



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
717TH AIR BASE SQUADRON (USAF)

MEMORANDUM FOR NEW 717TH AIR BASE SQUADRON MEMBERS

FROM: 717 ABS/CC
UNIT 6940 BOX 45
APO AE 09822-6940

SUBJECT: Welcome Letter

1. I would like to personally welcome you to the 717th Air Base Squadron and Ankara, Turkey. You will find your assignment at the 717th one of the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding tours of your career. Our mission is “to improve the lives of DoD personnel and their families through supporting their seamless transition to a life in Turkey”. As the most diverse squadron in the 39th Air Base Wing, the 717th is charged with providing support to the U.S. Embassy, Office of Defense Cooperation-Turkey. We also offer support to 28 NATO country partners and 22 Partnership of Peace country partners. Our squadron is staffed with 81 personnel and maintains many of the same capabilities found at larger installations. This includes a Commissary, Base Exchange, Traffic Management Office, Housing Office, Gym and an active Air Terminal at the Esenboga International Airport. Our base has a top-rated DoDD School with over 200 students from 30 different countries. Furthermore, the squadron enables combat operations by providing communications support to U.S. and Allied partners.

2. We maintain an informative welcome packet that covers many of the questions you and your family may have and can serve as a handy guide during your tour in Turkey. You can find the welcome packet and learn more about the 717th mission on our public webpage: <https://www.incirlik.af.mil/Units/717th-Air-Base-Squadron/>. As you will see during your review of the welcome packet, there are a host of facilities and services available at 717 ABS and the surrounding community. Our base is centrally located in the city of Ankara. Nearby are exclusive resorts, skiing, professional sports, and entertainment of all types. With a bit of curiosity and a little effort, I am sure you will find your time in Ankara to be a unique and rewarding experience.

3. Again, welcome! If you have any questions or need any assistance please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at DSN: (314) 672-7176 or at 717abs.cc@us.af.mil.

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Commander



Welcome Packet

**717th Air Base Squadron
Ankara, Turkey**

Mission

To improve the lives of DoD personnel and their families through supporting their seamless transition to a life in Turkey.

Vision

Build and maintain a strong relationship with all partners to enable a robust community ensuring a positive US working relationship in Ankara.

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I. 717th Air Base Squadron (ABS) or Ankara Support Facility (ASF) & the Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey (ODC-T)

1. Mission

The 717 ABS provides world-class support to the American military and diplomats stationed/retired in Ankara. While our main customers are from the US Embassy, Office of Defense Cooperation-Turkey (ODC-T) and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) staff, we also provide limited services to retirees in Ankara.

Located in the Balgat neighborhood of the Cankaya district, the ASF is a geographically separated unit of the 39th Mission Support Group, 39th Air Base Wing located at Incirlik Air Base (IAB), Adana, Turkey. The ASF is centered in the Turkish Training & Doctrine Command, or EDOK. Here at the ASF we have the following facilities and services:

- Command Section
- AAFES Base Exchange
- Food Court
- Barber Shop
- Base Civil Engineers
- Installation Chapel
- Multi-Faith Prayer Center
- Community Center
- Community Library
- DeCA Commissary
- DoDEA School (K-12)
- Fitness Center
- Gymnasium
- Housing/Furnishing Office
- Laundry Facilities (free to use)
- Outdoor Basketball Court
- Park Pavilion w/Kitchen
- Running Track
- Soccer Field
- Tennis Courts
- TMO (Household Goods, Customs, Freight)

2. APO Facility – ASF

The hours of operation for the APO are Tuesday-Friday 1000-1600. If you'd like to mail a few items prior to PCS, your sponsor can establish a mailbox, send a copy of your orders, no earlier than 30 days prior to your arrival. Your mailing address will use the following format:

Name (No Rank)
PSC 90, Box XXXX
APO, AE, 09822

3. ODC-T

The 717 ABS does not directly report to the ODC-T; however, we do support their mission and are permitted to use their facilities. The ODC-T is a tenant unit at the Turkish Armed Forces Sports School and occupies approximately 50% of the building. The ODC-T fitness center is equipped with Nautilus machines, free weights, stationary bicycles, treadmills, stair-step machines, sauna, and men's and women's locker rooms with showers. Separate to the ODC-T facility, 717 ABS and ODC-T personnel may use the Turkish Sport School's jogging track and swimming pool. Other facilities and services available at ODC-T include:

- AAFES Shoppette
- AAFES Snack Bar
- Barber Shop
- Dry Cleaning (located in the Snack Bar)
- Laundry (free)
- Military Resource Library
- Weekly Check Cashing and Currency Exchange
- Ground Transportation (Motor Pool)
- Pass & Registration for NATO kimiliks (IDs)
- Office of Special Investigations
- Legal Office

II. Finance and Personnel Actions

1. Overview

We are serviced by the 39 ABS/CPTS Finance Flight and 39 ABS/FSS Military Personnel Flight at IAB. As with every PCS, it is important to ensure all your records are thoroughly reviewed and updated prior to departure from your current installation.

2. Powers of Attorney and Notaries

A Staff Judge Advocate is located in Incirlik, and an Air Force legal representative is available at the ODC-T. Additionally, you can obtain a notary from a designated 717 ABS Notary or at the ODC-T Legal Office. Please note: the 717 ABS Notary can only perform notary actions and is unable/prevented from generating any legal documents.

3. Military Pay

a. DFAS

Before departing your current duty station you should ensure you have access to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) 'MyPay'. This will allow you to access your Leave and Earning Statements, adjust tax withholding rates, managed allotments, review travel vouchers

and manage your contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan. Your local finance office can assist you if needed.

b. Advance Pay

Military members are entitled to receive advanced base pay when ordered to PCS. If you elect to receive advanced payment, you must request this action from the losing finance and accounting office before departure from the permanent duty station. Personnel receiving advance pay in conjunction with their PCS move are advised that collection of advance pay may be prorated over a period of 24 months versus the normal 12 months. It's also worth noting here, that you will be renting housing accommodations on the economy. In order to rent an apartment, most personnel are required to pay a security deposit, one month's rent, and a realtor fee at time of leasing. This typically totals around \$3000-\$5000. While some fees are reimbursable, and you will receive the Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), you'll need to be prepared to pay this money upfront.

4. Entitlements & Financial Services

a. Base Allowance for Housing (BAH)

Military personnel who are leaving family members in the US are authorized to draw BAH. In order to start or verify these entitlements, all personnel must bring an original or certified copy of their rental contract/monthly mortgage statement. This document, along with the BAH documents, will need to be submitted to the Incirlik AB Finance flight.

b. Imminent Danger Pay (IDP)

Military members stationed in Ankara are currently authorized IDP. The IDP entitlement is \$225 a month. IDP is a pro-rated entitlement with a \$7.50 daily rate. You should receive your IDP within a month of arrival.

c. Family Separation

Family Separation Allowances are authorized for unaccompanied military members with dependents assigned to Turkey, since this is a remote assignment.

d. Check Cashing

There is no American banking facility in Ankara. Everyone should establish an account with a stateside banking facility before arriving in Ankara. Personal checks may be written for \$300 over the amount of purchase at the BX, \$25 over at the Commissary at ASF and \$20 over at the AAFES facilities at ODC Turkey. Personal checks can be cashed at the Garanti Bank cashier at the American Embassy, for normally up to \$1,500 per day. In addition, a Garanti Bank check cashing service is provided at ODC Turkey every Wednesday from 1130 to 1300. Checks can be cashed for Lira or USD.

e. Clothing Allowance

Another entitlement you will have while stationed in Ankara is Civilian Clothing Allowance (both

Summer and Winter). Please coordinate with your current Outbound Assignments Counselor to have the Civilian Clothing Allowance remark added to your PCS orders. You'll need this in order to receive the entitlement. If you have any issues, please reach out to your Sponsor.

III. Identification

1. Passports

All US military assigned to Ankara must have NATO travel orders (AF Form 1631) issued PRIOR to departure from their losing base to enter Turkey. DoD family members and civilian employees must have a no-fee passport to enter Turkey. NATO travel orders must indicate Ankara, Turkey as the travel to location, not your new APO mailing address. The expected date of return should reflect your DEROS from Turkey. It is important that your NATO travel orders bear the original signature of the officer authorizing movement in blue ink. When you enter Turkey the Turkish immigration authority will stamp your NATO travel order or official government passport. Safeguard the stamped entry document as you will need it to depart Turkey.

2. Kimlik (ID) Card

All US military members and civilian employees in Turkey must apply for a Turkish Identification card, commonly called a Kimlik Card within 15 days of entry. Note: bring at least two passport-size photos for yourself. These can be obtained at your local military photographic facility. Photos will be used for badges, ID cards, etc. The service member must provide the Pass & ID section located in ODC with Two passport size photos, a copy of PCS orders and completed application obtainable from the Pass & ID office. Pass & ID will process the applications for you.

IV. Clothing Information

1. Military Uniforms

There is very little availability of uniform items in Ankara. There are two AAFES clothing sales and service stores in Turkey: one large one at IAB, and a smaller selection in Izmir. You may also utilize on-line shopping through the AAFES website to obtain uniform items. Personnel should plan accordingly when shipping uniform support items, i.e., rank insignia, ribbons, shoes, etc. Additionally, you are able to special order military clothing items through the Ankara Base Exchange as the ASF; however, expect a minimum of four weeks for delivery.

Air Force personnel uniform requirements follow guidance contained in AFI 36-2903. Every effort should be made to ensure you have adequate uniform items prior to your arrival, to include: Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) Uniform, Service Dress with all your ribbons and medals, and PT Uniform. Other recommended items are lightweight blue jacket, overcoat, all-weather coat, sweater, and mess dress.

Throughout the year, the Uniform of the Day for AF personnel is OCPs Tuesday-Fridays. Business attire is required on Mondays and Civilian clothing is required when traveling to and from work.

2. Civilian Clothing

While you will need to come prepared with appropriate business attire, you'll find plenty of clothing retail stores available to you in Ankara, and usually at very affordable prices.

V. Customs (Beyanname)

Your assignment to Ankara will differ from previous overseas tours you may have had because of a property accountability system that requires the creation of a property inventory or "beyanname." The beyanname is used to regulate property imported duty free to prevent black market resale. It is a written declaration you provide to the Government of Turkey referring to controlled personal effects, you bring into Turkey. Everything that appears on your beyanname must leave the country with you or otherwise be properly disposed of in accordance with Turkish customs regulations. You are responsible for these items, until properly relieved of that responsibility, even if they are lost, stolen, broken, or destroyed. Note: in the extremely rare event items are stolen, obtain a police report to turn into customs.

Beyanname tracked items are furniture and other items including televisions, stereo equipment, air-conditioners, video recorders, video cameras, computers, microwave ovens and computer games. Do not bring stoves, washing machines or refrigerators. They will be provided for you from the Housing Management Office.

You are permitted to import household goods duty-free two months prior and up to six months after your arrival. If you wish to bring personal property in before or after this time, a waiver will be required.

When your household goods (HHG) are delivered, either a customs official or carrier agent will initiate the beyanname during your inprocessing. Your beyanname will list property by brand name, value and serial number. It is important that you carefully check the inventory for accuracy before the customs official or carrier agent departs. It is an official record and even a minor serial number discrepancy could cause problems when you depart the country on your next permanent change of station. Failure to properly account for these items could result in you being retroactively charged import duties and fees. Please note that similarly you will also have to complete a beyanname for your privately owned vehicle before you take possession of it.

It is a good idea to inventory your beyanname items annually and report discrepancies to the local Transportation Management Officer as they are discovered. Correcting a beyanname error can be a time consuming process. Any items discovered shortly before your port call could cause a delay in your departure.

VI. Privately Owned Vehicles and Driving in Turkey

1. Buying a Vehicle Locally

You have the option of buying a car locally. It is legal for Americans to buy cars from Turkish nationals, but in general, it is very difficult to sell a car to a Turkish national unless you originally purchased the vehicle from a Turkish citizen. You can, however, easily buy from, and sell to, other Americans with a NATO Beyanname or Diplomats stationed in Ankara.

2. Licenses

You are able to utilize your valid US Driver's License in the same capacity while in Turkey. While in

many states, it may be legal for Military members to utilize expired driver's licenses, the same clause is not recognized in Turkey. Please ensure your driver's license does not expire during your tour. It is also a good to obtain an international license as well in order to drive elsewhere in Europe as many European countries do not recognize licenses issued in the US. These must be obtained prior to your arrival in Turkey. For an international license please contact your local AAA office.

3. Registering Your Vehicle

If you ship your vehicle to Ankara you must have your DD Form 788 (Private Vehicle Shipping Document), a copy of your vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and a valid driver's license when you go to pick up your vehicle. You will have an opportunity to make on-the-spot claims (if applicable) against the forwarding agent when you receive delivery in Ankara. After taking delivery you may leave your vehicle on the ASF or the ODC-T until it is registered. You will need to obtain Turkish plates before you begin to use your vehicle. After receiving your Blue Book and your tax exemption certificate, it will take approximately 4 to 10 days to get Turkish plates at a cost of no less than \$500.00. Obtaining the Blue Book and tax exemption certificate takes 2 to 4 weeks, so be sure to apply for these at the ODC-t Pass and Registration Office as soon as you arrive. One way to get your vehicle licensed is to do it yourself. This is probably the hardest way, especially if you do not speak Turkish, because of the multi-layered processes involved. The other method is to pay one of the local companies that specialize in this service to do the tasks for you over the same time period. Most people choose the second method.

4. Vehicle Equipment

a. Mandatory

- First-aid kit
- Reflective warning triangle
- Fire extinguisher
- Snow tires and chains. During storms, vehicles without chains are not allowed on some roads.

Note: You should always have your vehicle registration, insurance policy, and driver's license (or copies) in your car. If there is an accident, you will need all 3. All items above are available either at the BX, on the local economy or both.

VII. Housing and Furnishings

717 ABS personnel live on the economy. The 717 ABS HMO will put you in contact with a realtor to show you several apartments for you to choose from. The process could take as little as 5-10 days but has been known to take up to 30 days. If you have any housing questions, please contact the Housing Manager at DSN 314-672-6921 or commercial +90-312-422-6921.

The Furnishings Management Office (FMO) provides washers, dryers, microwaves, stoves, ovens, as well as refrigerators to personnel assigned to the 717 ABS, if needed. Some apartments and homes come with these items already included.

Note: Rent is usually paid at the American Embassy banking facility or transferred through your Turkish bank account.

VIII. Health Care

1. Medical Care

While stationed in Ankara, you will be enrolled in TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) Prime Remote. We have a full-time TRICARE Beneficiary Consultant and Coordinator available to answer any questions. The TRICARE Rep can help set up any appointments and see to proper billing.

TRICARE has worked hard to establish a world-class health care network of physicians and hospitals for service members and their families in Ankara. Since the nearest military medical treatment facility (MTF) is at IAB, your care will be primarily delivered via the Embassy Health Unit, or on the economy.

Network providers agree to accept payment directly from TRICARE and not to expect payment from the patient.

Our Tricare Beneficiary Consultant and Coordinator, will also maintain your medical records, help you coordinate your medical care through International SOS TRICARE, and will thoroughly brief you on local care shortly after you arrive.

2. Defense Eligibility Enrollment System (DEERS)

Your DEERS information must be correct and current to receive medical treatment. While you should make every effort to ensure your DEERS information is current before your departure, updates can be made locally by appointment, or on the MilConnect webpage 24/7

IX. Arrival Procedures

1. Port Call

Send a copy of your orders to your sponsor and inform them of your travel itinerary as soon as possible. Make sure that you are scheduled to fly into Ankara Esenboğa Airport, Turkey. If a weekday arrival is not possible, please notify your sponsor early, as additional time is required to coordinate vehicles and driver support to pick you and your dependents (if accompanied) up for a weekend arrival.

If you are delayed in route, contact your sponsor or squadron leadership (contact information is located in Section XII. Additional Information), as soon as possible.

There are numerous foreign flag carriers that fly directly to Ankara from Frankfurt, Munich and Stuttgart, Germany and also from Vienna, Austria. Currently no U.S. Flag Carrier flies from the U.S. or Western Europe directly to Ankara. Your travel office should book you on a flight to Western Europe on a US Flag Carrier and then to Ankara on a European-based airline. It is advisable to avoid flying through Istanbul as the immigration and customs officials there have little experience dealing with military personnel traveling to Ankara on a permanent change of

station. Additionally, flying through Istanbul requires an inconvenient transit between the international and domestic terminals.

2. Airport Arrival

Most signs at the airport are displayed in Turkish and English. Upon arriving at the Ankara airport, you will disembark and enter the international terminal to process through Customs & Immigration. Have your ID card and NATO travel orders ready. The immigration officer will stamp your NATO travel orders or passport. It is vitally important that you do not lose this stamped document, as you will need it when you depart the country. Failure to provide the stamped entry document to immigration when you depart could result in the levying of a substantial fine upon departure.

After immigration, you will enter the baggage claim area. Do not leave this area until all your baggage has been claimed, for it may be hard to get back in the exit. After you collect your baggage, you will go through a customs checkpoint. The Turkish National Police stationed at this checkpoint may randomly check your baggage.

Assuming you provided your sponsor with the details of your travel itinerary, he or she will meet you immediately outside the terminal and transport you to temporary lodging at a hotel. If your sponsor is not there to greet you, contact your sponsor at the number they provided, or any of the 717 ABS leadership via the contact info located in Section XII.

3. Driving to Turkey

If you are driving to Turkey from Western Europe, check with your local security officer for any security or threat information regarding the countries you will be transiting through, and of any special requirements to pass through the countries you will travel through. Additionally, let your sponsor know of your planned travel itinerary so they can get them approved through the Regional Security Officer at the US Embassy in Ankara. Generally, it is best to avoid driving through the Balkans. It is possible to travel to Turkey via an Italian ferry to Greece and then onward to Turkey. Upon arrival to the border, you will be required to show the following:

- NATO Travel Orders reflecting that you will be stationed in Turkey (ID military cards are not enough)
- Proof of Insurance (“Green Card”). This must be obtained from your auto insurance company before driving into Turkey
- A valid Passport as your car will initially be put on your passport until you receive a NATO beyanname
- Your vehicle engine serial number
- Information on the manufacturer, year of manufacture, and place of purchase of your vehicle

Within two days of your arrival in Turkey you will need to initiate a vehicle beyanname through the 717 ABS Transportation Management Office (TMO) located on the ASF. They will help you

transfer your vehicle from your passport to the beyanname, clearing your passport. Failure to complete this process within 7 days of your arrival could result in you being assessed additional, and substantial processing charges. Until your passport is cleared of the vehicle, you may not use the passport to leave Turkey for any reason.

If you arrive in country with a car carrying high value items (such as televisions, computers, electronics, etc.) it will be annotated on your passport as well. During your in-processing with the 717 ABS TMO you will be advised on how transfer these items from your passport to your NATO beyanname.

X. Transportation

1. Official Business

Obtaining transportation to support your official duties in and around Ankara is not a problem. The 717 ABS maintains a fleet of sedans and vans, which provide transportation for official business. Your sponsor will brief you with details on using the motor pool.

2. Taxis

Ankara has an ample supply of taxis. Fares are very reasonable when compared with those typically charged in the US and Western Europe. Tipping is not required.

XI. Religious Services

An Air Force Chaplain is stationed in Ankara and maintains an office at the ASF. The Chaplain serves the US military community in Ankara. For more information about religious services or worship opportunities, please contact the Chaplain at DSN 314-672-7168 or commercial +90-312-422-7168.

XII. Additional Information

For any additional information please visit the websites below. Welcome again to the 717th Air Base Squadron, Ankara, Turkey. We hope you enjoy your assignment here.

717 ABS public page: <http://www.incirlik.af.mil/units/717thabs.asp>

39 ABW public page: <http://www.incirlik.af.mil/>

717 ABS Leadership Contact Information

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