



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



January 27, 2009

Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Culture Awareness

“Our effectiveness overseas is as dependent on our ability to comprehend and communicate as it is on firepower and technical supremacy.”

– Rear Admiral Dan Holloway, Director, Military Personnel, Training and Education Policy Division

Cultural, historical, and linguistic expertise is key to fostering relationships with our global partners. To support the Navy’s need to engage and interact in different regions and cultures around the world, the Navy has developed many Language Skills, Regional Expertise and Culture Awareness (LREC) programs, including Foreign Area Officer, Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus, Personnel Exchange Program (PEP), LREC training for deploying forces, and intelligence foreign language programs. These LREC programs contribute to our Maritime Strategy and enhance international naval relations by building mutual confidence and increasing interoperability. LREC capabilities are essential for successful maritime security cooperation, maritime domain awareness, humanitarian efforts, and shaping and stability operations.

Navy LREC transformation

- As Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom lessons attest, communication is enabled through awareness of foreign cultures, regional expertise and skill in foreign languages. To enhance communication, the Navy is taking steps to increase LREC abilities across the Fleet.
- The Navy’s target end-state is language fluency and regional expertise for some Sailors and cultural awareness for all.
- The Navy is building sufficient LREC capacity to meet known mission needs, with appropriate levels of expertise and the ability to surge for emergent requirements. Two examples of specific initiatives to increase capacity include increasing the number of Foreign Area Officers and increasing the number of partner countries in the PEP.

LREC support to the Fleet

- Navy’s Center for Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (CLREC), located at the Center for Information Dominance in Pensacola, Fla., provides language and cultural training and products to deploying forces.
- The Regional Security Education Program (RSEP) based at Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif. provides regional threat and historical perspective seminars to deployed Carrier and Expeditionary Strike Groups.
- [Transparent Language \(CL-150\)](#) is hosted on the Navy Knowledge Online website and provides Department of the Navy personnel free access to interactive training in 88 languages.
- The Navy LREC Strategy is available at:
http://www.navy.mil/maritime/Signed_Navy_LREC%20Strategy.pdf

Key Messages

- Naval forces can surge when necessary, but trust and cooperation cannot be surged.
- Navy’s emerging roles and missions have changed the nature of our work and require more emphasis on LREC throughout the fleet.
- LREC capabilities are aligned with operational requirements to support joint and Navy missions, utilizing the total force.

Facts & Figures

- Approximately 3,500 Sailors receive the Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus up to a maximum of \$1,000 per month.
- There are 194 Navy Foreign Area Officers, and the community is on track to grow to 400 by 2015.
- PEP is looking to increase the number of partners from 18 to more than 40 participating countries.
- In 2008, CLREC and RSEP provided training services to approximately 60,000 Sailors.