \$100 U.S. The cost of a cab is around \$40 Singapore.

If you are flying commercial you will arrive at Changi International Airport. Customs will check for passports, however PCS personnel only need orders. If your connecting flight is leaving that day The B&L Travel Agency can arrange transportation to Paya Lebar Royal Singapore Air Force Base which is where you catch the AMC flight to Diego Garcia. If you arrive at Changi after 2000 you will be spending at least one night in Singapore. Call the Sling Inn (65) 6-257-0256 and see if they have a room, a cab ride is about \$40 Singapore. The average cost of a room in town is \$100 U.S.

If for some reason the Sling Inn is full MWR has made arrangements with the B&L Travel Agency for those who are short on cash. B&L will take you to the Ghimpeng Hotel and cover the cost of the room (Get a copy of the receipt for your travel claim). B&L is authorized to give you a one time disbursement of \$100 for food and essentials (Fill out a Pay Adjustment Authorization Form DD139 from B&L). When you arrive in Diego Garcia MWR will contact you about payment.

### **United States**

Well in advance of your departure for Diego Garcia, you should check your routing with your Navy Passenger Transportation Office (NAVPTO) or Travel Office. To ensure that you do not receive overpayment of advance travel allowances, and to prevent spending your own money without reimbursement, you should discuss your travel entitlements with the personnel arranging your transportation. These verifications should be completed, even if you already have AMC, MTA, GTR or commercial airline tickets in your possession.

Should you choose to take a route other than the most cost-effective government route in order to take leave, you may shoulder the travel costs of the difference without reimbursement.

You will arrive on Diego Garcia by Air Mobility Command (AMC) aircraft or government contracted commercial jet.

It cannot be emphasized enough that **you should have a minimum of \$400 in your possession**, whether flying from the East or West Coast, to defray possible layover expenses. Most of these expenses will be reimbursable, but only after you have arrived on the island and submitted your travel claim. Remember to **save all of your travel receipts and tickets**.

### **East Coast Flights**

Diego Garcia is served by contracted commercial aircraft originating from Norfolk Naval Air Station and Baltimore/Washington International Airport. There will be several refueling stops along the way, but because some of these stops may be in countries where U.S. presence is sensitive, your personal conduct is of the utmost importance. Remember that you are an "Ambassador of Good Will." All personnel are required to wear civilian clothing, but must present a neat, well-groomed appearance.

### **West Coast Flights**

From the West Coast, there are numerous ways to reach Yokota Air Base, Japan, where Diego Garcia bound flights originate. If you are traveling to Japan on a commercial flight, you will arrive at Narita International Airport outside Tokyo. A shuttle bus to Yokota leaves three times daily for a small fee.

If your flight is military chartered, you will arrive in Yokota and will not need bus service. If your flight through Japan has an overnight layover, there is limited transient lodging in Yokota at the Kanto Lodge. The DSN number for the lodge is 224-2000. If no rooms are available, civilian lodging will run from \$75-\$150 per night and must be paid in Yen. The Kanto Lodge will provide you with a non-availability statement for your travel claim. From Yokota, you will travel on either an AMC military aircraft or a contracted commercial aircraft to Diego Garcia, with a refueling stop at Paya Lebar International Airport in Singapore. Proper civilian attire is appropriate on the flight to Diego Garcia.

## **COMMAND SPONSORS**

### **PREPARING FOR TRANSFER**

Once you know that you are coming to Diego Garcia, there's no time to waste in getting ready to move. A move overseas requires months of preparation, and the sooner you have orders in hand, the sooner you can get started.

This page will provide you with some of the details and answers to some of the most commonly asked questions on moving overseas. It cannot be overemphasized that you should immediately contact your sponsor. Constant communication between you and your sponsor will make your move smoother and eliminate needless worries and frustrations.

### **SPONSORS**

Your sponsor is your first link to your new command. Your sponsor will make BEQ/BOQ reservations for you and provide you with useful information to ensure your transition to life overseas is as comfortable as possible.

For your sponsor to serve you effectively, you must provide him/her with accurate information about you, so send the following information to your sponsor as soon as possible:

- Leave address and phone number
- Dates/Times/Flight information for your arrival

Generally mail takes 7 to 14 days to reach Diego Garcia, so plan accordingly. If your move occurs quickly before you are able to contact your sponsor or command, don't worry. There will be people at the air terminal ready to help you.

### **THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU PCS TO DIEGO GARCIA**

- Take care of all possible medical and dental problems that may not have been taken care of during your overseas screening. You will probably want an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses. You might also want to have an ample supply of any necessary prescription medicines on hand.
- Purchase any uniform items you may need. The Ship's Store only has a limited stock and quantity of regular items. You may order uniform items from the Navy Exchange in Yokosuka or from the Uniform Support Center.
- Change your current mailing address on all bills, catalog, magazines, etc. Sometimes mail is slow in leaving and arriving on island. Take this into account for any bills that may have specific due dates.
- Ensure all of your financial affairs are in order.

- Set-up temporary guardianship for minor dependents if necessary. Provide necessary powers-of-attorney for items such as real estate, automobile, taxes, litigation, etc., that may arise while you are on island.
- Ensure you have a current and valid will. Register to vote and request an Absentee Ballot for any elections you will miss.
- Ensure your relatives know how to contact their local Red Cross in case of emergency. Provide them with your Social Security Number, rank, rate and the name of your command.
- If you have dependants, bring a copy of your current rental agreement or lease to submit to PSD upon your arrival or your BAH may stop.
- Obtain a passport if you plan on traveling to foreign countries on leave. You may apply for a passport once you arrive, but it will take approximately 4-6 weeks to receive it through the mail.
- Remember - keep your sponsor informed of any changes or problems you encounter.
- Keep in contact with your sponsor. Let him/her know your travel arrangements, arrival times and any other information he/she may need in assisting you for the move.
- Be sure to have a current ID card. You will not be allowed to board any military aircraft with an expired ID.
- **LTC NEWS:** Due to the isolated nature of Diego Garcia and limited OPTAR resources available to send personnel TAD, you need to ensure that you attend the appropriate LTC class for your pay grade prior to transferring to Diego Garcia. Per BUPERS Instruction 1430.16E (ADVANCEMENT MANUAL) "states that all personnel from E-4 to E-7 that are eligible for advancement MUST attend LTC before taken the Navy Wide Advancement exam." To ensure yourself the best possible opportunity for continued advancement in the Navy, get the required LTC class before reporting.
- Arrange your pack out early with Personnel Property to minimize luggage you will have to carry while traveling.

## TRAVEL NOTES

No clothing, hats or belt buckles with slogans or insignia that may draw attention to your status as an American citizen/military member may be worn. Profanity, maliciousness, glamorizes drugs/ alcohol or any other negative behavior that may bring discredit to yourself or the United States are prohibited and may be punished as the UCMJ allows.

## ITEMS TO BRING

### UNIFORMS

**Officer/CPO:** Service dress white; summer white; service khaki; working khaki; Navy Working Uniform (NWU), PTU (with a good pair of running shoes), tropical dinner dress blue, dress blue in case of TAD.

**E6 and below:** Service dress white; service uniform; utilities, PTU (with a good pair of running shoes), Navy Working Uniform (NWU), coveralls (if you work space dictates it), service dress blues in case of TAD.

**Note:** Winter Service Dress Uniforms are suggested for all hands in the event of a TAD/TDY or other departure from the island to an area other than a summer/tropical climate.

### CIVILIAN CLOTHES

Shorts and T-shirts with sandals or sneakers are the most popular civilian attire on the island. Wash and wear articles are highly recommended as there is no dry cleaning facility

on DG. You may want to consider bringing some dress clothes for special events, church or just going out to the clubs.

## **SPORTS/LEISURE EQUIPMENT**

Bicycle with helmet, baseball/softball gear, snorkeling gear, fishing equipment, bowling ball, roller skates/blades, golf clubs, weightlifting gear, rackets (tennis/racquetball), sports shoes, beach/lounge chairs, beach blanket. Although the gym does loan equipment, it is better to bring your own if you play a lot of sports.

## **LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

There are many off duty activities in Diego Garcia. The Gym has weights lifting machines, bikes, elliptical machines, racquet ball courts and basketball courts. Out doors facilities include tennis courts, a soccer field, a swimming pool and running/biking trails. Fishing trips are available as well for a nominal fee. MWR conducts some type of event everyday of the week. All MWR sponsored events earn a free T-shirt for participation. Once a month Captain's Cup is held, an event where commands compete to win a trophy for the month. The gym has three masseuses along with personal trainers. A massage costs \$15 an hour and personal trainers will assist you for free.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

TV/VCR/DVD, computer, board games, reading materials, magazine subscriptions, portable tape/CD player, CD's, videos, DVD's (island selection is limited), preferred brands of hygiene goods, sheets, pillowcases, comforters, blankets (it does get cold in the rooms due to central air conditioning system), pillows, alarm clock, some dishes/glasses/silverware, iron and stereo. (TV's and VCR's are provided in all permanent party barracks). Spices available for purchase on island are limited, so if you have specific type of spices or seasonings you like, bring them.

# **LIVING ON DIEGO GARCIA**

Personnel E-5 and below normally have their own room but on occasion may share a room with one other person, while E-6's have their own room. Each room comes equipped with a large refrigerator, TV, VCR, and microwave, and a private shower/bath. These rooms do not come furnished with kitchen utensils or kitchen accruements.

All officers and chiefs have their own rooms. Permanent party personnel have larger rooms, which include kitchenettes. Rooms with kitchenettes come equipped with plates, silverware, cooking utensils, pots, pans, cups and glasses, basically a full kitchen utensil set, so there is no need to buy any. These rooms come with refrigerators, microwave, coffee maker, rice cookers and blenders.



Upon check-in, there is a small deposit that will be returned after a satisfactory inspection upon checkout. You will be issued a room key and linens. Most of the BEQ/BOQ's are two or three story buildings. The rooms all open up to the outdoor walkway/balcony.

Most barracks have grills and picnic tables outside and are free to be used by anyone.

## **COMMUNICATING**

The commercial/private phone system is operated by Cable & Wireless(C&W) (a British phone company). Phone cards must be purchased in order to call off the island. Your stateside phone cards will not work. Phone cards come in increments of \$10, \$20, \$30 and you can add more money if you want, can be purchased at Cable & Wireless. Vending machines are also available at The Turner Club, Billeting Office and Pax Terminal. You will be issued a phone card upon check-in with \$20 credit and receive an additional \$20 credit per month through the MWR. This may be used for telephone calls or WI-FI internet access at several locations around the base. When your cards get lost, you can head to the C&W office and pay to have your card updated. Phone calls have different rates depends on the time are you going to call and if your calling landline and cell phone.

Another way to keep in touch with the folks back home is e-mail. Private Internet Service Provider (ISP) is available through C&W at \$49 per month for 128Kbps/1 Gigabyte, \$79 per month for 128Kbps/3 Gigabyte or premium service at \$160 per month for 256Kbps/8 Gigabyte. An additional \$6 per 100MB is charged with each service. An additional \$30 registration fee, DSL modem purchase fee of \$60 and deposit of either \$160, \$79, or \$49 (Depending on the service) is charged at sign-up. If you have a DSL modem, bring it to save the \$60. For WI-FI the cost is \$4 per hour, charged to your phone card. If you have a computer, bring it with you.

The base also has computers at several locations for personal use. The library, Liberty Hall and Hometown Connection offer free e-mail and Internet access during normal hours of operation. The Liberty hall has free WI-FI for E-6 and below.

Do you want to mail a card or letter? Diego Garcia is home to the only U.S. post office in the Indian Ocean. The average time for mail to and from the States is around 6-10 days, but can be affected by military aircraft flights and holiday periods, just like home. In other words, no planes in, no mail!

## **EDUCATION**

The Education Service Office (ESO) on island is ready to help you with all your learning needs. The Navy College Office can help you get a degree, take standardized tests, PACE and DANTEs. Also look into Central Texas College, which has on base classes. Several universities also offer distance education programs leading to certification, associate, bachelors and master degree courses of study.

## **TV/RADIO**

The naval Media Center broadcasts over 30 television stations and three radio stations.

Channel 8 is the primary source from the Armed Forces Network and brings you prime time programming, live sports, news and entertainment. Channel 10 carries syndicated programming and movies all day long. Programming on channel 10 is on an eight-hour

rotation, meaning that every eight hours, the programming repeats itself. Channel 12 is sports. Additional channel programming is also currently available free of charge via C&W.

Power 99 FM is where you tune into if you want to listen to live DJ's during the day. They play the latest hits to your favorites of yesterday. The live shows are also request shows, and give you the latest happenings on DG.

The other station 101.9 FM is strictly satellite, playing country, top 40 and classic rock.

If you are into talk radio or a sports fan, switch to AM 1485 for the best in stateside programming, live from the Broadcast Center in California.

Since all programming, both radio and television comes to us from satellite, the people at AFN have no control over which programs or sporting events are aired. It comes straight to us from AFRTS-BC in California.

## NEWSPAPER

The Tropical Times newspaper is published every Monday with the latest television and movie schedules, military news and island events. Additionally it lists the galley menu for the week, MWR events and lots of other useful information.

## MOVIES

Diego Garcia's MWR department runs an outdoor covered movie theater. Movies are shown nightly from Sunday through Saturday at 2000; Friday and Saturday night's movies are also shown at 2200. Although we don't get the newest movies right away there is a good selection. Approximately two months after release in the States, we will get the movies here.

## FOOD

**The Consolidated Dining Facility (CDF)** is the island's galley. Serving three meals a day, they offer a variety of food. If you are not receiving BAS or Per Diem, you will be issued a meal card and can eat at the galley for free. If you are receiving compensation for food, the CDF is still the economical choice of eateries. In addition to the regular menus, the galley has a huge salad bar, speed line and desert bar.

**The Chief Petty Officer's club** is open to all military personnel E7-E9 and offers a fine menu to patrons including burgers, ribs and pizza. The CPO home delivery is available to all hands and your food can be brought to any building in the downtown area.

**The Peacekeeper Inn, Island Room and Food Court** offers nightly entertainment in the Island Room including full service beverage area and billiards. The Peacekeeper Inn restaurant offers a full service menu and the food court (also housed in the same building) offers fast food sandwich type menu and Starbucks coffee.



**The Officer's Club** sits at the tip of the island on Eclipse Point and has a beautiful view of both the Indian Ocean and lagoon and offers a full service menu. They also offer an all hands brunch on Sunday. **\*\*Collard Shirts required for all males.\*\***

**The Passenger Terminal** Snack Bar accommodates those incoming and outgoing passengers with a variety of sandwiches and drinks.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What must I do prior to coming to Diego Garcia?**

Although the answer to this is limitless, we advise you to set up allotments if you have dependents or financial obligations to support them. Make sure you bring a copy of your rental or mortgage paperwork so that you will not lose any BAQ/VHA payments. You may need to designate a power of attorney to sell your car or home while you are on DG.

Also, ensure that you have your overseas screening completed and that your area clearance has been approved prior to reporting to DG. Only active duty unaccompanied, military personnel are assigned to DG. Active duty military couples are not allowed concurrent assignments to DG.

### **What should I bring to Diego Garcia?**

Diego Garcia is a tropical island; therefore bring clothing suitable for the hot and humid climate (shorts, short sleeves shirts, T-shirts, sandals, and sunglasses). Bring plenty of sun block and sunglasses to this sunny island. Civilian clothes for off-duty and leave off island should be of the wash and wear variety since there is no dry cleaning on island. Shorts, pullovers, T-shirts and sandals are the normal civilian attire. Collared shirts are required at the Officers' Club. It is a good idea to bring additional shoes since the Ship's Store has a limited selection of styles and sizes. A set or two of dressier civilian attire is recommended for church or special occasions.

Bicycles and sporting equipment are good things to bring to the island. There are plenty of on and off-road bike trails for any bike enthusiast. Sports played on DG include softball, volleyball, tennis, racquetball, and golf. Since the Ship's Store supply and variety is limited, you may want to bring your favorite toiletries such as shampoo, shaving cream, deodorant, sunscreen, etc. Also, consider bringing a camera, stereo, alarm clock, coffee pot, fishing equipment, snorkeling gear, and black umbrellas since these items can be expensive on island. It is a very good idea to bring books and magazines since the Ship's Store and library's collections are limited.

Individuals may wish to consider bringing a PC to the island as access to the Internet and email allows for cost effective communications with friends and family.

### **What uniforms will I need in Diego Garcia?**

Bring plenty of uniform items with you. The Ship's Store carries uniforms, but the stock is limited and certain items can be unavailable for long periods of time. Everyone is expected to have squared away uniforms on a daily basis. The working uniform is utilities for E-6 and below and working or service khakis for E-7 and above. For Public Works and Security Departments, the working uniform is the construction utility uniform (camies). Summer whites are worn at all command inspections and ceremonies (i.e. Change of Command).

Officers and CPOs: Summer whites, service khakis, working khakis (optional) Navy Working Uniform (NWU), PTU (with a good pair of running shoes), service dress blues, service dress

whites, and dinner dress (O-4 and above). If you are working in Public Works or Security, bring your Battle Dress Uniforms.

Enlisted (E-6 and below): Summer whites, dress white jumper, dress blue jumper, utilities, Navy Working Uniform (NWU), Service Uniform, PTU (with a good pair of running shoes) construction utility uniform and Navy ball cap. In addition to these uniform requirements, all personnel should bring extra sets of the following items: undergarments, working uniforms, socks, ribbons, medals, hash marks, rating badges, belts, buckles, and collar devices.

### **What cannot be brought to Diego Garcia?**

All weapons, guns, knives with blades 3" or longer (including diving knives), pornography, plants, animals, narcotics, clothing with logos or designs which promotes/depicts/glamorizes drug and alcohol use or abuse, profanity, or obscenity are all prohibited on DG by B.I.O.T. law. All contraband will be confiscated by customs once you arrive on DG.

### **How long does it take for mail to get to/from Diego Garcia?**

Letter mail averages 10-17 days for incoming, and 10-14 days for outgoing. Packages with first class postage will get to DG quicker than surface rate packages. Mail is 2 to 3 times per week and depends on AMC flight arrivals.

### **Are there any banks or credit unions in Diego Garcia?**

There is one Community Bank which is associated with Bank of America on DG and one Navy Federal Credit Union. The NFCU on DG **does not process cash**. Checks can be cashed at the Community Bank or various MWR facilities such as the Peacekeeper Inn, Officers' Club, and CPO Club. Be sure to bring enough checks for cashing and paying your bills. ATM's that accept various bank and credit cards are located at central billeting and the Air Passenger Terminal.

### **How much does it cost to call home?**

It costs between 50-80 cents per minute to call (depending upon time of day the call is placed) anywhere off-island. There is only one telephone company on DG and their telephone cards are needed to call off-island. It is not possible to use other phone cards or make collect calls. There is another alternative to place calls in which you are going to need internet. You can subscribe to Skype.com or Vonage and have access to Voice over IP. Prices may vary.

### **Is scuba diving allowed on Diego Garcia?**

Scuba diving and spear fishing are prohibited in the waters of DG.

### **How is the snorkeling in Diego Garcia?**

Snorkeling is permitted in specific areas and offers an excellent way to see the fascinating marine life and beautiful coral formations in the lagoon. Due to prevailing winds disturbing the water from June through September, snorkeling is usually best from October through May. There are over 700 varieties of fish in the waters of DG.

### **What wildlife is protected in Diego Garcia?**

All life forms, including live shellfish are protected. Coconut crabs, chickens, all other birds, and donkeys, especially are protected under British law. Any detected harm, mistreatment, or harassment of any of the island's animals will result in punitive action. Fishing in specific areas under specific rules for edible game fish is allowed.

### **What Diego Garcia areas are off-limits?**

The eastern half of the island is off-limits. No personnel are permitted past the British Gate without a pass from the British Representative. This side of the island is a controlled area with no construction sites. It remains much as it was in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The remains of what once was a thriving coconut plantation are located on the east side of DG at East Point. The Brit Rep issues a limited number of passes to visit and explore the plantation ruins on weekends. Swimming is restricted on the ocean side of DG as well as certain protected lagoon areas such as Turtle Cove.

### **What is the weather like in Diego Garcia?**

The climate on DG is tropical marine; hot and humid, moderated by trade winds. The average temperature is 80 degrees, with a mean high of 85 degrees and a mean low of 76 degrees. The average rainfall is 102 inches per year, so bring a good umbrella for year round use. Umbrellas used while in uniform must be black.

### **Is there any tourism in Diego Garcia?**

No, since DG is exclusively a military reservation. Everybody is a member of the US or UK military, DoD employee, US Merchant Mariner, or BOS contractor.

### **Are credit cards or ATM cards accepted in Diego Garcia?**

Credit cards are only accepted in the Ship's Store (VISA and MasterCard only). There are only two ATMs on island, but is limited only to VisaCard, MasterCard, Plus, Discover, Cirrus and AFFN. ATM machines are located at Airport Terminal and Billeting Front Desk Office.

### **What educational opportunities are available in Diego Garcia?**

Central Texas College (CTC) offers Associate degrees in several areas. The Educational Services Office provides information and testing services. Most personnel are eligible for tuition assistance of up to 100 percent of tuition. Correspondence courses are available from several civilian colleges and universities. The average cost per course varies. The Educational Services Officer coordinates these classes and administers the GED, SAT, ACT, CLEP, and other exams offered under the DANTEs program. Exams are administered by appointment only.

### **What is the length of tour in Diego Garcia?**

Most tours in DG are one year long. Extensions are available for enlisted personnel. Some civilian personnel have been in DG for as long as 15 years.

### **What legal assistance is available on island?**

A wide variety of legal assistance services are available through the NSF Command Judge Advocate. While the CJA's primary role is to advise the Commanding Officer, the Legal Office can assist you with the preparation of your will, powers of attorney, credit advice,

notary services, immigration and many other matters by walk-in assistance or individual attorney appointment.

### **What religious services are offered on island?**

The two base Chaplains provides Protestant and Catholic services. Services are also available for Mormon and Jewish faiths. All military religious services are conducted in the main chapel, Chapel in the Palms. This chapel seats 180 and houses the office and administrative areas for the two Chaplains and their assistants. Religious activities include Christian Fellowship Study, Choir, Bible Study, and Confession and Rosary.

### **What special pay/allowances are granted to Navy personnel stationed in Diego Garcia?**

Housing allowance is not offered to DG DoD/military personnel since quarters are provided. If you are entitled to VJA, a copy of the lease agreement or mortgage paper work and payment information showing the full breakdown of your payment (principal, interest, taxes, etc.) must be presented to the PSD Office. VHA for your family home in CONUS cannot be started or restarted without either of these documents. There is no longer a grace period for VHA. Special incentive pay is provided to Navy personnel assigned to DG. (HDP) hardship duty pay is allowed for service members and (FSA) is also allowed for military member with dependents,

### **If I am assigned to Diego Garcia, will I get tax-free income?**

No, income in DG is not tax-free.

### **What AIS (Automated Information System) equipment should I bring if I'm going to be TAD/TDY in Diego Garcia?**

Bring a government issued notebook/laptop computer with you if you'll be here for a few days or weeks. Only government owned computers can be connected to the network or can be used to process government information.

### **Can I keep my BAH when I transfer to Diego Garcia?**

Yes and no. Single Sailors are not entitled to single BAH because you will occupy government quarters, single Sailors who are entitled to DIF (i.e. pay child support) will receive DIF, however, will not receive single BAH, married Sailors are entitled to draw BAH with dependents.

### **Can I put my car in storage before I transfer to Diego Garcia?**

Yes, however there have been changes to the vehicle storage policy. Prior to 1 July 00, service members were "authorized to store one privately owned vehicle (POV) at government expense when a member is ordered to a permanent duty station where shipment of a POV is prohibited". Beginning on 1 July 00 that policy was changed by RMG 250430Z MAR 97 and JFTR Para 5805 to read "Service members are authorized to procure POV storage service at their own expense. This service may be obtained commercially and a claim for reimbursement filed with the appropriate finance office". This means you can put your vehicle in storage but you must pay the monthly fee and file for reimbursement.

### **What souvenir items are available in Diego Garcia?**

There are free souvenir items as well as souvenirs which cost money. DG t-shirts are given to participants at MWR events. Sea shells are bountiful along the beach. **Coral cannot be taken off island.** The Ship's Store sells souvenirs such as DG t-shirts and sweatshirts. Uniform items such as DG ball caps, pith helmets and belt buckles may only be purchased by military.

## **NCTSFE DET DIEGO GARCIA PHONE NUMBERS**

To call commercial from the U.S. dial 011 – 246 – 370 – XXXX  
DSN dial 315 – 370 – XXXX

OIC	2001
AOIC	2002
OPS	2003
SEA	2913

AMC Paya Lebar (Singapore)	COMM: 65-283-7039
Sling Inn (Singapore)	DSN: 421-2309