



THE NUGGET

NEWSLETTER FOR THE ARMY PACIFIC REGION
PACIFIC REGION CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS CENTER,
FORT RICHARDSON, ALASKA

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Deverette Williams, Acting Director

This is a turbulent time for personnel within the Pacific Region. Situations are changing in our professional and personal lives daily. It is important for you know where to find the information necessary to assist you in making these life-impacting decisions.

There are several changes to automated systems and processes scheduled for the upcoming months. The Pacific Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center is working closely with other regions within the Army and the Department of Defense to ensure that the products are fully tested and users trained for these new applications.

Currently, Federal Employees have an option to elect a Long Term Care Insurance Program. We are also approaching the open seasons for Thrift Saving Plan and Health Benefits enrollment and changes.

Several of our customers have been impacted or soon will be impacted by Commercial Activities Studies or other reorganization efforts. I feel it is important (not only for them, but also for all employees) to ensure the accuracy of their personnel data. There are automated systems in-place that will afford employees the opportunity to review their data and to provide information to make the appropriate changes.

Please take a few moments to review this important information. I think you will find it particularly useful and timely.

What Can The ABC-C Do For You?

The Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) is a centralized service center for Department of Army civilian employees. You can access the ABC-C by telephone via a toll-free number, or through the Internet. The ABC-C automated systems are available almost 24 hours a day and benefit counselors are available to assist employees between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. CST.

The ABC-C can assist you with the below listed benefits. We also process actions associated with your benefits:

- Life insurance
- Health insurance
- Thrift Savings Plan
- Death/Survivorship
- Retirement estimates
- Retirement
- Buy-back of military and/or civilian time for retirement purposes



As a new employee, the ABC-C is where all of the benefits elections are made after you have started working.

As a current employee, the ABC-C is where you can change your benefits elections when necessary.

During open seasons for benefits, you can create transactions for changes, view those pending changes, and view the new elections after the effective date.

You can also inquire about paying for military or civilian time that you wish to count towards retirement – and, you can estimate retirement benefits on the web site using the calculators. (Once you have decided to retire, you will forward your application to the ABC-C for processing.)

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The ABC-C Web Site

Our web address is <https://www.abc.army.mil>. You can also reach us via the CPOL web site by clicking on the “links” button on the CPOL home page. Using the ABC-C web site is the ideal way to review your personal benefits information using your Personal Identification Number (PIN).

For example, you can look into upcoming open seasons, initiate changes when necessary, and plan your retirement. Or, you can obtain general information on health and life insurance, retirement estimates, and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

To better serve you during peak hours, ABC-C counselors are now available from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST

You can also access information helpful to new employees, and you can use a diagram that will help you use our web site or telephone system.

You can also let us know how we’re doing by completing the survey.

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Logging Into The Secure Area Of The Web Site

To log into the secure area of the web site, you must have a Point-of-Entry (POE) password. You create your own password, and you can change it at anytime as necessary. (NOTE: Your POE password will expire after 90 days if you do not change it from the date it was created.)

To create your POE password, you will need a recent SF50 (Notification of Personnel Action) so you can enter information that will be verified against the database. Once your information has been verified, you will be prompted to enter a new POE password; and, you will go to the next page automatically. You then must click on “Army EBIS” to reach the secure area.

Once you are in the secure area, you will use a 6-digit PIN, created by you, along with your SSN to view your personal information, or to create transactions

and work through retirement calculators. This PIN is the same PIN that you used on the ABC-C telephone system. (NOTE: If you have not created a PIN or do not remember it, just click on “PIN” and follow the on-screen prompts.)



Once you have a PIN, you are ready to explore the web site and create transactions.

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Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season

The 2002 FEHB Open Season will be held from November 11, 2002 through December 9, 2002. During this time, employees may elect to enroll or make changes to their existing FEHB coverage. The effective date of FEHB 2002 Open Season elections for Department of the Army civilian employees will be January 12, 2003. Employees can also find in depth information about FEHB and the upcoming open season at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/hr.htm>.

Open Season elections may be made via the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) using the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) at <https://www.abc.army.mil>. With a workforce of over a quarter of a million employees we do not have a single name to provide to all employees. A staff of benefits counselors is available to assist employee Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST by calling 1-877-276-9287. Employees who have not already established a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for the IVRS and EBIS must do so before utilizing the system. The EBIS has an additional security requirement to establish a Password at the Point of Entry Screen. Establishment of both the PIN and Password are completed immediately and easier if the employee has their most recent LES or SF 50 available.

During the 2001 FEHB open season all 20,792 elections and enrollment changes were made electronically.

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FEHB and Premium Conversion



Premium Conversion allows Federal employees to use pre-tax dollars to pay health insurance premiums, thereby reducing individual taxes. However, participation in Premium Conversion may impact opportunities to enroll, make changes in existing FEHB enrollments or disenroll. An employee's participation in premium conversion is automatic unless waived by the employee. Participation is reflected in the remarks section of the Leave and Earnings Statement by showing the amount of pre-tax dollars saved, typically the amount of the FEHB premium for that pay period. More information regarding Premium Conversion may be found at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehbm/index.htm>. Information about waiving

Premium Conversion may be found at the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) website at <https://www.abc.army.mil> and selecting “Information” then “Health”.

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Open Season for the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program is here!!

July 1 - December 31, 2002

Will you need long term care? Approximately 60% of people who reach age 65 will need long term care at some point in their lives. 40% of people receiving long term care are between ages 18-64 (Source: Conning & Company, Long-Term Care Insurance, Baby Boom or Bust? 1999)

Are your finances at risk? The national average annual cost of nursing home care is \$52,000* and is expected to rise to \$190,600 by 2030** Home health care costs are high as well. The national average annual cost of home health care is \$20,000 (that's \$18/hour*, five hours a day, five days a week for a home health aide) and is expected to rise to \$68,000 by 2030**

** MetLife Market Survey of Nursing Home and Home Care Costs, April 2002*

*** "Can Aging Baby Boomers Avoid the Nursing Home?", Stucki, B. and Mulvey, J., American Council of Life Insurers, March 2000, page 15*

Did you know that many financial advisors recommend long term care insurance as part of a client's total financial plan? Whatever your age, long term care can be one of the best and most economical ways to help pay for long term care, should you ever require it.

"Don't let the high cost of long term care jeopardize your savings - or burden the lives and finances of those who care about you most! Find out if the new Long Term Care Insurance Program is right for you!" - Kay Coles James, Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
4 Great Reasons to Learn More!:

The Program Is Sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Backed by Two Leading Insurers
You Can Save with Group Premiums
Care Provided by Family and Friends Is Covered
You're Covered in the U.S. and Abroad
Act Smart! Get a FREE Open Season Information Kit and application.

Call 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337) (TDD 1-800-843-3557) or visit <http://www.ltcfeds.com/>
Log on to <http://www.ltcfeds.com/> to see a listing of on-site Program Educational Meeting meetings near you.

Please note that the application for Open Season is different from Early Enrollment. Only Open Season Applications may be used to apply.

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program Sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and Offered by John Hancock and MetLife. The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program is administered by Long Term Care Partners, LLC, and offered by: John Hancock Life Insurance Company, Boston, MA 02117 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, NY 10010

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Thrift Savings Plan Open Season



The next Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) open season begins October 15 and ends December 31, 2002. (This is a change from previous fall open season dates). During the open season, eligible civilian employees may begin contributing to the TSP or change the amount of current contributions to the TSP. Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System may elect to contribute up to 13 percent and Civil Service Retirement System covered employees may elect to contribute up to 8 percent of basic pay. All civilian TSP Open Season elections and changes must be transacted through the Army Benefits Center - Civilian via the Interactive Voice Response System at 1-877-276-9287 or the Employee Benefits Information System at <https://www.abc.army.mil/> and selecting "Benefits Change". Employees may also view their most recent TSP contribution election via these systems.

Employees may only make contribution allocations (designate which of the five TSP investment funds money should be placed in) or interfund transfers (change the investment of money already in the TSP account) through the TSP website at <http://www.tsp.gov/> by selecting "Account Access" or by calling the ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777. More information about the TSP may be found in the booklet, "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees" available on the TSP website by selecting "Forms and Publications" under the "Civilian" column.

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College Payment Programs

The following College Payment Programs are offered by the government. Ensure you request training approval (using DD Form 1556) prior to enrollment. Requests for reimbursement of expenses after you have enrolled in a program can not be granted.

Civilian Academic Degree Program



A recent change in the Department of Defense policy now allows Federal agencies to pay for civilian employees to obtain college degrees. Prior to this change agencies could only pay for degrees when it was necessary to assist in recruiting or retaining qualified employees in certain shortage occupations. The new law has removed that restriction.

The new law states that degree payments are authorized as "part of a planned, systematic, and coordinated program of professional development endorsed by the Department of Defense". In general terms, the academic degree training

should support the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. No additional funds have been allocated to support this program so each organization has to support the program with their own funds.

More detailed information on this change in policy can be found on CPOL at this link:

http://cpol.army.mil/library/armyregs/memos2/tld_102601.html

Individual Career Program Opportunities



Many career programs also offer to pay tuition and related college costs for civilian employees to attend university training as part of their individual career development plans. These university programs are usually limited to part-time academic training that supports mission-related competencies identified in the Army Civilian Training Education and Development Systems (ACTEDS) plans.

DA centrally funds for all expenses to attend university training to include registration fees, books, and other related expenses. Additional information on these career opportunities can be found in the ACTEDS catalogue at this link: <http://cpol.army.mil/train/catalog/toc.html>

Tuition Assistance Programs



In addition to the two programs above many organizations also have their own tuition assistance program to help their employees pursue further self-development opportunities. Tuition assistance is usually limited to training that develops specific professional and job related skills that support mission requirements. Ask your supervisor about the availability of this program in your organization.

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Personnel Announcements

Ms. Ann McFadden, has been selected as the new Chief of Policy and Program Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Headquarters, Department of the Army, effective 6 October 2002. Ann served as the Civilian Personnel Director for the U.S. Army Pacific in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel in Hawaii. Her previous assignments have included: Assistant Director of Personnel, Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army, Heidelberg, Germany, and several assignments at Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Ms. Jeanne Scharch, currently the Civilian Personnel Director for DOD Dependent Schools in Europe, has been selected as the Director of the Pacific Region CPOC at Fort Richardson, Alaska. She has held numerous leadership positions in the Pacific and in Europe and has had two tours in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy in Congressional Affairs and personnel management program evaluation. Ms. Scharch will report to the Pacific Region on November 3, 2002. In the interim, **Ms. Deverette Williams** will be servicing as the CPOC Director.

Mr. Ric Beresford, will return to the position of Civilian Personnel Director at HQ, USARPAC/G1 on January 27, 2003. Until then, **Mr. Jeff Okazaki** has been selected as the Interim Director of CPD.

Ms. Lee Lipscomb, Personnel Staffing Specialist, Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), Assistant G-1, Civilian Personnel Policy, Policy and Program Development Division, Reengineering, retired on September 28, 2002. She has over 33 years of Federal service that began with the Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1968. Lee has been involved in Army civilian human resources at the installation, major Army command, HQDA, at home, and overseas. Her tours took her to the Military Traffic Management Command in Falls Church, Virginia; the Joint United States Military Advisory Group in Bangkok, Thailand; Frankfurt Civilian Personnel Office, Germany; Civilian Personnel Center, Alexandria, Virginia; Pacific Civilian Personnel Operations Center, Ft. Richardson, AK; and back to HQDA, Alexandria, Virginia. She has devoted most of her career serving as a functional expert in the development, deployment, and use of Army's automated personnel support systems.

Mr. Jessie Lipscomb, Personnel Management Specialist, Chief, Staffing, Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), Assistant G-1, Civilian Personnel Policy, Policy and Program Development Division, retired on September 28, 2002. Jessie has over 35 years of Federal service that began with the Air Force at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. He served on active duty with the Army and then returned to work as an Army civilian Computer Programmer with the Computer Systems Command, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. His first exposure to Army civilian human resources was in the development and deployment of Standard Civilian Personnel Management Information System. He moved to management positions at HQDA where he was responsible for the development, management, and deployment of Army personnel systems. He served in the Pacific Region as the Chief of Information Management Systems and Training where he continued to influence the direction of personnel automation. He is highly regarded throughout the Army and the Department of Defense for his visionary leadership in fostering positive change through automation.

Ms. Dora S. Johnson, Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, retires on September 30. She has over 35 years of federal service that began as a Communications Technician at Fort McClellan. She worked at Fort Gordon and at Fort

Benning performing communications work. She then spent 2 years in Japan in the communications field. Upon her return from Japan, she went back to Fort Benning and performed communications and supply work until she was selected as a Personnel Management Specialist Intern at Fort Benning. Upon graduation from the intern program, she worked in Management-Employee Relations at Fort Benning for 2 years before moving to Hawaii. After working as a Communications Technician and an EEO Specialist, she went back into the personnel field as a Employee Relations Specialist. This eventually led to her being selected as a senior Employee Relations Specialist and then a Supervisory HR Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center.

Mr. Tony Whitehouse, will be the new director at the West CPOC. Tony will be reporting to his new assignment late in December.

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Civilian Tracking System (CIVTRACKS)

Requests for Personnel Actions (RPAs) are not always required or submitted when civilian employees change duty locations temporarily, for example when they go TDY or are detailed in support of military contingency operations and exercises. When that happens, it is often challenging for Headquarters, CPAC and CPOC staffs to keep current on an individual employee's whereabouts when they aren't physically at the permanent duty location. As of May 31, 2002, Mr. Snyder signed a memorandum advising MACOMs of the implementation of a new automated tracking system for deployed and mobilized civilian employees (both appropriated fund and non-appropriated fund).

This new system, CIVTRACKS, short for civilian tracking system, was developed by HQDA to be used by employees who are deployed overseas to UNCLASSIFIED military contingency operations and exercises or who are sent overseas in support of emergency situations. The system permits an employee deployed overseas to enter a permanent record of his/her current duty location. CIVTRACKS is a secure, web-based system that allows easy employee access and data entry.

Access to CIVTRACKS is located at <https://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/civtracks/default.asp>. To enter the required information into CIVTRACKS, all that is needed is an internet connection and a special USERID and password. The plan is to issue each deployed or mobilized employee a deployment card that contains instructions, the USERID and password so that he/she may make the required entries into the system. The deployment card will be issued at home station or other processing point depending on individual MACOM's determination as to specific procedures.

Enhancements to the system are anticipated to make the website increasingly user friendly and capable of providing a more detailed real-time picture of the support civilian employees provide to our war fighters.

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Reconstructing Official Personnel Files

As a result of the realignment of personnel servicing within CONUS CPOCs, several official personnel folders (OPFs) did not arrive at the new servicing Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC).

The largest number of OPFs not reaching the new CPOC were those from the Army National Capital Region enroute to the North Central (NC) CPOC. After exhausting recovery efforts with the other CPOCs, the Army Benefits Center, Fort Riley, Kansas and the National Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, for the missing OPFs, the NCCPOC began the reconstruction process.



Although, much of the needed reconstruction documentation was gathered from OPM, Boyers, Pennsylvania and automated Army sources, it was necessary to contact the employees themselves and ask for their support in the reconstruction effort.

This is an awful thing to happen, but it highlights the need for employees to maintain information themselves in case their own OPF needs to be reconstructed.

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Interagency Web Site Provides Information For Gulf War Vets

The Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention -- an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services - recently announced the launch of an Internet site called MEDSEARCH, a central repository of Gulf War-related

medical research. Gulf War veterans and their families now have access to this one-stop shop of research information relating to the illnesses of some Gulf War veterans on the MEDSEARCH site, www.GulfLINK.osd.mil/medsearch. "VA is committed not only to continue its research efforts, but also to share that information with the veterans most affected," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. Principi noted that while no definitive causes for the unexplained symptoms experienced by some veterans have been identified, more than \$213 million has gone into federal research. More than 40 percent of this research is still ongoing, not only in search of the causes of illnesses, but also to find more effective treatments. The new web site was developed with veterans and researchers to ensure that MEDSEARCH is user-friendly. Developers designed the web site to serve the needs of both the layperson and the researcher. The site is indexed with plain language headings, such as "Pesticides" and "Depleted Uranium." Scientists who want more specific data can find it on MEDSEARCH, too. "This web site, a cooperative effort in support of Gulf War veterans and their families, reflects the commitment of all three agencies to learning more about deployment-related illnesses and sharing what we learn," said Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense For Health Affairs. The goal of MEDSEARCH is to include information about all federally funded research into the illnesses of Gulf War veterans in one centralized place. The site will be updated frequently to ensure that it contains the most recent and complete information available.

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Mentoring For Professional Success

Many Department of Army installations and activities have an on-going mentoring program. All have in common two goals: (1) The desire to tap into the valuable resource of employees who have demonstrated the ability, potential, and desire to become successful in their organization; and (2) To instill in their employees the desire to assist others in mastering additional skills, knowledges, or abilities in specific areas that will enhance their prospects for success.

Mentoring is a developmental process designed to help and guide younger and/or less experienced employees by someone with more experience—a Mentor. Mentoring helps achieve the goal of empowering employees. Engaging in a mentoring relationship is critical to anyone planning on advancing in their career. Successful professionals who have had mentors consistently report that it was the guidance received from a mentor that made the difference in their careers.



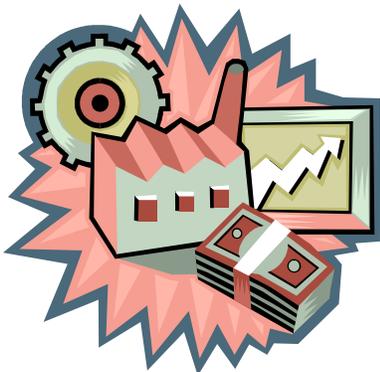
We find ourselves in a constantly changing work environment faced with high personnel turnover and an aging workforce—creating a critical void in experienced and seasoned workers. The need to clone corporate knowledge becomes a strategic issue if we want to remain successful and continue to provide high quality service to our customers. Mentoring offers a cost-effective approach to growing and grooming a seasoned workforce.

All employees are eligible to participate in the Mentoring Program, as either Mentors or Protégés, or both. Participation is entirely voluntary. The Mentor/Protégé relationship is a give and take proposition between one individual willing to share perspectives gained from experience and another individual with a desire to sharpen their skills and knowledge, listen actively, and receive constructive feedback. Success in the program requires both Mentor and Protégé to contribute and work toward building a relationship. Both participants must desire to fully participate and must have the support of their supervisor.

The Mentoring Program is not designed to provide Protégés a “way around their supervisors.” The Mentor/Protégé relationship allows the Protégé to assume personal responsibility for self-development and encourages continued open communication with the supervisor. Open communications may be demonstrated by (1) the Protégé providing thoughtful input into individual development plan discussions; (2) the Protégé sharing short-, mid-, and long-term goals with the supervisor; (3) the supervisor responding to and advising the employee on his/her goals and the organizational goals/needs; and, (4) the supervisor being fully aware of and providing input on the self-development actions being pursued by the Protégé.

Adult development theory suggests there are benefits to the mentor: career development, emotional satisfaction, rejuvenation and creativity, increased self-awareness and personal growth, realization of the Mentor’s life and professional contributions, and fulfillment of generativity needs. By assuming responsibility for caring for other adults and fostering their growth and development, these benefits can be realized by the Mentor. Benefits are generalized in four dimensions – ***relationship, professional, skill, and personal esteem.***

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OPM Online Learning Center

OPM has established a brand new online "e-learning" center. The site is www.golearn.gov. If you are pondering skipping this note now--hold off a second and take a look.....it's actually a good learning resource.

What’s in it for us? OPM currently has 20-30 free web-based training courses (including frontline leadership, customer service, change management, computer skills, project management, etc.)

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Emergency Contact Database

As we marked the one-year anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Department of the Army is reminding all civilian employees of the need to have current emergency contact information on file in the Emergency Contact Data Base. The database is available on the Civilian Personnel On Line website at <http://cpol.army.mil> under the heading, "Emergency Contact Data".



On March 13, 2002, the Department of the Army implemented the Emergency Contact Database to provide an automated means for employees to input and maintain their emergency contact data in the event of an emergency or death of an employee. The decision to develop and deploy the database was borne out of some lessons learned after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Those lessons included great difficulty in our ability to notify next of kin of some of the injured and deceased because of outdated or missing information in employee personnel files.

Since implementation, over 35,000 employees have registered and entered data. The number of employees who have registered without entering the necessary emergency data is 2,660. These numbers fall far short of the approximately 220,000 Army employees covered. We strongly encourage those employees who have yet to register and enter data or who have simply registered but have not entered data, to do so as soon as possible.

During the month of September, standard reports and instructions for accessing the data will be made available to supervisors, managers, and authorized personnel. Supervisors and managers are reminded of the need to conduct periodic validation with employees to ensure the accuracy of the data.

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Employee Member Self Service (E/MSS)

Want to receive your Leave and Earning Statement electronically prior to payday, view your W-2 on-line, or make changes to your payroll account on-line? Log on to the [E/MSS web page](#) and you'll be able to electronically perform:

- Federal tax withholding changes
- State tax withholding changes
- Savings Bond purchases (start/stop/change)
- Allotment changes
- Net pay/EFT distribution changes
- Address changes
- Print of current and up to 2 prior pay period LES's
- Turn off your hard copy mailed LES
- Print and view your W-2

Never had a PIN to access E/MSS? Fax your government badge, SSN, work phone # and a statement requesting a civilian pay E/MSS PIN to fax DSN 580-5800. In 2 workdays, your initial PIN will be set to the last 5 digits of your SSN. You will receive no notification of this initial PIN assignment, just log into the [E/MSS web page](#) 2 workdays after you fax your PIN request.

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Direct RPAs to the Civilian Personnel Operations Center

The Department of the Army, recognizing that the Human Resources automated tools and business processes needed additional enhancements to assist managers and supervisors in accomplishing their personnel mission, has developed Army Regional Tools (ART). Deployment and training on this has been completed within the Pacific Region

One of the tools imbedded in ART is Gatekeeper which is a question and answer checklist application designed to improve the quality of your civilian personnel recruitment actions. Proper completion of this checklist by the organization will provide the CPOC with pertinent information for recruitment purposes, insure quality of data entered into Modern DCPDS and help reduce the time to fill a vacancy.

The Department of the Army is planning to deploy a new process, called "RPA-Direct", to streamline the civilian personnel business process further. This process involves

sending Requests for Personnel Action directly to the servicing Civilian Personnel Operations Center. The proposed deployment date is November 2002.

What does this mean to you as a manager? It means the majority of RPAs will not be routed through your servicing CPAC as is the current practice. Instead personnel actions will be routed directly to the Pacific Region Civilian Personnel Operations Center. Retirements, deaths, awards, disciplinary and adverse actions will still be sent directly to your servicing CPAC. Advisory services on recruitment strategies and information required on the RPA and Gatekeeper checklist will be provided by the CPAC generalist prior to submission of the RPA. Specific guidance will be provided closer to the implementation date.

We request your assistance between now and the deployment of Direct RPA to CPOC, to use ART and especially Gatekeeper when submitting RPAs. This will help you to familiarize yourself with the process. In the event you experience problems or you have recommendations to improve the process, the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center will assist you with questions and pass along your comments and suggestions.

Points of Contacts for Direct RPA to CPOC are your servicing human resources specialist at the CPAC.

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Non-Foreign Cost of Living Allowance

It was determined that the calculation of Non-Foreign Cost of Living Allowance performed by the Defense Civilian Pay System was not in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations. As a result, some individuals who are or were employed in Alaska, Hawaii, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth on Northern Mariana Islands may have been mispaid one-cent per hour. The pay system has been modified effective with the pay period ending January 26, 2002 to correctly calculate the Non-Foreign COLA. Employees will be required to make a claim for additional compensation for periods prior to that date. Underpayments and overpayments calculated for the claim period will be combined, resulting in either monies due or a net overpayment. Payments will be made as quickly as possible after the claim has been calculated. Should a net overpayment occur, DFAS will inform the claimant and terminate collection predicated on the likelihood that the claimant will file a waiver.

- Claim Submission: Guidance is available on the DFAS web-site or from the nearest CSR. The basis for a claim will be a signed letter submitted by individuals to their current employing activity. Separated employees must submit their letters to the last employing activity of record. Employing activities will forward the claims, along with any accounting information to: DFAS-PCP/PE, PO Box 33717, Pensacola, FL 32508-3717 or fax to 1-866-401-5849 or (850)473-6450. The letter must contain the following information:

- Name
- SSN
- Address

- Name and location of the Non-Foreign COLA employing activity
- The beginning and ending date(s) of the claim, expressed in month, day and year.

- Claim Period Covered: Based on the Statute of Limitations, a claim may be filed for a period up to six years. The payment consideration period will end the date the claim is filed and be for a period of 6 years prior to that date. Since the DCPS was modified prospectively as of the pay period ending January 26, 2002, claims may be made only for periods prior to that date.

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Cantwell, AK