



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 2, 2007

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Release No. 07-081

Surge Doubles Holiday Mail Volume to Iraq, Afghanistan

Today's Holidays Need Today's Mail

WASHINGTON, DC — The surge in military personnel sent to Iraq is contributing to an overall increase in overseas mail delivery by almost 200 percent and average volume will quadruple during the peak holiday week. The U.S. Postal Service is reminding friends and families to send holiday mail destined to troops stationed overseas as early as possible.

Tuesday, Nov. 13, is the first recommended date for sending holiday packages to troops stationed overseas using Parcel Post to all Air/Army Post Office (APO) or Fleet Post Office (FPO) ZIP Codes. Parcel Post is the most economical shipping option for families. The last recommended date for mail going to the war zone is Dec. 4, but for mail destined to all other international military installations, it is Dec. 19.

All military mail, regardless of destination, is sent by domestic mail rate. International rates do not apply to military mail delivery.

“Mail Call can be the best part of the day for our deployed military service members, especially around the holidays. With more of our young men and women serving overseas, making sure their mail arrives on time is important to all of us,” said Pentagon spokesman Lt. Bashon Mann.

The Postal Service is expecting to deliver 20 million pounds of mail to military installations around the world this holiday season. The second week of December should be the busiest week for overseas delivery. Mail to Iraq alone during this period is expected to increase more than 400 percent over the average weekly volume.

All packages and mail must be addressed to individual service members, as required by U.S. Department of Defense regulations. 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 aircraft to reach armed services members overseas as quickly as possible.

The Postal Service has created a special mailing and shipping kit designed specifically for military families sending packages overseas. Each of these CARE KITs contains two Priority Mail boxes, six Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes, eight Priority Mail labels, one roll of Priority Mail tape and eight customs forms with envelopes. Flat Rate Boxes are a special value. Customers pay only \$8.95, regardless of the weight or destination of the package. Call 1-800-610-8734 and ask for the CARE KIT.

To help ensure delivery of holiday cards and packages by Dec. 25 to military APO/FPO addresses overseas and to international addresses, the Postal Service recommends the following mailing dates.

Military Mail Addressed To	Express Mail® Military Service (EMMS)^{1/}	First-Class Mail® Letters/Cards	Priority Mail®	Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL)^{2/}	Space Available Mail (SAM)^{3/}	Parcel Post®
APO/FPO AE ZIPs 090-092	Dec 18	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AE ZIP 093	N/A	Dec 4	Dec 4	Dec 1	Nov 27	Nov 13

APO/FPO AE ZIPs 094-098	Dec 18	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AA ZIP 340	Dec 18	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13
APO/FPO AP ZIPs 962-966	Dec 18	Dec 11	Dec 11	Dec 4	Nov 27	Nov 13

- 1/ **EMMS:** Express Mail Military Service is available to selected military post offices. Check with your local Post Office to determine if this service is available to your APO/FPO address.
- 2/ **PAL:** Parcel Airlift Mail, or PAL, is a service that provides air transportation for parcels on a space-available basis. It is available for Parcel Post items not exceeding 30 pounds in weight or 60 inches in length and girth combined. The applicable PAL fee must be paid in addition to the regular surface rate of postage for each addressed piece sent by PAL service.
- 3/ **SAM:** Space Available Mail, or SAM, parcels are paid at the Parcel Post rate of postage, with maximum weight and size limits of 15 pounds and 60 inches in length and girth combined. SAM parcels are first transported domestically by surface and then to overseas destinations by air on a space-available basis.

An audio news release featuring a quote from Pentagon spokesman Lt. Bashon Mann is available in the newsroom at usps.com/news.

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.