



CAMP DARBY



Issue 1

FINANCE NEWSLETTER

Sep/Oct 2001

208th Finance BN

BRAVO DET

Bravo Blaze

Keep the fire burning!

Beginning 01 October, 2001, Our Finance Newsletter will be circulated to the Darby community on a monthly basis. Our intent is to keep our local community well informed on a wide spectrum of finance issues. We hope you find the information useful and informative. If you have any suggestions as to how we may improve our finance support to you, please let us know. Please note, the last page of this newsletter has a feedback form attached. Simply fill it out and drop it in the mail.

DET NAME CHANGE

In an effort to improve our finance support to both USAEUR and SETAF, the 266th Finance Command has completed a re-alignment. As a result of this restructure, Delta Detachment 208th FB Vicenza, Italy has been re-designated as BRAVO detachment. Here at Camp Darby, we are now B det, 208th FB, FST Darby.



CAMP DARBY, ITALY



LIRA Rate via email: If you would like to receive the LIRA rate each day in your email, just contact our office and you will be placed on a distribution list.

OUR ORGANIZATION:
The mighty 208th Finance Battalion is headquartered in Spinelli barracks, Mannheim, Germany. The commander is LTC Stephen Riviere, Executive Officer - MAJ William Ramsey, Command Sergeant Major - CSM Daniel Schorn. FST Darby falls under Bravo Detachment, 208th FB based out of Vicenza, Italy. The commander is CPT Gary Hill, Executive Officer-1LT Dennis Slaton, Detachment Sergeant - SFC Karen Mallory.

Inside This Issue

- 1 LES Via Internet
- 2 Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
- 3 SGLI for dependents
- 4 GI Bill increased benefits
- 5 Travel Card changes

Travel Issues

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

M-F 0900-1200 1300-1500

Thurs 1300-1500 (Closed Thur Morning)

For Travel Inquiries or questions contact: Mr. Pietro Casotti

DSN 633- 7534

FAX 633-7909



➤ **GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD CONTRACT CHANGES:** In December 2000, Bank of America sought to renegotiate the existing contract, citing unacceptable delinquency rates, debt write-offs, and high account maintenance costs. DoD and Bank of America reached an agreement. The contract modifications included several important changes for travelers. The modification commits DoD to the following:

- Reduce number of active cards of infrequent travelers (two or fewer times per year).
- Implement “default split disbursement”, a method of paying travel settlements where a portion is sent directly to the bank and the balance to the traveler.
- Establish procedures for salary offset to collect delinquent amounts that are over 90 days past due.
- Strengthen in/out processing requirements to ensure that the travel card issues are addressed in a timely manner.
- Reduce ATM cash and credit limits to \$250 cash and \$2,500 credit for standard cards and \$125 cash and \$1000 credit for restricted cards (this will be phased in over a six month period).
- Increase ATM cash fee to 3 percent of amount withdrawn, or \$2, which ever is greater.
- Establish a \$20 fee for expedited delivery of cards. (does not apply to emergency replacement).
- Increase fee for late payment from \$20 per month to \$29 (non-reimbursable).
- Permit individual DoD activities to negotiate with the bank to establish debit cards (vice travel cards).
- Acknowledge that the bank can offer a pay-by-phone service and charge cardholders \$10 (non-reimbursable). *It is important to realize that these changes were brought on by the high rate of cardholder delinquency and the large amounts being written off by the bank. These changes were necessary to ensure the continued availability of this travel card service to DoD and the Army. It is up to all of us, cardholders and managers, to make sure this program works the way it is intended.*



TIP OF THE MONTH

CONVERTING KILOMETERS TO MILES: One kilometer equals .62 mile. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply the number of kilometers times .62 to give the equivalent number of miles. The equation is: **Kilometers X .62 = miles**



Local National Pay Issues:

LN Pay statements will be ready for pick-up on Monday, 29 October at the finance Pay cage. Your point of contact for Local National pay issues is Mr. Gildo Masenello. He can be reached at his Vicenza office at 634-7091.



Retiring Soon? If you are retiring from active duty, you may have questions concerning your separation entitlements. **Your P.O.C.** for retirement or separation information here in Italy is Ms. Heyer. Her office is located in Vicenza, and she may be reached at DSN 634-8855. **Questions** regarding military retirement should be addressed to DFAS-CLEVELAND Center by calling 800-321-1080 or you may visit the DFAS web site at <http://dfas.mil/money/retired/>

Oct

CALENDAR

- **Payday** 1
- **USAREUR Tng Hol** 5
- **Mid month cutoff** 4
- **Midmo NPA distro** 12
- **Midmonth Payday** 15
- **EOM cutoff** 16
- **LES Distro** 26
- **LN Payday** 29



Late Breaking News

Military Report.com
<http://www.militaryreport.com>

SEP 11, Issue

- Scholarships for Military children
- Get your tax refund faster
- Private firm to military retiree and annuity pay services

SEP 4, Issue

- Payroll deductions for delinquent travel card holders



Civilian Pay Issues

PCSING Soon? Have questions on your entitlements or where to process your final PCS settlement voucher? All civilian PCS's within Europe are processed through our 208th FB travel office located in Mannheim, Germany, DSN 384-6944 or 6966.

CIVILIAN LEAVE AND EARNING STATEMENT

(LES) Info. If you want a detailed explanation of your LES, the following web site will give you a itemized description of each item:

<http://www.dfas.mil/money/civpay/les.htm>

Camp Darby, Italy



Military Pay

➤ **LES VIA INTERNET:** You no longer have to wait for your S-1 or PAC to distribute your end of month LES. Your monthly Leave and Earning Statement (LES) is now available for both viewing or printing on the internet. With the new **Employees Member Self Service (E/MSS)** all you have to do is sign in and enter your pin number. Your current LES, plus the past two month's LES will be available at your finger tips. You may also make some changes to your pay online. You can change your financial institution or the number of tax deductions right from your personal computer. By now, most all active duty army soldiers should have received their pin numbers through the mail. If you do not have a pin number, you can follow these instructions to obtain one: You must FAX or mail the following information to DFAS in order to establish a new pin. Clearly indicate on your request "E/MSS PIN" and include: Name, SSN, Copy of Gov ID with photo, Daytime phone, and Signature. The fax number is 216-522-5800 or DSN 580-5800 or mail the information to: DFAS-CLEVELAND/PMCAA, ATTENTION E/MSS, 1240 E 9th Street, Cleveland, Oh 44199. They will issue you a temporary pin set to the last 5 numbers of your SSN. Once you sign in, then you can change it to your permanent PIN. Access the system at <http://www.dfas.mil/emss/>

➤ **SGLI EXPANDS TO INCLUDE SPOUSES AND CHILDREN:** The Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance plan will also cover troops' spouses and eligible children beginning Nov. 1. The Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001, signed by President Bush last spring, allows for up to \$100,000 coverage for military spouses and \$10,000 coverage for each child. More info to follow.....

➤ **GI BILL INCREASED BENEFITS:** It's not too late to contribute to receive additional benefits for the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). Effective 01 May, 2001, any active duty soldier eligible for educational assistance under the original law governing MGIB, PL 98-525, may contribute an additional amount of money up to \$600, for purposes of receiving an increased amount of basic educational assistance. *Education centers are responsible for counseling eligible soldiers IAW implementation instructions.* Soldiers electing to participate should bring their signed DD form 2366 to our local finance office for processing the requested payroll deduction (DD 2558) or lump sum payment (DD 1131). Your primary POC for eligibility is your local education center. If you have questions on how to start your payroll deduction or lump sum payment, you can contact our office at 633-7516.



ON THE WEB

DFAS	http://www.dfas.mil/
266 th FINCOM	http://266fincom1.hqusa.reur.army.mil/266fincom/default.htm
208 th Finance Battalion	Http://www.208fb.mannheim.army.mil/
D Det 208 th FB	https://www.d208fb.vicenza.army.mil/
FST Camp Darby ☺ our page	http://www.livorno.army.mil/
Civilian Pay Tables	http://www.opm.gov/oca/payrates/index.htm
Finance Regulations	http://131.84.1.34/comptroller/fmr/

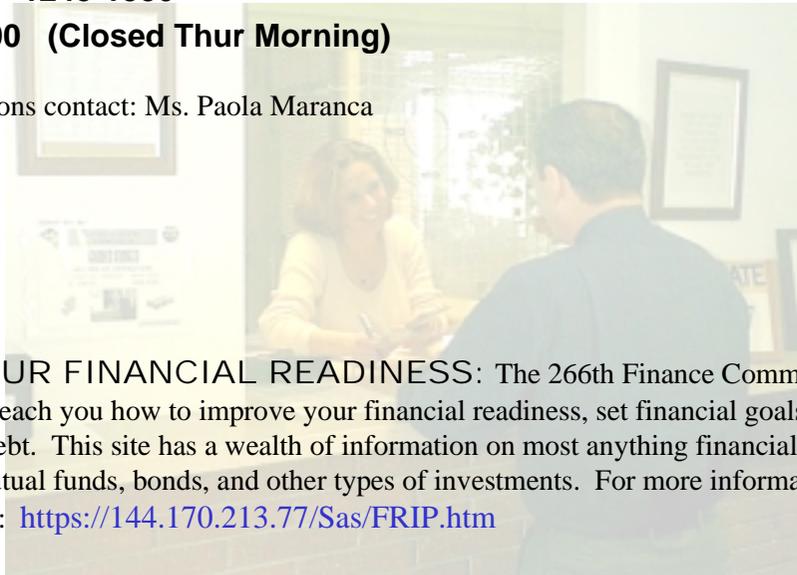
CASHIER OPERATIONS

CASHIER SERVICE HOURS

M-F 0845-1200 1245-1530

Thurs 1300-1500 (Closed Thur Morning)

For inquiries or questions contact: Ms. Paola Maranca
DSN 633- 7534
FAX 633-7909



➤ **IMPROVE YOUR FINANCIAL READINESS:** The 266th Finance Command has an excellent web site to teach you how to improve your financial readiness, set financial goals, establish a budget, and manage debt. This site has a wealth of information on most anything financially-related. It also has information on mutual funds, bonds, and other types of investments. For more information, please go to the following web site: <https://144.170.213.77/Sas/FRIP.htm>



Currency Converter Web site

www.oanda.com

➤ **THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN:** Open season for the TSP begins 9 October, 2001. The Thrift Savings Plan is a retirement savings and investment plan that has been available to civilian employees of the Federal Government since 1987. The purpose of the TSP is to provide retirement income. It offers participants the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under so-called “401k plans”. The TSP allows participants to save a portion of their pay in a special retirement account administered by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. The money that participants invest in the TSP comes from pre-tax dollars and reduces their current taxable income; investments and earnings are not taxed until they are withdrawn. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106.65), as amended by the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106-398), extended the opportunity to participate in the TSP to members of the uniformed services. (The enrollment period begins 9 October, 2001 and continues through 31 January, 2002. Contributions to the TSP will begin to be deducted beginning the first week of January, 2002. Members who do not enroll during the special “open season” will have two open seasons per year. (Open seasons are currently May 15 through July 31 and November 15 through January 31). For more information, visit the following web site: www.tsp.gov or call the Thrift line (504-225-8777).



Buy Bonds

www.savingsbonds.gov





THE SOLDIER

**It is the soldier, not the reporter,
who has given us freedom of press,**

**It is the soldier, not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.**

**It is the soldier, not the campus
organizer,**

**who has given us freedom to
demonstrate.**

**It is the soldier, not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair
trial.**

It is the soldier,

Who salutes the flag,

Who serves under the flag,

and whose coffin is draped by the flag.

TO SUPPORT AND SERVE

Newsletter POC: Questions or comments regarding this newsletter should be directed to SFC Tom Fowler, Newsletter Editor, at DSN 633-7516 or email charles.fowler@darby.setaf.army.mil

MPS

B DET, 208TH FB
FST DARBY
UNIT 31301, BOX 50
APO AE, 09613

Feedback Form

Questions, comments, or suggestions as to how we may improve our service to you may be added here and returned to finance via MPS
