

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



*“ARMY CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS--  
HELPING LEADERS MEET THE MISSION”*

CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN  
NUMBER 21

FEBRUARY 2000

## **WE'RE BACK!**

It has been some time now since you last saw an employee information bulletin. In fact, it has been since January 1998, when we published DCP Information Bulletin Number 20. This was a special bulletin which contained all the information you may or may not have wanted to know about the extreme changes that Regionalization of the delivery of civilian servicing throughout the Department of the Army would cause. When those changes did occur they were as extensive as we projected they would be and, in fact, introduced a learning curve and workload that interrupted our production of the Information Bulletin. Total implementation of Regionalization was 100% completed with the standup of the Western Region in August 1999. Practically everyone affected by Regionalization, and that includes just about everyone who works for the U.S. Army, has weathered the initial shock and mastered the learning curve. We now find ourselves enabled to move to the next level of endeavor which once again permits publishing the Information Bulletin. This is a good thing in that we will now be able to inform the Fort Polk workforce of further changes looming on the Regionalization horizon as well as other topics of interest. The bulletin will now be known as the CPAC Information Bulletin. This, of course, is because Regionalization caused the Directorate of Civilian Personnel to transition to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center. But, you knew that already, didn't you?

## **FORT POLK CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER (CPAC)**

### **CORPORATE CORE**

Our mission, vision, values, and guiding principles make up our corporate core. They identify what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. Our corporate core is intrinsically linked to the Installation's mission, vision, and values.

## **MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK**

Provide an advanced level of joint training for military forces under tough realistic conditions. Mobilize, prepare, train, and deploy units worldwide, while taking care of soldiers, civilian employees, retirees, and families.

### **CPAC SUPPORTING MISSION**

Provide commanders and managers the advisory assistance and services necessary to obtain, compensate, develop, utilize, and retain an effective workforce of highly qualified civilians needed to meet the mission.

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## VISION

### JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK

-Home of the world's premier joint combat training center for light forces-continually modernizing to train units into 21st century.

-Army's center of excellence for training, sustaining, mobilizing, and deploying combat ready soldiers and units.

-An enduring "Best Hometown" in partnership with our surrounding communities, where our military and workforce are proud to live and serve.

### CPAC SUPPORTING VISION

-A technically competent, confident, high performance team of Civilian Human Resource professionals that is strategic in its approach, and committed to providing products and services that are attentive to the needs of customers, responsive to their request, timely in their delivery, courteous when direct dealings are necessitated, and always of the highest quality.

The team understands that:

- People are our business.
- Quality Service is our pride.
- Effective Partnerships is our delivery mechanism.
- Exceeding customer expectations is our aim.
- Adding value is our constant focus.
- Helping leaders meet the mission is our ultimate goal.
- Becoming the Army's best is our continuing quest.

More simply put, "Civilian Human Resource Professionals Partnering In Service To Help Leaders Meet The Mission."

## VALUES

### JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| -Teamwork   | -Respect/Dignity |
| -Commitment | -Trust           |
| -Competence | -Duty            |

## CPAC SUPPORTING VALUES

The Army and JRTC and Fort Polk values apply to the total installation and help define our character. While we adopt them all, we highlight the following because they are intrinsically linked to our vision

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| -Competence | -Pride           |
| -Commitment | -Trust           |
| -Loyalty    | -Respect/Dignity |
| -Teamwork   | -Integrity       |

## CPAC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

--Do the right thing, the right way, for the right reasons, in a timely manner. That is, do what you know to do without being told and what you say you are going to do, when you say you are going to do it, and do it right the first time.

--Generally, the processing of Command Actions, Pay Actions, PERSACTIONS, and Labor Management Employee Relations Actions will receive the highest of priorities.

--All work must be in compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and must be autographed with quality.

--Work together as a team.

--Carry your fair share of the load.

--Be accountable and accept responsibility for actions.

--Work to resolve customer concerns and complaints at the lowest level.

--Dispose of attitudes that do not facilitate teamwork or work accomplishment.



**CIVILIAN PERSONNEL  
ADVISORY CENTER  
SERVICING ASSIGNMENTS**

TEAM A: Nora Fletcher (Leader)  
Retha Richard  
Bobbie Vaziri  
Augustine Ross

Activities Serviced: MEDDAC, DENTAC,  
VETCOM, DCFA, DRM, DOIM, G1/AG, OPS GRP,  
CMD GRP, DOC, CPAC, PAO, WARRIOR BDE,  
IG, CHAP, PMO, SJA, EOP, SAFETY, LAO, CID,  
ATSC, AMS TMDE SPT.

TEAM B: Bill Chance (Leader)  
Diane King  
John Miller

Activities Serviced: DOL, FORSCOM,  
MAINT FAC, G3/DPTMS, NCO ACAD, DPW.

Telephone for both Teams: 531-4020  
Fax for both Teams: 531-1851

**OTHER CPAC TELEPHONE  
NUMBERS**

**DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

Donald Mallet (Director) 1840/2532/1842  
Suzette Hird 6611

**PERSONNEL SYSTEMS SUPPORT**

Janette Nolde 1847  
Kathy Romero 1848/4603  
Cheryl Hoyt 1847/4548  
Thomas Winn 4023

**COMPENSATION/RETIREMENT**

Yvonne Johnson 4881/2835  
Charles Cramer 4118  
Pam Mallard-Carmicle 8754

**TRAINING**

Tami Culbreath 7060/1856  
Fax: 6334

**PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE**

Sherri Collier 4020/4708

**CIVILIAN PAY LIAISON**

Jackie Rubar 8757

**NAF DIVISION**

Brigitte O'Toole 6331/4955  
Petra Day 6331/4955

Nicole Boyd 6331/4955  
April Swisher 6331/4955

**JOB HOT LINES**

Internal 6414  
External 2971

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**THE MODERN DCPDS**

Just when we think we have mastered our working procedures, methods, and technology, something new and innovative takes its place and we have a new learning cycle to conquer. It's about to happen again.

In 1999, the Department of Defense began using a new, state-of-the-art, Human Resources (HR) information system to process personnel actions and maintain workforce data. The new system is currently being referred to as the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (modern DCPDS).

The modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System capitalizes on the capabilities of new technology to improve and simplify:

- Processing personnel actions;
- Accessing civilian workforce information; and
- Delivering civilian personnel services.

Designed to be a single information system for all DoD civilian employees, the modern DCPDS supports appropriated fund, nonappropriated fund, and local national civilian personnel operations.

It replaces a number of personnel information systems and applications in use today across DoD, including the current Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (also known as the legacy DCPDS) and some of the Personnel Process Improvement (PPI) Suite tools.

The critical functionality of the replaced systems remains, but now resides in a more advanced, robust system that better supports our business needs.

## THE MODERN DCPDS (CONT)

The modern DCPDS matches new technology with business needs. It provides a better tool to do the job.

### A BETTER TOOL TO SUCCEED IN A REGIONALIZED ENVIRONMENT

The modern DCPDS supports regionalization of services by quickly and efficiently flowing data across organizations and geographic locations. The system operates via a network environment (client-server, multi-tiered, distributed data platform in an open-systems environment). At the core is a relational database. The modern DCPDS replaces the current HR information system and significantly improves the flow of, and access to, up-to-date information for managers and personnel professionals.

Personnel actions are electronically routed, and easily tracked, between:

- Manager desktops;
  - Local personnel offices; and
  - Regional personnel service centers.
- Personnel information for civilian employees flows to Component regional databases that link to a central DoD database (from which aggregated Component and DoD information can be extracted).
- Managers and personnelists can access up-to-date information -- ranging from individual queries to summary workforce reports -- from their desktop computers.
- Information flows to outside organizations, via interfaces, for such purposes as payroll and centralized reporting (e.g., DFAS, OPM).
- Redundant and unnecessary processes (e.g., duplicate data input) are eliminated.

### A BETTER TOOL FOR MANAGERS

Without leaving their desks, managers are able to easily, electronically:

- Initiate personnel actions and send them to the servicing personnel office.

- View authorized information about the positions and employees they supervise.
- Track the status of personnel actions.
- Create, modify, and update position management and classification information.
- Initiate training requests for employees.
- Retrieve information for their organizations and print reports, either through numerous standard reports or through other query tools.

### A BETTER TOOL FOR PERSONNELISTS

The modern DCPDS:

- Is easier to use. It features a standard Windows format with easy point-and-click maneuvering. Words, pick-lists, edits, and on-line help replace the codes, manual table look-ups, and guess-work of the legacy DCPDS.
- Reduces duplicative data-entry and redundant operations. With its relational database, data already input flows and displays wherever it is used, and multiple systems update automatically.
- Reduces reliance on paperwork. Electronic routing and instant on-line access to up-to-date information are important features of the modern DCPDS.
- Reduces inquiries from managers about the status of actions and requests for employee information and reports (because managers can get the information directly).



## **A BETTER TOOL FOR DOD ORGANIZATIONS**

As a single source of HR information, the modern DCPDS is a powerful tool for DoD installations, Component headquarters, and the Department overall. Its reporting tools:

- Support organizational decision-making and reporting requirements.
- Provide up-to-date workforce data -- organization-specific or DoD aggregate.
- Reduce the need for time-intensive "data calls" and "data roll-ups."

## **A BETTER TOOL FOR EMPLOYEES**

Employee advantages from the features of the modern DCPDS include:

- Quicker response to many inquiries.
- Potential for direct access to personal data.
- Future ability to update some personal data.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **When is the modern DCPDS scheduled for use?**

#### **Fall/Winter 1999\***

- Army Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) at Ft. Richardson, AK
- Navy Human Resource Service Center (HRSC) at Silverdale, WA
- Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) at Randolph AFB, Tx

#### **Spring 2000**

- All other DoD personnel offices (deployment schedule available through each Component)
- Fort Polk currently scheduled for May 2000

\*Initial deployment is to three regions (sites listed above) for Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E). Following the successful completion of OT&E and system certification, the system is being deployed to all remaining DoD personnel offices at approximately

one region per pay period. Deployment to the remaining regions begins in the spring of 2000.

### **Who is developing the modern DCPDS?**

There are many people working together to develop the modern DCPDS.

The Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS), Regionalization and Systems Modernization Division (Reg/Mod) is the program management office responsible for ensuring the system is developed to meet the functional performance requirements of the personnel community and DoD. The DoD personnel specialists in CPMS Reg/Mod are the "functional developers" who work with technical experts to develop, test, and deploy the system.

The Air Force Personnel Center, Directorate of Personnel Data Systems, is the Central Design Activity (CDA) with responsibility for oversight of the design and development of the modern DCPDS. The CDA staff are the technical experts who work with the CPMS Reg/Mod in deploying the modern DCPDS to OT&E sites.

Oracle Human Resources is the core commercial off-the-shelf product being used to develop the modern DCPDS. Oracle Corporation technical experts -- who are concurrently developing Oracle HR for other Federal government clients -- are working with the CDA and CPMS Reg/Mod to customize the product to meet DoD and Federal requirements.

Military Departments and Defense Agencies (Components) have been actively involved in defining system requirements and testing. Their involvement continues with training users and assisting in the deployment of the modern DCPDS.

### **How do the system developers understand our needs?**

Personnel specialists and personnel systems specialists from across DoD have been involved from the very beginning of the development effort. An executive Committee of Component principals and the Component Program Managers for Regionalization and Systems Modernization meet monthly with CPMS to discuss development status and issues. Many additional Component representatives have been involved in defining specific functional requirements and testing the system.

### How is the system being tested?

Each unit of software is tested individually to ensure it performs as required. Next, there is integration testing, to ensure that all pieces perform together as required. Then, before deployment, the entire system is tested in a simulation environment, on the same platform and network system that is used in the field. Transactions, reports, and interfaces are all carefully tested. Personnel specialists from across DoD are involved in testing.

Finally, the system is tested in an operating environment at three regional human resources service centers. These are the three OT&E sites -- Army CPOC at Ft. Richardson, AK; Navy HRSC at Silverdale, WA; and AFPC at Randolph AFB, TX. After OT&E is completed, the system is certified for deployment to all remaining regions.

### How are users trained?

Users receive hands-on training a few weeks before the new system is deployed to their office. CPMS Reg/Mod has developed a user guide and training materials, and is conducting Train-the-Trainer workshops for Component trainers. Component trainers conduct user training and assist new users on-the-job. In addition to training and user guides, the modern DCPDS has on-line help to provide user assistance during system operation.

You can find out more by contacting the:

Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service  
Regionalization & Systems Modernization Division  
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200  
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

(703) 696-1760 or DSN 426-1760

<http://www.cpms.osd.mil>

## UNDERSTANDING THE HATCH ACT MAY HELP YOU PROTECT YOUR JOB

The 1939 Federal Hatch Act restricted the ability of federal, District of Columbia and state government employees to participate in political activities.

Congress amended the Hatch Act in 1993 to permit more political activity by federal workers, although it did not change the provisions applying to state and local government employees.

With the 1993 amendments, many federal employees (including Department of the Army civilians) are now permitted to take an active part in political management or political campaigns.

However, violating the Hatch Act restrictions can result in severe penalties, including the loss of one's job; so government employees who are interested in politics should make sure they understand what they may and may not do.

The Hatch Act permits federal employees to: be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections, register and vote as they choose, assist in voter registration drives, express opinions about candidates and issues, contribute money to political organizations, attend political fundraising functions, attend and be active at political rallies and meetings, join and be an active member of a political party or club, sign nominating petitions, campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances, campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections, make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections, distribute campaign literature in partisan elections, hold office in political clubs or parties.

The Hatch Act forbids federal employees to: use official authority or influence to interfere with an election, solicit or discourage political activity of anyone with business before their agency, solicit or receive political contributions (this may be done in certain limited situations by federal labor unions or other employee organizations), be candidates for public office in partisan elections, engage in political activity while: on duty in a government office, wearing an official uniform, using a government vehicle, wear political buttons on duty.

Certain political activities may also be criminal offenses under title 18 of the U.S. Code, which deals with (among other things) conflicts of interest.



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Following are some frequently asked questions received by the Office of Special Counsel, the agency responsible for investigating reports or complaints concerning Hatch Act violations, followed by the answers:

**Q:** Can I make a contribution to the campaign of a partisan candidate, or to a political party or organization?

**A:** Yes. A federal employee may contribute to the campaign of a partisan candidate, or to a political party or organization.

**Q:** I use my personnel car to deliver mail for the Postal Service. Can I have a political bumper sticker on the car?

**A:** Yes. A Postal Service employee who uses her private vehicle to deliver mail can have a political bumper sticker on the vehicle, as long as the bumper sticker is covered while the employee is on duty.

**Q:** If I have a bumper sticker on my personal car, am I allowed to park the car in a government lot or garage, or in a private lot/garage if the government subsidizes my parking fees?

**A:** Yes, An employee is allowed to park his or her privately owned vehicle with bumper sticker in a government lot or garage. An employee may also park the car with bumper sticker in a private lot or garage for which the employee receives a subsidy from his or her agency.

**Q:** Can I help organize a political fundraiser?

**A:** Yes. An employee is allowed to organize a fundraiser, including by supplying names for the invitation list, as long as he or she does not personally solicit, accept, or receive contributions.

**Q:** Can my name appear on invitations to a political fundraiser as a sponsor or point of contact?

**A:** No. An employee's name may not be shown on an invitation to such a fundraiser as a sponsor or point of contact.

**Q:** Can I speak at a political fundraiser?

**A:** Yes. An employee is allowed to give a speech or keynote address at a political fundraiser, as long as he or she is not on duty, and the employee does not solicit political contributions.

**Q:** If I'm going to speak at a political fundraiser, what information about me can be printed on the invitations?

**A:** An employee's name can be shown as a guest speaker. However, the reference should not in any way suggest that the employee solicits or encourages contributions.

Invitations to the fundraiser may not include the employee's official title, although an employee who is ordinarily addressed with a general term of address such as "The Honorable" may use, or permit the use of, that term of address on the invitation.

**Q:** Can I attend a state or national party convention? If so, in what capacity?

**A:** Yes. A federal employee may serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a state or national party convention.

**Q:** If I run as a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election, does the Hatch Act allow me to ask for and accept political contributions?

**A:** An employee who is a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election is not barred by the Hatch Act from soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions for his or her own campaign.

**Q:** May I distribute brochures for a political party to people arriving at a polling place on Election Day?

**A:** Yes. An employee may stand outside a polling place on Election Day and hand out brochures on behalf of a partisan political candidate or political party. (Reminder: Local ordinances frequently specify required distances from polling places.)

The answers to other questions about allowable political activity by federal employees can also be found in Hatch Act regulations in Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Please visit the Freedom of Information Act reading room at [www.fmcs.gov/foia/foiareadm.htm](http://www.fmcs.gov/foia/foiareadm.htm)

## WE'VE BEEN ASKED

The CPAC has been asked:

**Q.** "I want to volunteer to assist with local civic and school activities. Can I be given time off to participate in such activities without having to take leave?"

**A.** Volunteering for citizen service is one of the most important ways we can demonstrate that we care for and are responsible for one another. Federal employees have a tradition of being generous with their time and talents and have made positive contributions to their official responsibilities. Employees should be aware of the various scheduling flexibilities available should they choose to participate in volunteer activities.

### **a. SCHEDULING WORK AND TIME OFF**

(1) **GENERAL.** The Federal personnel system provides departments and agencies with considerable flexibility in scheduling hours of work and time off. Departments and agencies are encouraged to make appropriate use of this flexibility in responding to requests for changes in work schedules or time off to allow employees to engage in volunteer activities, while giving due consideration to the effect of the employee's absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity.

(2) **ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES.** Departments and agencies have the flexibility to approve a variety of work arrangements for employees seeking to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours.

**ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES (AWS) -** Flexible or compressed work schedules may be established for employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal working hours. Employees represented by an exclusively-recognized union may participate in a flexible or compressed work schedule "only to the extent expressly provided under a collective bargaining agreement between the agency and the exclusive representative." (See 5 U.S.C. 6130 (a) (2).)

**CREDIT HOURS -** Credit hours are those hours within a flexible work schedule that an employee elects to work in excess of his or her basic work requirements (e.g., 80 hours in a pay period for a full-time employee) so as to vary the length of a workweek

or workday. Employees may use credit hours to fulfill their basic work requirement, thereby gaining time off from work to pursue volunteer activities and for other purposes. If a department or agency authorizes credit hours under its flexible work schedules program, the maximum amount of credit hours that may be carried over from one pay period to another is 24 hours.

(3) **SCHEDULING TIME OFF FROM WORK.** Employees seeking to participate in volunteer activities during basic working hours may be granted annual leave, leave without pay, compensatory time off, or, in very limited and unique circumstances, excused absence, as discussed below. (Employees may also be permitted to use accumulated credit hours under flexible work schedules, as discussed above.)

**ANNUAL LEAVE -** When employees request annual leave to perform volunteer service, departments and agencies should be as accommodating as possible in reviewing and approving such requests consistent with regulations in 5 CFR part 630, subpart C, Annual Leave, and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

**LEAVE WITHOUT PAY -** At the discretion of the agency, leave without pay (LWOP) may be granted to employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal working hours. As with annual leave, OPM encourages departments and agencies, whenever possible to act favorably upon requests by employees for LWOP to perform volunteer services. However, LWOP is appropriate for extended periods only if the employee is expected to return to his or her job at the end of the LWOP. Agencies should review their internal policies on LWOP and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

**COMPENSATORY TIME OFF -** Department and agencies may approve requests from employees for compensatory time off in exchange for performing an equal amount of time in irregular or occasional overtime work. For employees under flexible work schedules, departments and agencies may approve employee requests for compensatory time off for both regularly scheduled and irregular or occasional overtime work.



**EXCUSED ABSENCE (administrative leave)** - Each department or agency has discretion to excuse employees from their duties without loss of pay or charge to leave. OPM advises that the granting of excused absence for volunteer activities should be limited to those situations in which the employees' absence, in the department's or agency's determination, is not specifically prohibited by law and satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

(1) the absence is directly related to the department or agency's mission;

(2) the absence is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the head of the department or agency;

(3) the absence will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position; or

(4) the absence is brief and is determined to be in the interest of the agency.

(4) **PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SHARING.** Part-time employment or job-sharing may also be appropriate for employees who request such arrangements in connection with performing volunteer service. Regulations in 5 CFR part 340 provide additional information on part-time employment and job-sharing.

#### **b. LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS**

Agency officials are reminded that conditions of employment (such as work schedules) of bargaining unit employees may not be changed without notifying the exclusive representative and bargaining unit on the matter to the extent required and/or permitted by laws, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. Moreover, bargaining unit employees may participate in flexible or compressed work schedules "only to the extent expressly provided under a collective bargaining agreement between the agency and the exclusive representative." (See 5 U.S.C. 6103 (a) (2) .)

#### **c. PROHIBITION OF COERCION**

While managers, supervisors, and other agency officials may encourage employees to become more involved in volunteer activities, 5 U.S.C. 6132 provides that employees may not be coerced for the purpose of interfering with their legal rights under flexible and compressed work schedules. (Also see 5 U.S.C. 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices.)

#### **d. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND HATCH ACT RESTRICTIONS**

Departments, agencies, and employees are reminded that conflict of interest laws and related regulations governing outside employment for compensation also apply to Federal employee who engage in volunteer activities. Hatch Act restrictions apply to employees who are on duty, as well as to those on unpaid leave.

#### **e. USE OF GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

Employees may not use Government facilities and equipment for other than authorized purposes. (See 5 CFR 2635.704.) Employees may consult their agency ethics officials or Office of General Counsel for information about what may be authorized by their agency or department.

#### **f. AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERISM**

Departments and agencies are encouraged to recognize their employees who volunteer their skills to help others. However, providing cash or paid time off undermines the volunteer spirit in which these individuals done their personal time and efforts for the benefit of others. Nevertheless, granting appropriate citations and letters of appreciation, or small mementos such as a "You Make a Difference" pin or mug, would demonstrate the agency's pride in the various beneficial services its employees render to the community. In addition, departments and agencies can publicize employee volunteer activities in internal publications, such as newsletters, bulletins, and magazines. Departments and agencies should make the effort to acknowledge and say "Thank You" to those whose personal efforts make their communities a better place to live and work and who contribute something extra to the well-being of others.

Fort Polk directorates and activities are encouraged to avail themselves of opportunities to support employee participation in Volunteer Activities.

## TSP RATES OF RETURN

Rates of Return as of February 7, 2000.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent the actual total rates of return used in the monthly allocation of earnings to participant accounts. The returns are shown after deduction of accrued TSP administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees. The most current C, F, and G Fund rates of return are shown below. Percentages in ( ) are negative. RETURNS ARE UPDATED AFTER THE MONTHLY ALLOCATION OF EARNINGS, USUALLY BY THE 7TH BUSINESS DAY OF THE MONTH.

	<u>C Fund</u>	<u>F Fund</u>	<u>G Fund</u>
January 2000	(5.03%)	(0.34%)	0.56%
<u>Last 12 Months</u> * (2/1999 - 1/2000)	10.25%	(1.88%)	6.13%

\*The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis. Additional information on the TSP can be obtained by accessing the Army Civilian Personnel Online at <http://cpol.army.mil> home page, clicking on PERMISS, then click on the Master Index of topics, click on T, click on Thrift Savings Plan. For the monthly returns for the last 12 months, see the C, F, and G Fund Monthly Returns Fact Sheet. For the monthly returns from January 1988 through December 1998, see Historical Rates of Return. If you have questions about the information presented on the Rates of Return page, read Questions about Rates of Return.

## LEAVE YEAR QUIRK'S RESULTS

This year is one of the unusual years in which most federal employees will have 27 pay periods rather than 26. The reason is that the leave year started January 2 and because of the fall of the calendar will end on January 13, 2001 (some agencies are on a cycle that started January 9 and will result in the usual 26 pay periods). A leave year with 27 pay periods has no effect on the way leave accrues, says the Office of Personnel Management. The bottom line is that employees will accrue an additional four, six or eight hours of annual leave (depending on their length of employment) than in a 26 -period leave year. Note:

Employees must schedule any "use or lose" annual leave before December 3.

Despite the leave year quirk, most employees will have 26 paydays this year because of the way pay cycles fall. But some will have 27. Those employees will receive their pay on their usual cycles; employees can receive more or less than their annual rate of basic pay in a given calendar year.

For those getting 27 paychecks in a calendar year, the additional check may cause the allowances, differentials, bonuses, awards and similar cash payments, when added to basic pay, to exceed certain aggregate limits (Executive Level I-currently \$157,000). In that case, payments may be deferred and paid in a lump sum at the start of the next calendar year. Similarly, the extra pay might cause certain employees to exceed the annual maximum earnings limitation on premium pay (GS-15, step 10-varies by locality) that mostly affects law enforcement officers. In that case, agencies can alter work schedules so that the maximum isn't exceeded.

## ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

If you have suggested topics or articles you would like addressed in future bulletins, submit them to Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, 7041 Radio Road, ATTN: Bill R. Chance or Nora Fletcher, Fort Polk, LA 71459-5341, telephone extensions 531-4020/4708, and, if at all possible, suggested topics will be addressed.

DONALD R. MALLET  
DIRECTOR, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL  
ADVISORY CENTER

