



# POSTAL NEWS

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Contact: Media Relations  
202-268-2155

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## **MAIL TO TROOPS SURGES TO 400,000 LBS. DAILY**

WASHINGTON – Military mail volume to the Middle East and Persian Gulf region jumped more than 35 fold from nearly 3,000 lbs. per day in October to 107,000 per day at the end of March. Since then, as a result of America's outpouring of support for its servicemen and women overseas, mail volume has surged to 400,000 lbs. per day.

To keep up with the demand, Vice President Network Operations Management Paul Vogel said the Postal Service continues to add extra transportation.

"The Postal Service is doing whatever it takes to get mail overseas to the military," he explained. "We are now using up to five flights per day that we contracted from among 10 air carriers," he said.

In early April, The Postal Service chartered two 747 cargo jets to fly mail overseas to the Military's postal system. One flew six days a week from the east coast; the other flew three days a week from the west coast. Additional charter aircraft are now flying mail from both locations seven days a week. Of these aircraft, at least three are 747s that are flying every day, seven days a week.

The Postal Service is reminding Americans that certain conditions and restrictions apply when mailing items to military and civilian personnel deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Middle East and Persian Gulf areas.

Programs that allowed the public to send mail addressed as "Any Service Member" were cancelled more than a year ago by the Department of Defense (DoD). While popular with the public during Desert Storm and other operations, DoD's concern with security and transportation constraints led to canceling this program. Well meaning Americans who are circumventing this prohibition by sending bulk quantities of mail to individual soldiers are making it extremely difficult for the military to deliver mail from service members' loved ones, DoD sources said.

The DoD recommends that individuals and organizations wishing to mail letters and care packages to individual servicemembers overseas refocus their activities into supporting the service member's family members at home, or by visiting [www.defendamerica.mil](http://www.defendamerica.mil) and clicking the "Support Our Troops" icon to identify other opportunities for extending support.

The DoD has requested that those who send mail use the servicemember's full name (with or without rank or rating), unit and APO/FPO (Air/Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office) address with the nine-digit ZIP Code (if one is assigned) and a return address. For packages, mailers are asked to print on one side only with the recipient's address in the lower right portion.

All military units are assigned an APO or FPO ZIP Code and in many cases that ZIP Code travels with the unit. The Postal Service places APO/FPO mail on special charter flights, commercial airlines, and military service aircraft at military and U.S. airports. When planes arrive overseas, the mail is tendered to the military and transported via local military transportation to delivery points.

According to the Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA), depending on where the service member is located, letters and Priority Mail parcels to Kuwait normally take 10 to 15 days. Parcel Post packages take longer since they don't travel by aircraft within the U.S. prior to overseas dispatch. There may be size restrictions and customs declaration form requirements to some locations as mail going through the MPSA can be subject to the host country customs requirements. The time to deliver varies depending on the category of mail and the country of destination. Delivery may also take longer when armed forces are on the move during periods of heightened activity.

The Postal Service has a close connection to the Military. One in three of its 740,000 employee workforce has a military background. To date, more than 4,000 of its 12,500 employees who serve in the Reserves or National Guard have been called to active duty.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that makes deliveries to about 140 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume - some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year - and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.