



**JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5341**



“A Return to Prominence – One Satisfied Customer at a Time”

**CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN
NUMBER 142**

December 2011

The CPAC staff would like to wish everyone a

**Merry
Christmas**

**Sunday,
December 25th**



Implementation of USA Staffing

USA Staffing

USA STAFFING TRAINING. As part of the Department of Defense (DoD) hiring reform initiative, all DoD components will transition to web-based software owned by the Office of Personnel Management to fill internal and external vacancies. During FY 11 and 12, the Department of the Army will be deploying this automated system called USA Staffing (USAS).

The vision of the Army Civilian Human Resource community is to provide a single point of entry for all recruitment and hiring activities. USAS will expedite the process for applicants, HR professionals, and selecting officials through an efficient web-based interface. It

automates the recruitment and hiring process including developing position based assessments, creating and posting vacancy announcements, collecting and reviewing application materials, rating and ranking candidates, issuing referrals, making selections, and notifying applicants of their status throughout the recruitment process.

Mandatory briefings and training sessions have been scheduled to provide information on the new system.

Special sessions designated for MEDDAC/DES are restricted to designated employees. Employees may elect to attend any session held at the Bayou Theatre or Education Center during regular hours on 10 and 12 Jan 2012.

	TUES 10 Jan 12 BAYOU THEATRE EMPLS ONLY	WED 11 Jan 12 EDUC CTR BLDG 660 RM 223- 225 MGRS/ SUPVS ONLY	THURS 12 Jan 12 EDUC CTR BLDG 660 RM 223- 225 EMPLS ONLY	TUES 17 Jan 12 B-2392 DES ONLY	THURS 19 Jan 12 B-2392 DES ONLY
MEDDAC B-285 EMPLS ONLY	0545- 0645	0545- 0645	0545- 0645		
	0830- 1000	0830- 1000	0830- 1000		
	1030- 1200	1030- 1200	1030- 1200		
	1300- 1430	1300- 1430	1300- 1430		
	1500- 1630	1500- 1630	1500- 1630		
MEDDAC ONLY	1730- 1830	1730- 1830	1730- 1830	1800- 1900	1800- 1900

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How Do I Contact someone after I retire?

How Do I Contact the ABC-C After I Retire?

You can still call the Army Benefits Center - Civilian for 180 days after your date of retirement. You will follow the prompts on the [ABC-C telephone menu](#) through the point where you enter your Social Security number (SSN). Once your SSN has been entered, you will be automatically transferred to the next available counselor.

How Do I Contact OPM After I Retire?

Approximately 6 - 8 weeks after you retire, you should receive a letter from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This letter will provide your claim number (CSA number). Once you receive your CSA number, you may contact OPM by calling their nationwide toll-free number, 1 (888) 767-6738. When you call, please have your CSA claim number available; it will speed up your call.

If you wish to speak to a Customer Service Specialist, you should call during OPM's regular business hours, from 7:30 A.M. until 7:45 P.M. (Eastern Time). You may find it easier to reach OPM Tuesday through Friday. If the line is busy, please try your call again. **Calling early sometimes helps.**

The retirement section at OPM may also be reached by email at retire@opm.gov.

The mailing address for OPM is: Office of Personnel Management, Retirements Operations Center, P.O. Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017.



\$\$ PAY CORNER \$\$



Control Your Pay With myPay!

Click on MyPay Key above to be linked to the MyPay System

Or

Type into your browser:

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>



myPay Goes Mobile!

DFAS has announced that many myPay on-line services can now be accessed from mobile devices with a built in web browser such as Android, BlackBerry, iPhone, or other Smartphone, or iPod touch device.

Simply visit <https://myPay.dfas.mil> and start accessing your account anytime, anywhere!

myPay is CAC enabled

Using myPay has gotten easier. Now you can access your myPay account using your Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC).

There's no need to enter your login ID and password. Just click the "DoD CAC Login" button on the home page.

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

The first time you use this feature, you will be asked to confirm your CAC by entering your Social Security Number (SSN). You might also be asked to confirm the email address associated with your CAC.

The next time you visit myPay, just click the "DoD CAC Login" button to go straight to your account.

This enhancement makes logging into myPay quicker, easier and more secure. As the Department of Defense's universal identification standard, CAC is

the most effective way for myPay to verify your identity and prevent unauthorized access.

LOGGING IN FROM HOME?

Don't worry. All myPay users still can access myPay using a login ID and password, regardless of whether you have a CAC or have access to a CAC-enabled computer.

For help with myPay, the Customer Care Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time. The toll-free number is 888-332-7411.

NEW TO MYPAY?

If you are new to myPay, you will be prompted to create a myPay login ID and password so you can log in to your account from home.



Benefits of Participation: **Summary**

Saving for your retirement has many advantages.

- **Tax Deferred Contributions:** Your contributions come out of your pay before taxes and all of your investment earnings are tax deferred.
- **Minimal Cost:** You pay very low administrative and investment expenses.
- **Agency Automatic Contributions:** If you are covered by FERS, you receive 1% of your basic pay each pay period automatically.
- **Matching Contributions:** If you are covered by FERS, you are eligible to receive up to an additional 4% of your pay from your agency.
- **Catch-Up Contributions:** If you are age 50 or older, you can contribute an amount that exceeds the elective deferral limit.
- **Multiple Fund Investment Options:** You have a choice of diversified investment funds or you can select from professionally designed lifecycle funds.
- **Transfer Other Employee Plans Into TSP:** If you already have money in a traditional IRA or another eligible employer plan, you can transfer those accounts into your TSP.

- **Loans:** Under certain circumstances, you may be eligible to borrow from your account.
- **In-Service Withdrawals:** Under certain circumstances, you may be eligible to access your TSP savings while you are still employed by the Federal Government.
- **Multiple Withdrawal Options:** You have a variety of withdrawal options when you leave Federal service.

Employee Contributions — There are no longer any percentage limits on employee contributions to the TSP. TSP contributions are limited only by the restrictions imposed by the [Internal Revenue Code](#).

Elective Deferral Limit (I.R.C. Section 402(g)) — The elective deferral limit for 2012 is \$17,000. For 2011 it was \$16,500. See the Fact Sheet "[Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals](#)."

I.R.C. Section 415(c) Limit — The limit for 2012 is \$50,000. For 2011 it was \$49,000.

Catch-up Contributions — The limit on catch-up contributions for 2012 is \$5,500. If you are at least age 50 (or will become age 50 during the calendar year) and if you have made or will make the maximum amount of employee contributions for the calendar year (e.g., \$17,000 in 2012), you may also make catch-up contributions to your TSP account. See the Fact Sheet "[Catch-up Contributions](#)."

Participant statements are on-line in [Account Access](#) on this Web site. Click on [Your TSP Participant Statement](#) for more information.

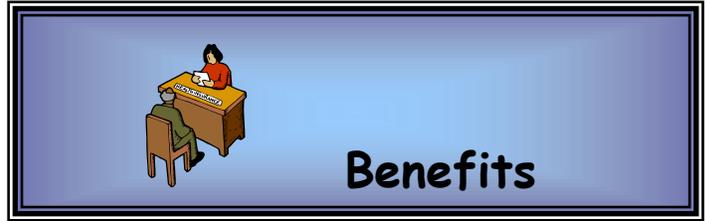
Loan interest rate for new loans is 1.750%.

Annuity interest rate index: 2.500% for annuities purchased in November 2011 and 2.250% for annuities purchased in December 2011. [Click here](#) for historical annuity interest rates.

Your account balance is updated each business day. To access your account balance on this Web site, you will need your TSP 13-character account number and your 8-character [Web Password](#). To obtain your account balance from the [ThriftLine](#), you will need your TSP account number and 4-digit TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Civilian TSP participants who are members of the Ready Reserve — If you are a civilian TSP participant with an outstanding TSP loan and are placed in non-pay status to perform military service, make sure your agency provides the TSP with documentation to certify your status and suspend loan payments. The Internal Revenue Code allows the TSP to suspend loan payments for all

participants placed in non-pay status for up to one year of non-pay. However, participants placed in non-pay status to perform military service for more than one year are authorized suspension of loan payments for the entire period of military service. For more information, see the Fact Sheet [Effect of Nonpay Status on TSP Participation](#).



TSP RATES OF RETURN

Rates of Return were updated on December 1, 2011

(Figures in parenthesis indicate a negative return)

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
Nov 2011	0.14%	0.01%	(0.21%)	(0.51%)	(2.46%)
Last 12 Months	2.51%	5.68%	7.82%	3.78%	(2.67%)

(12/01/2010-11/30/2011)

*The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.

	L Income	L 2020	L 2030	L 2040	L 2050
Nov 2011	0.02%	(0.34%)	(0.49%)	(0.62%)	(0.78%)
Last 12 Months	3.55%	4.40%	4.55%	4.59%	

(12/01/2010-11/30/2011)

*The monthly G, F, C, S, and I fund returns represent the change in their respective share prices for the month. The changes in share prices reflect net earnings after accrued TSP administrative expenses have been deducted. The F, C, S, and I fund share prices also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The TSP is a retirement savings plan for civilian federal employees. The monthly G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns represent the actual total rates used to allocate monthly earnings to participant accounts. Allocations are usually completed by the fourth business day of the month. The returns are shown after deduction of accrued TSP administrative expenses. The F, C, S, and I Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The TSP performance history for the past 12 months can be accessed through the following link:

http://www.tsp.gov/curinfo/annuity_history.html

*****New FEGLI Premiums*****

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is announcing changes in premiums for certain Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) categories. These include changes to premiums for Option B (most age bands), Option C (all age bands), and Post-Retirement Basic Insurance (for annuitants only).

There will be no change in premiums for Basic Employee or Option A coverage.

No Open Season is scheduled at this time.

New Premiums

OPM has completed a study of funding and claims experience within the FEGLI Program. Based on this updated actuarial analysis of actual claims experience, OPM has determined that changes are required to Option B, Option C, and Post-Retirement Basic premiums.

Experience in all Option B age groups, other than the oldest groups (ages 75-79 and 80 and over), shows we should make a slight decrease in premiums. We are reducing premiums for the following age bands for Option B: Under 35, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, and 70-74. The last premium change to Option B was implemented in 2005.

We are also reducing Option C premiums for enrollees under age 45, and increasing premiums for age groups age 45 and over. We are decreasing premiums for the following age bands: Under 35, 35-39, and 40-44. We are increasing premiums for the following age bands: 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, and 80 and over. The last premium change to Option C was implemented in 2005.

The extra premium for Post-Retirement Basic FEGLI will increase for those enrollees who elected the 50% Reduction and No Reduction at retirement. The extra premium for the 50% Reduction election for Basic insurance is \$0.64 per \$1,000 of coverage; and the extra premium for the No Reduction election for Basic insurance

is \$1.94 per \$1,000 of coverage. The last premium change to Post-Retirement Basic FEGLI was implemented in 2003.

Effective Date

The effective date for the new premiums is **January 1, 2012**. Payroll offices must apply the new premiums the first pay period beginning on or after that date.

Printed from website: <http://www.opm.gov/retire/pubs/bals/2011/11-205.pdf>



DAY/DATE	HOLIDAY	Training/Liberal Leave Day
Monday, 10 October 11	Columbus Day	Friday, 7 Oct *
Friday, 11 November 11	Veterans Day	Monday, 14 Nov*
Thursday, 24 November 11	Thanksgiving Day	Friday, 25 Nov *
Monday, 26 December 11	Christmas	Friday, 23 Dec*
Monday, January 2, 2012	New Year's Day	Friday, 30 Dec*
Monday, January 16, 2012	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	Friday, 13 Jan*
Monday, February 20, 2012	Washington's Birthday	Friday, 17 Feb*
Monday, May 28, 2012	Memorial Day	Friday, 25 May*
Wednesday, July 4, 2012	Independence Day	NONE DESIGNATED
Monday, September 3, 2012	Labor Day	Friday, 31 Aug*
		*DESIGNATES TRAINING HOLIDAY FOR MEDDAC



**Army Public Health Nursing
Department of Preventive Medicine
Bayne-Jones Army Community Hospital**

AGE APPROPRIATE TOYS

By Clifford Brannan

I recently went to the store to buy my 3 year grandson a toy racetrack and some cars to play with. As I

was on my way to town I was thinking to myself this won't take long and should be a lot of fun.

When I got to town and found the toy department, I was awe-struck at the thousands of toys to choose from. After my initial shock at all the different toys, I went about my task of finding the racetrack. After two and a half hours of going up and down the aisle I finally found one. It had all kinds of moving parts and cool things to do.

Happy with my find I bought it and headed home. I proudly showed it to my daughter only to be told, "Dad, he is too young for that. It is not an appropriate toy for his age". I then realized that shopping for toys can be confusing and somewhat frustrating for many people if you do not know the guidelines or recommendations set up by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and The Toy Industry Association (TIA).

Most toys sold in the U.S. come with age recommendations. This is based on a number of factors, including the age of the child, developed motor skills and the maturity level of the child for whom you are purchasing the toy. These are not written in stone. Some children mature faster than others and each child is different.

Here are some guidelines from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to keep you child safe and make toy shopping a little easier:

Birth to 1 Year: Children this age do not really play but are learning eye focus and muscle development. They love shapes, colors, and anything that makes sound. Soft toys such as stuffed animals, large balls with lots of color, cloth books and activity gyms with dangling toys on them are very intriguing for this age group. Remember children 3 years and under love to put everything in their mouth. Avoid toys with small parts such as, button eyes or noses as these can become choking hazards. Toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous, posing a risk for being strangled or entangled for infants and small children.

Ages 1-3: Children this age are starting to develop better motor skills and love to be on the go. Their toys should be able to move with them. Walking toys that they can stand behind and push are great choices for this age, Carts with blocks and balls that they can load and unload are also a good choice. Children in this age group also enjoy pounding toys and shape toys. Push cars, trucks and cloth dolls are often favorite toys. Children this age pull, twist and drag their toys. Look for well built toys with no small parts. Avoid any toys with sharp edges, toys that might break easily leaving small parts or toys that have points upon which they can be injured on. As stated above,

toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous, posing a risk for being strangled or entangled.

Ages 3-5: This age group has improved motor skills and enjoys exploring new things. Puzzles with large pieces, balls and boxes with shape matching openings are educational and challenging. Thick crayons and paint sets approved for this age group can also be a great parent and child activity together. Children in this age group love to mimic their older siblings. It is important to teach your older children to keep their toys out of reach of the younger child. The toys you buy your older children may not be safe for their younger siblings.

Ages 5-9: For this age group only “certain toys” will do. They are influenced by TV advertisements and peer pressure. They must have what their playmates have to “be cool” and fit in. Computer games that are approved for their age can teach hand to eye coordination. Science kits are a great learning tool for this age group. Bicycles and a good sturdy helmet can entertain your child during nice summer afternoons. Sports equipment used with the appropriate safety gear can be an excellent way for your child to spend time with his friends while learning team work. It is important to remember riding toys, such as skateboards, scooters, bicycles, in-line skates, etc., goes fast and falls could be deadly. Properly fitted helmets and safety gear should be worn at all times.

For age groups 10 and older refer to the manufactures warnings and recommendations on the toys packaging.

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL...

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission requires toy manufacturers to meet very strict safety standards and to label certain toys that could pose hazards to younger children. Always look for labels that give age appropriate recommendations and use this as a guide. Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear- to you, and, when appropriate, to the child. Look for safety labels including: “Flame retardant/ Flame resistant” on fabric products and “Washable/ hygienic materials” on stuffed toys and dolls. Labels on toys that state “not recommended for children 3 and under” are labeled that way because they may have small parts that may become lodged in child’s nose, ears, or windpipe, which poses a choking hazard to small children. When buying toys for any child they should be appropriate to meet the developmental skills, abilities and interest of your child.

Other safety considerations to keep in mind are: Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages. Dispose of all plastic wrapping and packaging

material at once before they become dangerous playthings. Avoid toys with sharp edges. By regulation, toys designed for children less than eight years of age should be free of sharp glass and metal edges. Balloons can choke or suffocate children, keep un-inflated or broken balloons away from children. Avoid building or play sets with small magnets, death or serious injury can occur if magnets are swallowed. Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired or misuse can shock or burn. Electric toys should only be used by children over eight years old, with adult supervision and cautiously.

If it is decided to use second- hand toys or to purchase from on-line vendors, it is important to verify that the toy has not been recalled. One may refer to the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/> . Second- hand toys and older toys should also be inspected when purchasing and ongoing for breakage and potential hazards, be aware that older toys painted may contain lead, since older paint contains more lead than newer paint. Examine the toys for rust or weak parts that may become hazardous.

No matter how old your child is, safety is the key to ensure your child will have a fun and safe childhood. Protecting children from unsafe toys is the responsibility of everyone. Careful toy selection and proper supervision of children at play helps protect children from toy related injuries.

For more information on toy safety, age appropriate guidelines and toy recall information, go to www.cpsc.gov . Look for product Safety Standards and Guidance/ search for standards and guidance.





Safety Boudreaux's Den

-Holiday Safety-

Holiday Fires

The year end holiday season - Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, New Year's - is a prime time for residential fires. Decorative lights, candles, parties where people drink and smoke, and especially the onset of the heating season all increase the likelihood of fire.

Watch Children

Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach - up high and preferably in a locked cabinet. Teach young children to stay away from candles, fireplaces, and space heaters. Older children should be taught how to light candles or fireplace fires safely, and they should do so only under direct supervision.

Choose Toys Wisely

When buying presents for children, avoid those that could be highly flammable. Make sure all electric toys bear a fire safety label from an independent testing laboratory. Keep electric toys away from Christmas trees and paper decorations.

Give Space Heaters Space

Keep space heaters at least 3 feet (approximately 1 meter) away from furniture, bedding, clothing, walls and other things that can burn. Always use the proper fuel for liquid-fuel space heaters, vent them, and refill them only in ventilated areas when they are cool. Make sure the type of heater you are using is legal in your area and has a label from a safety laboratory.

Party Safety

Use only flame-retardant or noncombustible materials for costumes and decorations. Provide smokers with large, deep, non-tip ashtrays and, keep an eye on anyone who is drinking and smoking. Empty ashtrays often and wet their contents before dumping them. Check cushions and furniture for smoldering butts.

Holiday Lights

Be sure all decorative lights, indoor and outdoor, bear the label of an independent testing laboratory. Replace any light sets that have cracked or frayed cords or have loose connections.

Do not overload outlets or run extension cords under carpets, across doorways, on or under heaters, or pinched behind furniture. Unplug all decorative lights before leaving home or going to bed. Never use electric lights on a metal Christmas tree.

Fireplaces

Have your chimney inspected by a professional at least once a year and cleaned if necessary. Always use a fire screen, and burn only materials appropriate for a fireplace. Never burn trash or paper in a fireplace; burning paper can float up a chimney and onto your roof or into your yard. Remove ashes in a metal container, and never store them in your home.

Candles

Always put candles in non-tip candleholders before you light them, and do not burn candles near combustible decorations or displays. Keep candles well away from curtains and other combustible articles, and never put candles in windows or near exits. Never leave candles burning, unattended, or within the reach of small children. Extinguish candles - wetting the wicks - before you leave a room or go to bed.

Christmas Trees

Choose a fresh Christmas tree. If you are not cutting your tree yourself, buy one that is not shedding its needles. Cut your Christmas tree trunk at fan angle and put it securely in a large, deep, non-tip stand. Set up your tree away from exits, fireplaces, and heat sources. Be sure your tree has water constantly. If you use an artificial tree, be sure that it is labeled as being flame-retardant.

For A Safe Enjoyable Holiday, Follow These Fire Safety Tips

1. Space Heaters Need Space
2. Be Watchful of Dangers to Children
3. Buy Only Safe Toys
4. Choose a Fresh Tree
5. Check Out Lights
6. Take Care with Candles

BRAIN TEASER

A barrel of water weighs 20 pounds. What must you add to it to make it weigh 12 pounds?

Answer on page 10



*Equal Employment
Opportunity*

What is Hanukkah?

The events that inspired the Hanukkah holiday took place during a particularly turbulent phase of Jewish history. Around 200 B.C., Judea—also known as the Land of Israel—came under the control of Antiochus III, the Seleucid king of Syria, who allowed the Jews who lived there to continue practicing their religion. His son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, proved less benevolent: Ancient sources recount that he outlawed the Jewish religion and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods. In 168 B.C., his soldiers descended upon Jerusalem, massacring thousands of people and desecrating the city's holy Second Temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing pigs within its sacred walls.

Led by the Jewish priest Mattathias and his five sons, a large-scale rebellion broke out against Antiochus and the Seleucid monarchy. When Matthathias died in 166 B.C., his son Judah, known as Judah Maccabee ("the Hammer"), took the helm; within two years the Jews had successfully driven the Syrians out of Jerusalem. Judah called on his followers to cleanse the Second Temple, rebuild its altar and light its menorah—the gold candelabrum whose seven branches represented knowledge and creation and were meant to be kept burning every night.

According to the Talmud, one of Judaism's most central texts, Judah Maccabee and the other Jews who took part in the rededication of the Second Temple witnessed what they believed to be a miracle. Even though there was only enough untainted olive oil to keep the menorah's candles burning for a single day, the flames continued flickering for eight nights, leaving them time to find a fresh supply. This wondrous event inspired the Jewish sages to proclaim a yearly eight-day festival.

The Hanukkah celebration revolves around the kindling of a nine-branched menorah, known in Hebrew as the hanukiah. On each of the holiday's eight nights, another candle is added to the menorah after sundown; the ninth candle, called the shamash ("helper"), is used to light the others. Jews typically recite blessings during this ritual and display the menorah prominently in a window as a reminder to others of the miracle that inspired the holiday.

In another allusion to the Hanukkah miracle, traditional Hanukkah foods are fried in oil. Potato pancakes (known as latkes) and jam-filled donuts (sufganiyot) are particularly popular in many Jewish households. Other Hanukkah customs include playing with four-sided spinning tops called dreidels and exchanging gifts. In recent decades, particularly in North America, Hanukkah has exploded into a major commercial phenomenon, largely because it falls near or overlaps with Christmas. From a religious perspective, however, it remains a relatively minor holiday that places no restrictions on working, attending school or other activities.

<http://www.history.com/topics/hanukkah>

What is Kwanzaa?

Kwanzaa is a seven-day holiday that was designed and founded by Dr. Maulana Karenga, the chair of Black Studies at California State University at Long Beach. The holiday has strong African roots and is a celebration of African American family, community, and culture.

In 1965, a deadly riot broke out in the predominantly black Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, leaving 34 people dead, 1,000 injured, and \$40 million worth of property destroyed. Dr. Karenga, a former black activist, was deeply disturbed by the devastation and searched for a way to overcome the despair he felt had gripped the African American community in the riot's aftermath. He founded Us, a black cultural organization, and looked to Africa in search of practices and concepts that might empower and unite the nation's African American community. Inspired by Africa's harvest celebrations, he decided to develop a nonreligious holiday that would stress the importance of family and community while giving African Americans an opportunity to explore their African identities.

Karenga combined aspects of several different harvest celebrations, such as those of the Ashanti and those of the Zulu, to form the basis of Kwanzaa. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase *matunda ya kwanza*, which means "first fruits" in Swahili. Each family celebrates Kwanzaa in its own way, but celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry readings, and a

large traditional meal. On each of the seven nights, the family gathers and a child lights one of the candles on the *kinara*, or candleholder, then one of the seven principles is discussed. The principles, called the *Nguzo Saba*, are values of African culture that contribute to building and reinforcing community among African Americans. These values include unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, economic cooperation, purpose, creativity, and faith. An African feast, called a Karamu, is held on December 31. Today, Kwanzaa is celebrated by millions of people of African descent all across the United States and Canada.

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-first-kwanzaa>

These articles were taken from The History Channel’s website at <http://www.history.com>. For more information, please visit the website or call the Fort Polk EEO office at 337-531-1802/1804.



Did You Know?

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer was invented for a US firm's Christmas promotion in 1938.

Gold-wrapped chocolate coins commemorate St Nicholas who gave bags of gold coins to the poor.

US scientists calculated that Santa would have to visit 822 homes a second to deliver all the world's presents on Christmas Eve, travelling at 650 miles a second.

The first Christmas card was designed in 1843 by J.C. Horsley.

The poinsettia is a traditional Christmas flower. In Mexico (its original birthplace), the poinsettia is known as the "Flower of the Holy Night"

The first postage stamp to commemorate Christmas was issued in Austria in 1937.

December 2011 On Cyber Patrol

Tis the Season to Watch for Scams



This holiday season, don't fall prey to a criminal's cyber scam. Protect yourself by following a few simple guidelines when shopping online and giving to charities. Actually, these rules are good all year round as well.

Step up your online safety procedures

Watch out for unsolicited emails offering deals that are too good to be true. There's a good chance they are phishing scams designed by bad guys going after your Personally Identifying Information (PII). Consumer advocates also suggest paying on-line with a credit card instead of a debit card. You are then protected under federal law if you don't receive the merchandise you purchased. Also, you can dispute any unauthorized charges when you use a credit card. Additionally, you should always keep documentation of any orders made on-line, and frequently review your credit card and bank accounts for any unusual activity. Finally, keep an eye out for any missed bills or statements which could potentially indicate your account has been taken over.

When it comes to charities, do your research

Sometimes being generous requires a little legwork, but it is worth the time and trouble to protect yourself and to ensure that the cause or organization you wish to support actually receives your money. Online resources such as CharityNavigator.org, which rates charities according to their financial stability, accountability and transparency, can be used to research an organization before committing to a donation. Also, the Consumer Fraud Reporting website is a good resource you could utilize in your decision making process. Another option is to contact your state attorney general's office to see if a charity is legitimate. If you really want to dig down into a charity, you can also contact them and request their IRS Form 990. This government form provides detailed financial information regarding their charity, and any legit organization should be happy to provide it.

Protect yourself from bogus or predatory solicitations.

Even if you are on the "Do Not Call" list, charities are not bound by those rules. If you receive a call requesting donations, and are interested in possibly making a donation, ask them to send you their information through the mail to allow you to look into their organization more thoroughly. Though, make sure you shred or tear up any charity mailings that you choose to ignore, as identity thieves aren't above digging through trash to find documents with your personal information.

Also, this is really the time of year to be on the lookout for phishing scams and malware infested emails. Avoid all emails from charities you don't normally support. Even if it is a charity that you support, it is always safer to use a stored link that you know is safe or search out the website

that your computer's security software has approved. (You DO have virus protection, firewalls and browsing security software, right? If not, get yourself an early holiday gift.)

The safest thing to do is to contact the charity of your choice on your own. If you are looking for ideas on who to donate to, there are online resources that can help you to identify legitimate charities in need of your contributions. Just remember, you must take charge of your online activities and charity efforts to ensure you have a cyber-safe holiday season.

BRAIN TEASER ANSWER

Holes.



December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Month

December is annually designated as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (often referred to as 3D Month). Every day, almost 30 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. This amounts to one death every 48 minutes, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Some 3D tips to keep in mind.

- Prior to any drinking, designate a non-drinking driver when with a group.
- Don't let your friends drive impaired. Take their keys away.
- If you have been drinking, get a ride home or call a taxi.
- If you're hosting a party where alcohol will be served, remind your guest to plan ahead and designate their sober driver; offer alcohol-free beverages; and make sure all guests leave with a sober driver."

What is Spice?

“Spice” is a mixture of herbs and spices that is typically sprayed with a synthetic compound chemically similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredients in marijuana. Known on the street as Black Mamba, Bombay Blue, Fake Weed, Genie and Spice. The drug is usually smoked in joints or pipes and was sold legally until 2011. The new law criminalizes “entire groups” of chemicals that could be used to make the pseudo-marijuana. This change came after the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) determined the substance to be un-safe.

Psychological effects are similar to those of marijuana and include paranoia, panic attacks, and giddiness.

Physiological effects include increased heart rate and blood pressure. Spice appears to be stored in the body for long periods of time and the long term effects on humans are not fully known.

Supervisory Development Course

Effective 1 October 2011, the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA) announced the cessation of support of Command Training Programs. As such, the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center will no longer conduct the on-site HR for Supervisory Courses.

The Supervisory Development Course is now available on-line. ALARACT 375/2011 SUPERVISOR DEVELOPMENT COURSE (SDC) ENROLLMENT:MANDATORY SUPERVISOR TRAINING FOR ALL SUPERVISORS (MILITARY AND CIVILIAN) WHO SUPERVISE ARMY CIVILIANS, DTG: 031248Z OCT 11. This message provides instructions for enrolling in the new on-line Supervisor Development Course. This course is required for all supervisors (military and Army civilian) of Army civilians. The course is available for new enrollments now. New supervisors must take this course within one year of appointment to a supervisor position. Current supervisors must take the course as refresher training every three years.



ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

If you have any suggestions on topics or issues that you would like addressed in future bulletins, please call **531-1847**.

Suggestions will be reviewed and addressed if at all possible.

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DONALD R. MALLET
 Director, Civilian Personnel
 Advisory Center