

# Postal Service announces holiday mailing guideline

*Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Jung, Special to American Forces Press Service*

## Postal Service announces holiday mailing guidelines

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan, Oct. 28, 2009 - U.S. Postal Service officials have announced recommended mailing dates for delivery by Christmas to U.S. servicemembers serving in Afghanistan and other overseas locations.

First-class and priority mail for servicemembers stationed in Afghanistan should be sent by Dec. 4 for arrival by Christmas. The deadline for parcel airlift mail is Dec. 1, and space-available mail bound for Afghanistan should be sent by Nov. 21.

Officials recommend that parcel post mail to all military overseas locations should be sent by Nov. 13.

A chart with recommended mailing deadlines for all types of mail to various APO and FPO addresses is available at the Postal Service's Web site at

[http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2009/pr09\\_082.htm](http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2009/pr09_082.htm).

Express mail cannot be used to mail packages to Afghanistan; however priority mail is available.

Priority mail packaging products, including priority mail flat-rate boxes, can be obtained free at any post office, or online at <http://shop.usps.com>. The priority mail large flat-rate box can be used to mail to any overseas military address, no matter the weight of the box, for \$11.95.

The Postal Service offers free military care kits, designed for military families sending packages overseas. To order by phone, call 800-610-8734 and ask for the military care kit. Each kit includes two "America Supports You" large priority mail flat-rate boxes, four medium-sized priority mail flat-rate boxes, six priority mail labels, a roll of priority mail tape and six customs forms with envelopes.

"All packages and mail must be addressed to the individual servicemember by name, without rank, in accordance with Department of Defense regulations," said Air Force Master Sgt. Deb LaGrandQuintana, the 455th Expeditionary Communications Squadron official mail manager here.

Military overseas units are assigned an APO or FPO ZIP code, and in many cases, that ZIP code travels with the unit wherever it goes, LaGrandQuintana added.

The Postal Service places APO and FPO mail to overseas military servicemembers on special transportation destined to be delivered as soon as possible.

Mail sent APO and FPO addresses may require customs forms. All mail addressed to military post offices overseas is subject to certain conditions or restrictions regarding content, preparation and handling. For general guidelines on sending mail to servicemembers overseas, visit <http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/>.

Postal Service officials recommend taking the following measures when sending packages:

- If you use a regular box, use one strong enough to protect the contents with no writing on the outside.
- Cushion contents with newspaper, bubble wrap, or Styrofoam. Pack tightly to avoid shifting.
- Package food items like cookies, fudge, candies, etc. securely in leak-proof containers.
- Use pressure-sensitive or nylon-reinforced packing tape.
- Do not use wrapping paper, string, masking tape, or cellophane tape outside the package.
- Print your return address and the servicemember's complete name, without rank, followed by unit and APO or FPO delivery address on one side only of the package.
- Place a return address label inside the package.
- Stuff fragile items with newspaper or packing material to avoid damage.
- Remove batteries from toys and appliances. Wrap and place them next to the items inside.
- Purchase insurance and delivery confirmation service for reassurance of package delivery.