
Defense Report

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Forcing Military Personnel to Pay for Official Moves is Not the Way to Keep Good People in the Armed Forces

It is patently unfair to require the men and women of the armed forces to deplete their savings, or as is often the case, to go into debt to meet the expenses incurred by government-required moves from one duty station to another. When the employees of a private business concern are transferred to new jobs, they are provided the allowances, services and assistance to cover the costs and make the move physically easier.

This is not the case for the people in the military service. When making a permanent relocation, the average servicemember is reimbursed only one dollar for every four dollars spent out of pocket. Thus, whenever the average mid-grade noncommissioned officer moves, the family's moving expenses are about \$1500 more than the government reimburses the service member. Because of this inequity, over half of the people making military-ordered moves need to borrow, including withdrawal from savings, to meet their expenses.

Coincident with the inadequate reimbursement which severely drains the budgets of all military families, the government pays nothing for the movement of the families of the very junior enlisted persons when they are ordered to a new stateside assignment. For overseas moves, these same junior grade people are allowed to ship a total of only 225 pounds of personal possessions, and in no case does the government reimburse service members for the travel expenses of children two years old or less.

Failure to provide for the movement of the families of these younger service men and women is a hangover from the days of selective service when our two-year draftees seldom encumbered themselves with families. In today's volunteer Army, 60 percent of the soldiers are married and when their government orders them to report to a new duty post, that government should bear the full costs of such a move. The government should not place the burden for military-required moves on the pocketbooks of soldiers whose compensation already lags behind that of their civilian contemporaries by about seven percent.