

JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER AND FORT POLK
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER
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*“ARMY CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS--
HELPING LEADERS MEET THE MISSION”*

CPAC INFORMATION BULLETIN
NUMBER 22

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**EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF
SERVICE (E/MSS)**

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is implementing a new service for civilian employee payroll customers called the Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) application. All Army civilian employees will receive a letter from DFAS, which will provide their PIN to use to access E/MSS. The letter will be similar to the following:

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is pleased to announce a new service for use by our civilian employee payroll customers, the Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) application. Your use of E/MSS is completely voluntary.

E/MSS allows you to access your current civilian pay information and make selected changes directly to your DFAS pay record using Internet or Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) technology. E/MSS provides an alternative to sending paper forms to your Customer Service Representative (CSR). It will provide you with accurate and timelier information. Again, use of E/MSS is purely voluntary. The paper-based process will remain available if you do not have access to a personal computer or do not wish to use E/MSS.

**YOUR PERSONAL
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:**

You have been assigned a new, temporary Personal Identification Number (PIN) displayed below. Use of this PIN, together with your Social Security Number (SSN), assures that only you can view and make changes to your account. Please note that if you have multiple jobs as a civilian, and your servicing Human Resource Office (HRO) has assigned you a pseudo-SSN, you will receive a separate PIN for each job/SSN.

**IMPORTANT CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION**

Your Temporary Personal Identification Number (PIN) is:

Keep this PIN NUMBER in a secure location! This temporary PIN is valid for 120 days from issuance.

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TO ACCESS E/MSS

IVR - Touch Tone Toll Free (CONUS ONLY):

1-877-Dod-EMSS (1-877-363-3677)
Commercial: (912) 757-3119

**** Internet - <http://emss.dfas.mil> ****

or from DFAS Web Site- <http://www.dfas.mil>

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E/MSS FACTS & FEATURES

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

You can

- Change your Federal Tax Withholding Status and Exemptions
- Start/Stop/Change Your Direct Deposit Allotments
- Change Your Correspondence Address to which DFAS sends your Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) and other information (available via the Internet option, only)
- Update Your Electronic Funds Transfer Address for Net Pay

In future phases, additional transactions will be available to you via E/MSS.

ACCESSING E/MSS: When you first access E/MSS, you will be asked to enter your SSN and your temporary Personal Identification Number (PIN). You should then customize your PIN to a number of your choice. You may use this same PIN for accessing any other DFAS pay systems to which you are associated. On-line help will be provided to assist you. A special toll free number (listed below) has been established to assist you if you wish to have PIN capabilities disabled, if you have problems accessing E/MSS, or need other PIN assistance.

HOW E/MSS WORKS: After you access E/MSS, menus will guide you through the transactions. E/MSS will display your current pay information. You can then provide the changes you want to make to that information. E/MSS will edit the input

and ask you to confirm that the system has captured what you want to change. Finally, the system will tell you what pay period the change will be reflected on your LES.

WHAT YOU NEED: In addition to your PIN, to use the web version of E/MSS, you will need a Personal Computer (PC) with one of the following industry-standard browsers:

- Netscape Navigator Version 3.0, version 4.01 or higher
- Microsoft Internet Explorer version 4.0 or higher
- Netscape communicator

If your PC, or any PC with internet access, does not have one of these browsers, you will not be able to use the web version E/MSS. However, the E/MSS IVRS phone capability is still an alternative for you.

SECURITY: E/MSS Internet transmissions are secured using 128-bit encryption and Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology. Data encryption measures make E/MSS a secure means for you, the customer, to update your own pay-related information at your convenience.

QUESTIONS?: The E/MSS web-site has Frequently-Asked-Questions (FAQs) and answers. If you want to review information about E/MSS before you access the system, additional FAQs are posted on the DFAS informational web site at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

E/MSS HOURS OF AVAILABILITY:

E/MSS is available to you 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, except for short periods of system maintenance. E/MSS will display a message when the system is not available.

For E/MSS and PIN assistance, call toll free 1-800-390-2348, commercial (216) 522-5122

or DSN 580-5122 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. EST.

**OTHER NEWS - ELECTRONIC
LEAVE AND EARNINGS
STATEMENTS:**

A separate feature to be offered in the near future will allow you to receive your pay statements (Leave and Earnings Statement - LES) via e-mail.

**HAVE YOU VISITED
PERMISS LATELY?**

If you haven't recently logged in to the Personnel Management Information and Support System (PERMISS), you may do so at the <http://cpol.army.mil> (scroll down and select PERMISS). It contains the latest general information in all functional civilian personnel areas (e.g., disciplinary actions, sample letters, collective bargaining issues, leave issues, job interviews, retirement, etc.). It's a wonderful place to go to start a search, as it will link you to other sites and resources. The best way to use the system is to log in whenever you have a civilian personnel question. Should you not locate the answer to your question, or have suggestions for improvements, complete the embedded anonymous survey. All comments are reviewed, and PERMISS is updated accordingly.

One example of the excellent information available in PERMISS can be found in the benefits section. It includes, but is not limited to, retirement, health benefits, life insurance and death benefits. Also available are linkages to more references (e.g. Army Regulations).



**DESIGNATIONS OF
BENEFICIARIES**

Are you sure that, if you die, any money payable would be paid to the person you want? It only takes a few moments to protect your survivors. Failure to take that time can have disastrous consequences for them.

A "designated beneficiary" will always receive any money payable, if the designation is in writing, witnessed by two people (other than the person(s) you designate), and received prior to your death. Once you've designated someone as your beneficiary, that person remains your beneficiary--no matter what family or personal life changes you experience--UNLESS you cancel or change your designation in writing.

If you don't designate a beneficiary, money payable on your death will be paid as specified in law under the Federal Order of Precedence, as follows:

- First, to your spouse. If none, then to
- your children, (or descendants of deceased children) in equal shares. If none, then to
- your parents, in equal shares. If none, then to
- the executor or administrator of your estate. If none, then to
- the next of kin according to the laws of the state in which you live when you die.

If you're satisfied with the above order of payment for all benefits payable, you don't need to designate a beneficiary.

If you're not satisfied, you should complete a designation of beneficiary form for each benefit that you want paid out in a different order. There are four separate forms for the purpose, as outlined on the next page.

1. **Form TSP-3: Federal Retirement Thrift Savings Plan.** This is the form for your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and is used to designate how you want your TSP account paid out if you die.

2. **SF-1152: Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee.** Use this form to name the person(s) you want to receive your unpaid salary and lump sum annual leave payable if you die.

3. **SF-2823: Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance.** Use this form to designate the person(s) to receive your Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) benefits, both standard and any optional coverage(s) in which you are enrolled.

4. **SF-2808: Civil Service Retirement System OR SF 3102: Federal Employees Retirement System.** Use this form to tell the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to whom to pay your contributions in the Retirement Fund. These will be paid as a lump sum only if no one is eligible for a monthly survivor benefit based on your service. The retirement system to which you belong determines which form you should use. **NOTE:** If you filed a designation of beneficiary under CSRS and later transferred to FERS, that designation is no longer valid and you must file a new designation under FERS.

If you're not sure what you've filled out in the past, the designations described above are filed in your Official Personnel Folder (OPF) in your servicing Civilian Personnel Operations Center--EXCEPT the SF 2808, which is filed at the OPM and the TSP-3 which is filed at the TSP Service Office. Take a few minutes to review your designations--otherwise someone from your distant past may get the benefits due at your death!

You can write to OPM to request a copy of a previously-filed SF 2808. The address is:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Retirement Operations Center
P.O. Box 45
Boyers, PA 16017-0045

However, it is easier simply to submit a new form, properly signed and witnessed, to OPM. The new form will supersede any that you may have filed in the past. Ask your servicing Civilian Personnel Advisory Center for a blank copy.

If you filled out a designation in the past, but you now prefer the Federal Order of Precedence, fill out a new designation of beneficiary for that benefit, and write "Cancel prior designations." This still needs to be signed, witnessed, and received prior to death to be valid.

Many employees think that if they have a current will, they need not worry about designations of beneficiaries. That is not true. A will does not determine who receives Federal benefits, unless an executor named in your will is either designated as your beneficiary or is entitled to receive the benefits under the Federal Order of Precedence.

Another common mistake many employees make is assuming that when they divorce and/or remarry, their designation of beneficiary is automatically changed. It is not. If a beneficiary has been designated, it remains in effect until the designation is cancelled or superseded.

All employees should be aware of the problems that can result either from completing a designation of beneficiary form and forgetting about it, or never completing one at all. You should, therefore, review your designations periodically. A designation of beneficiary in no way affects your survivors' eligibility for monthly survivor annuity benefits--their eligibility depends entirely on your length of service,

coverage under a retirement system (CSRS or FERS), and your spouse, former spouse and/or children meeting certain eligibility requirements.

For further information concerning designations of beneficiaries, contact a member of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center staff at 531-4881 or 531-2835.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

The CPAC has finally updated its Web Page. It is located at <http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/CPAC>. Among other things, it provides information about the CPAC; a CPAC servicing directory; and employment information, including links to USA Jobs, OPM, CPOL, and the CPOC. At your fingertips are our local FP regulations and pamphlets pertaining to civilian personnel, as well as, Civilian Personnel Bulletins and CPAC Employee Information Bulletins. Under "What's New" is our New Employee Handbook. Check it out and be sure to let us know what we can do to improve. After all, the site was designed with you in mind.

FASCLASS II

Remember FASCLASS I, our Fully Automated System for Classification? This tool was the web-based automated position classification records system that (a) automated position descriptions (PDs); (b) provided a searchable automated Master File of PDs; (c) constructed automated organization charts/tables reflecting current position and personnel information from DCPDS; and (d) maintained automated records of competitive levels and competitive area logs. It contained nearly 133,000 PDs with the conversion process about 86% complete throughout Army. Well, as a part

of our continuing effort to improve, provide a better service, and add value, we are pleased to announce that FASCLASS II is almost here. FASCLASS II is a centralized system with new features such as the ability to view organizations via hierarchical line diagrams and access respective positions and PDs. It has an archive function and will incorporate the current PD Library within its database. It will maintain all of the current functionality of the PDL, including the quality assurance review and approval of PD's by MACOMs for use Army wide. Not only this, it will allow managers to do organization "what if" scenarios and analysis and will create a PD in FASCLASS for transmission to the CPAC and CPOC. Finally, FASCLASS II will interface with the Modern System and is password protected. We are working frantically to allow you to access it from a link on our home page. We aren't there yet. Until then, continue to access it from CPOC's home page.

MODERN SYSTEM UPDATE

Here's the latest. The deployment date has been accelerated. We will deploy our new, improved and user friendly automated personnel system on 7 July 00. Our CPOC partners are working frantically to clean-up the database, build the required supervisory hierarchies, process the pipeline actions, plan for the personnel moratorium and prepare for the massive training effort. You will be pleased to know that we are ahead of the game to the extent that we can be, thanks to the DOIM and our directorate staffs. However, as with any new system, we will have some transition challenges. Among them are the transition from the legacy system, shut down of that system and training of the CPAC/CPOC staffs and our customers. Please know that as we commence the transition, there will be a

blackout period during which we will not process any personnel actions. We will advise you of this period as soon as we have been advised. It is important to note that actions in the pipeline, but not received by the CPOC in time to complete processing, will drop out of the system upon deployment. This means that the action will have to be resubmitted after transition to the new system. With respect to training, we will employ the "just-in-time" approach. That is, we will train as close to the deployment date as time will allow so that we derive maximum benefit from the training. Tentatively, the CPAC is scheduled to receive its training during the period 7-8 June 00. We will then aggressively seek to train our admin partners, DRM partners, and approving officials prior to 7 July 00. Of course, we will consult you regarding the schedule upon receipt of the final implementing guidance from our CPOC partners. As usual, we will ask our admin partners to help us train the other users of the system within your organization and will have our Rapid Response Team available to assist upon request. This approach worked really well when we transitioned to our current system and we're persuaded that it will work again with your help. So, please excuse the temporary inconvenience as we make permanent changes designed to provide you more efficient and effective service. More specificity to follow as developments are known.

27 PAY PERIODS IN LEAVE YEAR 2000

The Office of Personnel Management is reminding Federal workers that the year 2000 will have 27 -- rather than -- 26 pay periods. While the extra pay period will not translate into an extra check for most employees, it could affect many workers'

"use or lose" leave rights at the end of 2000. For most employees, 2000's leave year runs from 2 Jan 2000 to 13 Jan 2001. This means employees will continue to accrue leave into next January; however, the 30 day maximum carryover of annual leave remains in effect. According to OPM, employees who accrue leave during the year's last pay period that exceeds the maximum carryover amount should be sure to schedule any "lose or use" annual leave before 3 Dec 00.

FEEA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE NEARS

The deadline for applying for the Federal Employee Education & Assistance (FEEA) Fund 2000-2001 Merit Scholarship Program is approaching for civilian federal employees and their dependents. All completed applications for the scholarship program must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2000. Applicants can also send a self-addressed, stamped, #10 business-size envelope to:

FEEA Scholarships
8441 W. Bowles Ave. Suite 200
Littleton, CO 80123-9501

To download applications, go to:
<http://www.feea.org>.

To participate in the merit-based scholarship competition, students must submit an application package which demonstrates superior academic achievement, a dedication to community service, clarity of thought as expressed in the required essay, as well as a positive character reference from a teacher, counselor, supervisor, coworker or community leader.

**2000 FEDERAL PERSONNEL
GUIDE-- FREE COPY!**

FED Technology is offering all active Federal employees a chance to receive their own free copy of the 2000 Federal Personnel Guide. This 230-page handbook covers every aspect of your Federal career.

Some of the topics covered in the Guide are:

- *Pay
- *Benefits
- *Leave
- *Health Insurance
- *Medicare
- *Social Security
- *Life Insurance
- *Veterans Benefits
- *Thrift Savings Plan
- *Disability
- *And much more!

To take advantage of this limited time offer, you need to reserve your copy before March 31, 2000. To request your copy of the Guide, go to: <http://www.fedreport.com>.

Publications and events offered by commercial sources are published for the convenience of the Bulletin reader and are not endorsed by the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center or Department of the Army

TSP RATES OF RETURN

Rates of Return as of March 8,2000.

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>
February 2000	(1.93%)	(1.22%)	0.53%
<u>Last 12 Months*</u> (3/1999 - 2/2000)	11.57%	(1.07%)	6.29%

*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 1999, 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.

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. MALLETT
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ADVISORY CENTER

