

# Enrollment for the Thrift Savings Plan gets underway

## Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Sailors who are thinking about ways to invest their money for retirement should look into what the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) has to offer.

Active duty members and Reservists in any pay status can start signing up to make TSP contributions which offer significant tax incentives. The enrollment period began Oct. 9 and will run through Jan. 31, 2002.

Much like a 401(K) — a civilian savings plan that invests pre-tax dollars — the TSP is designed to provide re-

tirement monies for military members. It is transferable to other retirement accounts and not tied to the military retirement system.

A two-page enrollment form is available at the Navy Personnel Command home page at [www.persnet.navy.mil](http://www.persnet.navy.mil) or [www.bupers.navy.mil](http://www.bupers.navy.mil). Sailors can also obtain forms at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) by selecting the “Uniformed Services” option.

Once the forms are completed, they should be turned in to the servicing personnel support detachment (PSD) or the ship’s personnel office. The hardest decision is selecting the investment choice and the

amount to contribute. All investment funds are fully explained in NAVADMIN 258/01 and at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov).

Sailors will see contributions deducted from their pay beginning on the Jan. 15, 2002, payday if the enrollment is transmitted to Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) before Dec. 8, 2001.

For enrollments transmitted to DFAS between Dec. 8, 2001, and Jan. 31, 2002, contributions will begin on the Feb. 1, 2002, payday or later.

For Sailors who miss the special enrollment period, several others are available: May 15 through July 31 and Nov. 15 through Jan. 31 each year.

Reserve personnel who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days can make TSP elections outside an open season.

Individuals who enlist, reenlist after a break in service or accept a commission in the regular Navy or the Naval Reserve, will be able to elect to participate in TSP outside of regular open seasons. Their enrollment must be within 60 days of either being sworn-in to active duty or entering in a pay status with the Naval Reserve.

Sailors who want to learn more about TSP, can go to [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) and select “Questions and Answers” under the “Uniformed Services” option.

## Expect delays with certain military mail

**Jim Garamone,**  
*American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Military mail destined overseas will get through, but it may be delayed, said Capt. Eugene DuCom, deputy commander of the Military Postal Service Agency.

DuCom thanks overseas service members and their families for their patience since the Sept. 11 attacks. He said the attacks grounded air fleets throughout the United States, thus delaying mail deliveries to and from overseas.

Since then, new security restrictions have also slowed deliveries. Packages, for example, could not be placed aboard passenger airlines. Those restrictions have since been relaxed.

Commercial airlines have canceled flights, further delaying all mail — including military mail. Now the anthrax mail attacks in Florida, New York, New Jersey and Washington will also slow deliveries.

Military postal workers, for example, have masks and rubber gloves available to them as they sort mail. A policy may come out making that a requirement, DuCom said.

The U.S. Postal Service delivers the military mail to gateways at various cities. The military then takes responsibility for delivering.

In return, the military postal service collects the mail and then delivers it to the gateways. DuCom said he has great confidence about mail coming back to the states. He said packages must have customs declarations on them and there is no “drop off” system for them.

He has less confidence in mail going overseas. Even with screening, a suspicious letter or package might still get through. DuCom said an example of a suspicious letter or package is one leaking powder or a liquid or one without a return address.

DuCom said service members and their families also should be wary of letters or packages from people they do not know. If service members have any question about mail they have received, they should leave it alone and contact the authorities on their installations.

For more general information about mail security, go to <http://www.usps.com>.

## Chairman Myers asks troops to prepare for hardships

**Army Sgt. 1st Class Kathleen T. Rhem**

*American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Fighting terrorism is the most important thing America’s armed forces have been asked to do since World War II, the military’s top officer said.

“Everything else, at least for the next couple of years, will probably pale in comparison to efficiently and effectively carrying out the orders that the President of the United States has given us,” said Joint Chiefs Chairman Air Force Gen. Richard Myers.

Myers, in an American Forces Radio and Television Service interview to U.S. forces overseas, said he’s counting on troops to stay focused on their missions and to take care of themselves and their comrades.

He warned that America is entering a whole new era of military engagement and that service members should be prepared for long tours of duty away from home.

“We are at war,” Myers said. “We will stretch the force and I would just hope the force is going to understand that this is a global war on terrorism. It is defending what every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine (and) Coastguardsman said when they raised their right hand and they took their oath — to defend and support the Constitution of (these) United States.

“I mean we’re defending freedom in the most specific and the broadest sense of that word,” Myers added.

Myers said there’s no question in his mind that there will be personal hardships among service members and their fami-

lies. But, he added, he and the rest of the Joint Chiefs will do their best to mitigate that impact.

“Our job is going to be try to balance our war on terrorism with our exercise programs and everything else that we have going on and try to balance it in a way that puts the minimum hardship on our people,” Myers said.

“But I hope the troops out there understand, this is really the most important task I’ve been assigned since I’ve been in the military.”

The chairman also asked service members’ families to stand strong.

“You’re part of it, too, just like you always are,” Myers said directly to families, then added, “so I would ask for their support of the service member piece of their family and we’ll get

through this just fine.”

Deployed service members also need to make every effort to communicate with family members back home.

“If you’re overseas particularly, your family’s going to worry about you, so communicate with them as you can,” Myers said.

“If you have access to e-mail, then e-mail them. Write letters the old-fashioned way.

“But stay in contact, because, naturally, moms and dads and spouses are going to worry about members forward-deployed. So, as you can, reassure them.”

But most of all, he wants troops to believe in what they’re doing.

“If we’re successful, then our nation will be victorious, and in the end, freedom will be victorious,” Myers said. “And that’s what it’s all about.”