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# THE **TARGET**

DECEMBER  
1995

*"Arsenal Island's Community Newspaper"*

Vol. 41, No. 1

Rock Island, Illinois



1 TO 3400

401 TO 6600

## **PAY DAY**

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During World War II, the pay wagon rolled through Rock Island Arsenal distributing paychecks to workers. The way we get paid has changed a lot since the 1940s, and it's about to change again in a big way. Look inside to find out what these changes will mean to you.

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## INSIDE THIS SECTION

- A look back at the furlough – page 3
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# Arsenal begins production of gun components

## XM35 designed for rapid deployment

Rock Island Arsenal is gearing up for the production of critical gun mount components that will be part of weapon designed for use in rapid deployments.

Under a new project approved and funded for fiscal year 1996, RIA will manufacture and assemble most of the components that make up the cradle and recoil assembly of the XM35 gun. A cannon capable of firing 105mm rounds, the XM35 will serve as the main source of firepower for the XM8 Armored Gun System.

During FY96, 26 AGS vehicles will be produced. Current plans call for a total production run of 237 Armored Gun Systems between now and 2003; however, that number could go up or down, depending on budget considerations and on the success of overseas sales efforts.

Official approval for low-rate initial production, which covers the 26 guns and vehicles that will be produced this fiscal year, is expected this month. The final word will come from the AGS Project Manager's Office at the Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, RIA's direct customer for the XM35 project.

All components made here will be shipped to Watervliet Arsenal, N.Y., where gun tubes and related parts for the XM35 are being manufactured. Watervliet will perform final assembly of the XM35 and forward the guns to United Defense, the prime contractor for the AGS.

The XM8 Armored Gun System is specially designed to meet the strategic needs of the Army of the 21st century, which will be largely based in the United States but must be capable of rapidly deploying to any spot on the globe.

Though it sounds heavy at 35,500 pounds, the XM8 AGS is a lightweight compared to the Abrams main battle tank, which tips the scales at over 100,000 pounds. Thus, unlike the Abrams, the AGS can be quickly deployed by air, either by parachute or by rolling it off a

cargo plane.

Once it arrives in a combat zone, the AGS can be reinforced by adding up to two layers of modular armor. While that still doesn't make it capable of directly taking on enemy tanks, the AGS does provide a combination of speed, survivability and firepower not currently found in any weapon available to the first troops sent to the scene of battle.

The AGS carries a crew of three and travels at speeds up to 45 miles per hour. Like the gun on the Abrams, the XM35 gun on the AGS fires 105mm tank ammunition. But unlike the Abrams gun, the XM35 uses an autoloader, which brings its firing rate up to 12 rounds per minute, and has a recoil that is about 20 percent less powerful.

Research and development work on the XM35 gun began more than 10 years ago at Benet Laboratories at Watervliet Arsenal. By the early 1990s, Rock Island Arsenal became involved in the project through the production of prototypes and spare parts for the gun mount.

In all, the Arsenal produced eight prototype components, which were integrated into prototype vehicles that underwent field and live fire testing at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

To prepare for low-rate initial production, RIA employees wrote shop process orders, set up standards, and designed and built tooling. On the quality side, test programs were written and gages were set up, assuring proper measurement of the extremely tight tolerances that will have to be met.

The initial production phase will give the Arsenal a chance to prove out its manufacturing processes and assess their producibility and repeatability. During this phase, changes in engineering and in production techniques can be made readily, based both on customer requirements and on RIA's own internal process reviews.

The simulation and acceptance test—  
Turn to 'XM35 gun,' page 2

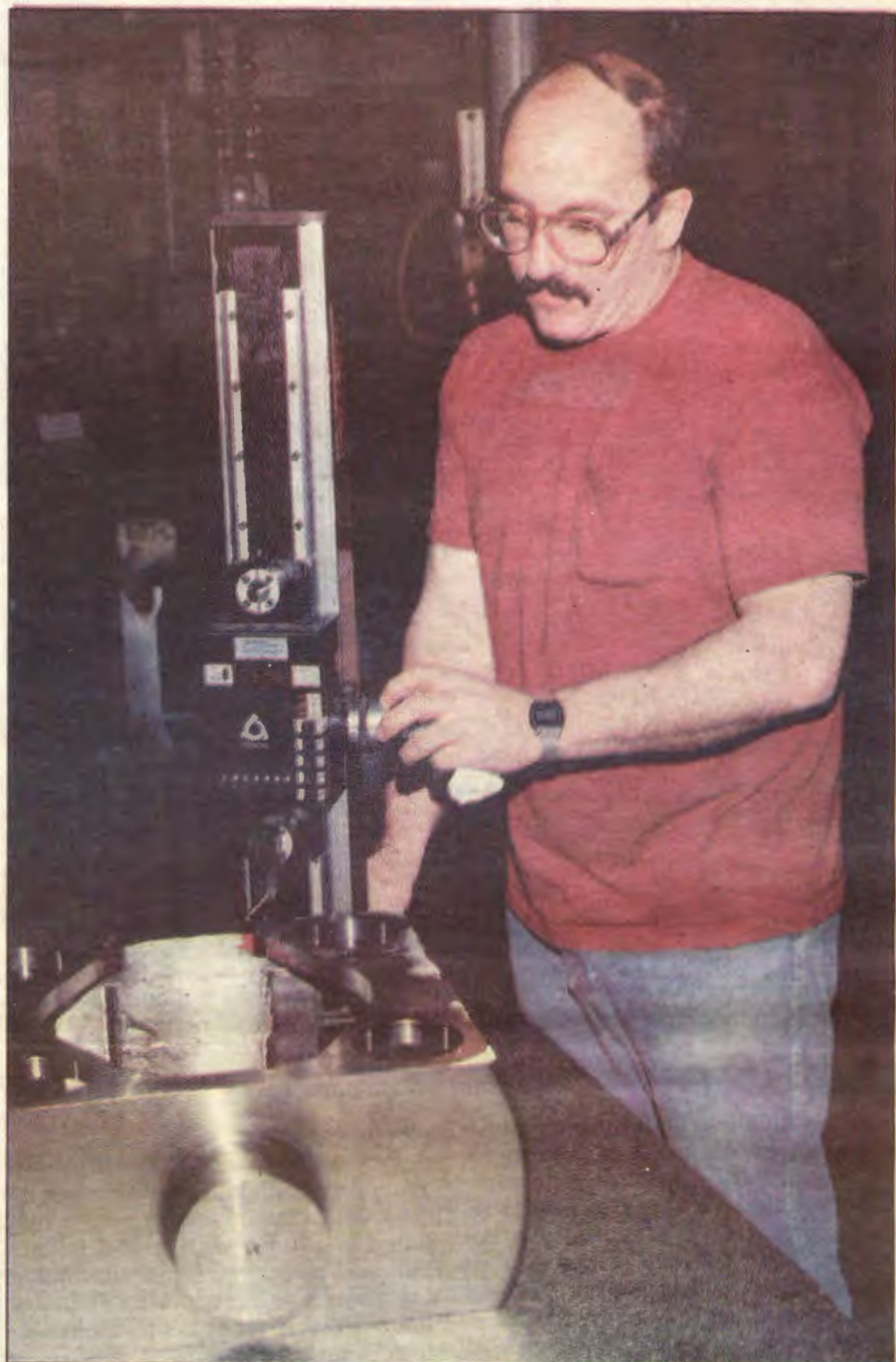


Photo by TED CAVANAUGH

Richard Parkinson of the Quality Systems Directorate uses a height gauge to inspect a rotor for the XM35 gun system.

# New payroll system takes effect in March



By PAUL LEVESQUE  
Target Editor

March 17, 1996: That date should be circled in green on your calendar, and not just because it's St. Patrick's Day.

Along with being a day for the wearing of the green, next March 17 will also mark a change in the paying of the green for most Arsenal Island employees.

The two-week pay period that begins on March 17 has been selected as the start date for the full implementation of the Defense Civilian Payroll System.

Abbreviated as DCPS, an acronym that is commonly pronounced as "Dee-sips," the new system will replace the old Standard Army Civilian Payroll System (STARCIPS or "Star-Sips").

The upcoming shift from STARCIPS to DCPS will affect employees of Rock Island Arsenal, IOC Headquarters, ACALA and most tenant agencies. DCPS is already in place at some installations, as well as at a few local tenant agencies (see related article, page 9).

For the most part, past adjustments in payroll accounting, computing and disbursement techniques have affected operations behind the scenes, and so have gone largely unnoticed by employ-

ees. But DCPS will produce changes that will be visible to everyone and that will have an immediate impact.

In general, the changes wrought by DCPS will represent an improvement over the old system. For example, employees will receive a more user-friendly leave and earnings statement.

To assure a smooth transition, however, employees will need to take a few simple steps to prepare for the implementation of DCPS.

The job of assuring that employees understand what those steps are, and of making the overall transition as smooth as possible, has been taken on by a group known as the DCPS Conversion Team.

Team members represent a broad range of capabilities and organizations, in areas such as payroll, accounting, resource management, information management and personnel. The team has also kept union and partnership representatives informed and has, on occasion, sought their advice.

Recently, some team members met to discuss DCPS in non-technical terms and explain just what it would mean to the people paid under the new system. A section-by-section rundown of the discussion follows.

## DCPS AT A GLANCE

On March 17, 1996, the Defense Civilian Pay System will be implemented at RIA, IOC Headquarters, ACALA and most tenant agencies. The first DCPS paychecks and leave and earnings statements will be issued by April 11. Here's what you should do to prepare for the transition:



Save the last leave and earnings statement you receive under the old system. That LES will be associated with the paycheck posted on March 28.



Be certain that your home address of record is correct. When DCPS is implemented, leave and earnings statements, along with checks, savings bonds and correspondence, will be mailed to non-government addresses only and will not be distributed in work areas.



You should receive a copy of your master personnel record in January. Since the information on that record will be used by DCPS in calculating your pay, check it thoroughly.



Be ready to file two W-2s for the 1996 tax year, one for pay received under the old system and one for pay received under DCPS.



Say goodbye to the time card, and to the days when an employee's time would default to 80 hours in a pay period. Cover yourself by keeping and submitting accurate accounts of your leave usage.



Don't be surprised when your net pay varies by a few cents from one check to the next. This is related to the rounding method used by DCPS and will even out in the long run.



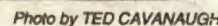


Photo by TONY LOPE.

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the Department of Defense as civilian employees, often find themselves outside their state of residence on Election Day. But thanks to the Federal Voting

virtual designated as the voting assistance officer. Capt. Tracy Wickham serves as the voting assistance officer for Arsenal Island. He can be reached on

if you've just become a permanent resident of the area, information on how and where you can register to vote is available through your county courthouse.

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# Commander's Corner

By Col. John L. Storm

## E-mail expansion

There was a time not long ago when electronic mail was nothing more than an idea. Then came the first versions of electronic mail, which could only be operated and understood by technical experts. After it became more user-friendly, electronic mail was introduced on the general market. At first it was a luxury enjoyed by a few, but it quickly spread into homes and offices everywhere.

Today, electronic mail is so common that we've had to invent a shorthand term for it. "E-mail" is such an everyday word that it's now used as both a noun and a verb ("Can you e-mail that to me?"). Like many of you, I've grown so dependent on my e-mail, and have found it to be so useful as a communication tool, that I often wonder how I ever managed to get along without it.

Because of its speed, convenience and widespread availability, e-mail has become the preferred means of spreading the word on items and events of interest to the entire Arsenal Island community. While this is an intelligent and appropriate use for e-mail, these messages intended for the entire community frequently do not reach those people who, in my opinion, make up our community's backbone.

Our manufacturing and logistics employees — the people who perform the functions which make Rock Island Arsenal so unique and so valuable — work outside the office environment. The nature of what

they do, and where and how they do it, limits their access to the Arsenal's personal computer network, and therefore to electronic mail.

But all of that is about to change. I'm pleased to announce that our manufacturing and logistics employees will soon enjoy broader and easier access to e-mail. The e-mail expansion project is now in its final phase, and should be in place by the start of the new year or shortly thereafter.

Also coming soon will be other improvements in the way e-mail is handled and distributed; improvements which will impact all e-mail customers, including those in administrative areas.

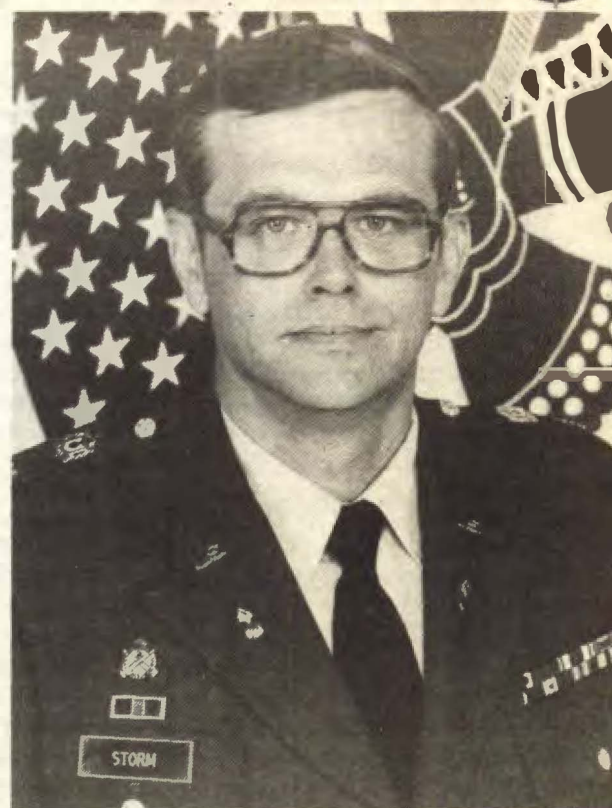
"Wiring" our manufacturing and logistics employees was one of my main goals as Arsenal Commander. I believe that communication is absolutely vital to our success as an organization; thus, it's critical that all of us share the same channels of communication.

You'll see more information about the expansion and improvement of electronic mail in future issues of the *Target* and in other media, including (you guessed it) e-mail.

## Happy Holidays!

Preparing for the holidays can be a stressful experience. Yet all the hustle and bustle is worth it if we use this season as a time to get closer to family and friends, and to focus in on what is truly valuable in our lives.

Whether it's because of too much stress or too much celebrating, accidents do tend to rise during the holi-



days. So, while you enjoy all that the season has to offer and join the celebration, please be smart and be safe. Remember that friends never let friends drive drunk. And what better friend do you have than yourself? From the Storm family to everyone in the Arsenal family, best wishes for a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the best in the New Year!

## Letters

### Dismay expressed on furlough guidance

Editor:  
I am writing this letter to express my dismay about the Office of Personnel Management's guidance for pay during the furlough.

It is my belief that Government employees are paid to serve United States citizens. We already suffer from public cynicism and a poor image of our "essentiality." Being paid for not working intensifies and justifies the public's opinion of federal employees.

Most experts predicted furloughed employees would be paid. My honest, ethical, accountable and responsible reaction to the furlough was to either take my work home or charge my time to annual leave. When informed that the continuing resolution contained sufficient resources to pay my salary, I chose to charge my time to annual leave. The OPM guidance forced changing my status from annual to administrative leave.

I still can live by my values by losing an equal amount of annual leave by not consuming this leave down to the 240 hour maximum carryover threshold. I hope IOC management respects my "HEARTS" reaction to OPM's violation of the public's trust.

Name withheld by request

While your intentions are good, management officials at IOC and other government agencies were not authorized to approve annual leave for the furlough period. It has also been decided that sufficient time exists for employees to schedule their "use or lose" leave before the end of the year. (See the story on page 2 for details.)

If you, and other employees who feel as you do, decide not to schedule your leave, there is an "ethical" alternative to simply allowing it to be forfeited. Why not consider donating your leave to a coworker who needs it? Donated leave is used by employees who've exhausted their own leave but who need additional time off due to their own illness, the illness of a family member, or another emergency.

To find out who needs your leave, and for more information on the leave donor program, call Ext. 2-1256.

Patrick Broderick  
Director, SMCRI-PS

The *Target* welcomes letters from its readers. Only those letters of general interest will be published; personal responses cannot be provided. Unsigned letters will not be used, though names will be withheld on requests.

Letters should be short (one page or less) and to the point, and should concern a single subject. All letters may be edited for clarity, brevity, propriety, spelling and grammar. Decisions of the *Target* on what letters should and should not be used will be final.

Send your letters to SIORI-RM-PA (Target) or to the e-mail address "target".

### Combined Federal Campaign totals posted

The final totals have been posted for the 1995 Illowa Bi-State Combined Federal Campaign.

During 1995, employees gave \$310,075.88 through CFC, a figure which represents about 95 percent of the original goal of \$325,000.

Though the campaign fell short of its goal, CFC operations manager John Gunter said that he was pleased with its results overall.

"Given the uncertainty that people faced, I think that they gave generously," Mr. Gunter said. "Thanks to all who contributed, and to the keypersons and others who worked on CFC."

The Illowa Bi-State Combined Federal Campaign included all employees on Arsenal Island, as well as federal and postal employees in eight counties in western Illinois and eastern Iowa. Here is a breakdown of the major divisions on the island, showing the total donated and the percentage of division goal which was attained:

**Rock Island Arsenal:** \$76,139.50 (85.9%). **IOC Headquarters:** \$86,498.10 (103.3%). **ACALA:** \$40,674.18 (72.5%). **DFAS:** \$8,994 (88.2%). **Tenants:** \$34,037 (145.8%). **Corps of Engineers:** \$20,140.06 (111%).

## THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

### Some items to ponder

The semi-annual Thrift Savings Plan open season is now under way.

Between now and the end of the TSP open season on Jan. 31, employees will be able to open an individual account; change the level of contribution to an existing account; or change the way that an investment is distributed among the three TSP funds.

Those funds are the C Fund, which is invested in common stocks; the F Fund, which is invested in a bond index fund; and the G Fund, which is invested in short-term U.S. Treasury securities.

TSP forms, and information on the open season, are available by contacting the Civilian Personnel Office at Ext. 2-1299.

Here are some items for TSP investors to ponder during the open season:

- **Low cost is a key feature.** It used to be that the only people who could invest in stocks and bonds were those who were able to both put up a rather large initial sum and pay broker's fees.

But now that the Thrift Savings Plan is here, federal employees can "play the market" at a very low cost, and can do so by putting up an initial sum that amounts to pocket change.

Employees can open an individual TSP account for as little as \$1 per two-week pay period. If you're a bit more ambitious than that, you can invest up to 10 percent of your basic pay if you're covered by the "new" Federal Employees Retirement System, and up to 5 percent if you're covered by the "old" Civil Service Retirement System.

The administrative expense of operating the Thrift Savings Plan is borne by TSP investors, who now number about 2.2 million in all and whose accounts total \$32.9 billion, a total which grows at a rate of \$100 million a week through contributions and interest earnings. This broad base lessens the impact of administrative costs on individual investors.

Present TSP investors pay those costs by forfeiting a tiny percentage of their interest earnings to plan administrators. The forfeiture varies from fund to fund and from year to year, but lately has amounted to about one-tenth of 1 percent.

In other words, for every \$1,000 of earnings achieved through the Thrift Savings Plan, about \$1 is used to cover the cost of running the plan. All remaining profits are then returned to investors.

- **Don't be too quick to shift.** Recent TSP activity shows why it probably isn't a good idea to shift the money in your account because of short-term changes in the market.

According to the Federal Thrift Investment Board, TSP participants shifted nearly \$100 million from the C Fund to the G Fund during December 1994 and January 1995. The moves were apparently made in reaction to the lackluster performance of the C Fund during 1994, caused by a corresponding slump on Wall Street.

Those investors found themselves on the sidelines as the stock market rallied during the first half of 1995. As a result of Wall Street's strong performance, for the first six months of 1995 the rate of return on the C Fund was six times that of the G Fund.

Predictably, \$298 million was transferred into the C Fund in June and July of 1995. The board estimates that, taken as a whole, investors who left the C Fund early in the year and investors who transferred money into the fund during the summer missed out on \$48 million in earnings.

In short, don't buy high when you can buy low. TSP investments are generally for the long haul, so riding out downturns in the market can leave you in a great position to benefit from the upswings which are sure to follow.

One caveat: You might consider moving money out of the C Fund if you are approaching retirement or are otherwise close to cashing in your account, so that you don't lose money just because of one downward move in the market.

- **More funds coming?** Two new funds may be added to the Thrift Savings Plan if a bill now before Congress is approved.

Earlier this year, the Federal Thrift Investment Board recommended that TSP be expanded to include a small-capitalization index fund and an international stock index fund. The "small cap" fund would track the performance of the common stocks of companies outside the Standard and Poor 500 index, which the C Fund tracks; the international fund would track the performance of stock markets in 20 overseas nations in Europe, Australia and the Far East.

Thrift board officials stated that adding the new funds would make the Thrift Savings Plan more diverse and improve its overall earnings potential. They noted that overseas stocks often rise while U.S. stocks are falling, and vice versa, and that adding a "small cap" fund would open up the entire U.S. market to TSP investors.

The new funds can only be added if Congress amends the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986. Bills to do just that have been introduced in both the House and Senate. Though the legislation has generally been received favorably, final action is still pending.

## CSRS voluntary contributions earn 6.875 percent interest

Voluntary contributions to individual Civil Service Retirement System funds will earn interest at a rate of 6.875 percent during 1996. That's down from the 7 percent which CSRS voluntary contributions earned during 1995.

Voluntary CSRS contributions are additional payments which employees can make into their CSRS retirement funds, over and above the amount which they are required to contribute.

Employees have been allowed to make voluntary CSRS contributions for many years. However, the program did not become truly popular until 1985, when the contributions began earning interest at a higher, market-based rate.

That rate is adjusted annually and is based on returns from the previous year. This makes voluntary CSRS contributions an attractive investment any time when interest rates are declining.

Here are some of the basics of voluntary CSRS contributions:

- The program is open only to employees who are covered by CSRS, and who therefore have an active CSRS account. Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System, including those once covered by CSRS, are not eligible. No similar program exists for FERS employees.

- Voluntary CSRS contributions cannot be made by payroll deduction. Employees must first apply to take part in the program, then send their

contributions directly to an individual account. Contributions can only be made in \$25 increments.

- Voluntary CSRS contributions are made after taxes are deducted. In contrast, Thrift Savings Plan contributions are made with pre-tax dollars. Thus, it may be wise to "max" your thrift plan contribution before investing in CSRS.

- Earnings on CSRS contributions are tax-deferred, in that they are not taxed until they are withdrawn. They can be taken out at any time, but are subject to a 10 percent tax penalty if withdrawn early, i.e. before age 59 and one-half. Withdrawal can be made in a lump sum, or the balance of your account can be used to increase your monthly annuity by a fixed amount.

- Total contributions cannot exceed 10 percent of an employee's lifetime basic pay. Excess contributions are returned without interest.

- If you had a break in service, and withdrew money from your CSRS account when you left the government, you must make a full redeposit before you make any voluntary CSRS contributions. Employees who worked in excepted positions must first deposit money to cover the excepted years before they become eligible for the program.

The forms needed to make voluntary CSRS contributions are in RIA's Civilian Personnel Office. Call Ext. 2-1299 for more information.

## Treasury sets new bond rates

The U.S. Treasury Department has announced the market-based interest rates that will apply to U.S. savings bonds purchased between Nov. 1, 1995 and April 30, 1996.

During those six months, the short-term rate for savings bonds will be 4.75 percent, and the long-term rate will be 5.16 percent.

The rate announcement is only the second of its kind. The first was issued on May 1, the date on which changes in the way bonds earn interest took effect.

The short-term rate is used to calculate interest earnings on Series EE savings bonds for the first five years they are held. Bonds must be held at least six months to achieve any earnings at all.

The long-term rate applies to the period between five and 17 years after bonds are purchased. The current rate was announced only for reference, since no bonds issued under the new rate structure have been outstanding for five years.

Savings bonds purchased before May 1 of this year will accrue interest according to the rules in effect at the time of purchase.

Under the new rate structure, Series EE bonds are guaranteed to reach face value in 17 years. The purchase price of bonds is half their face value.

Bonds held longer than 17 years will stop earning market-based interest and will instead accumulate interest at the fixed rate then in effect for extensions.

The Treasury Department has also announced that Series E bonds issued on or before December 1955 have reached final maturity and have stopped earning interest. Series E bonds issued after December 1955 will subsequently reach final maturity 40 years from their issue dates.

In addition, those Series E bonds which have an interest-earning life of 30 years are reaching final maturity. These 30-year bonds have issue dates of December 1965 or later.

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## Holiday shopping, the RIA way

So you still haven't got all your holiday shopping done yet, and you're dreading that trip to the mall. What to do?

Try this: Do some of your holiday shopping on Arsenal Island. Here's some of the places you can go and the things you can buy:

- Discount movie tickets for Showcase Cinemas can be purchased either at the Community Events Office or at the Outdoor Recreation Equipment Center.

- The tickets are \$4.75 each, a discount of \$2 off the regular price of an evening performance. These handy stocking stuffers are good at Showcase Cinemas in Davenport and Milan, plus at dozens of other locations around the nation.

- The retail store in Bldg. 60 and the shop at the Fitness Center are your outlets for clothing items marked with the Rock Island Arsenal logo.

- The items on sale include t-shirts, sweatshirts, golf shirts, rugby shirts, sweatpants, gym shorts and more.

- Junior Achievement companies from Arrowhead Ranch will return on Tuesday, Dec. 19, and Wednesday, Dec. 20, to sell their products. Sales on both days will take place in the Main Cafeteria in Bldg. 60 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The items sold on Tuesday will include pet beds, tic-tac-toe boards, bird feeders, long hot dog forks, and collectible brass steins made of 75-millimeter shell casings. The latter will come with a certificate of authenticity. On Wednesday, JA companies will sell sports clocks, wind chimes and wooden reindeer Christmas decorations.

- The RIA Museum Gift Shop sells t-shirts and other clothing items, toys and games, souvenirs, books and more. Many are unique items which would be hard to find anywhere else.

- Like the museum, the gift shop is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Silver's Tailoring and Alterations, a service which opened last month, has handbags, wallets and scarves for sale. The shop is located next door to the Outdoor Recreation Equipment Center in Bldg. 333.

- Still not sure? Then get an MWR gift certificates. The gift certificates, which come in \$10 increments, can be redeemed at any morale, welfare and recreation program outlet on the Arsenal.

- The certificates are on sale at the Community Events Office and at other MWR outlets.

## Winter: You might as well enjoy it

Winter is here, so why not enjoy it? If you're not sure how, come to the Outdoor Recreation Equipment Center, where you'll find everything you need for fun in the snow and ice.

The center has ice skates, sleds, toboggans, and downhill and cross-country skis complete with poles, boots and bindings. You can also come to the center to have your skates sharpened or your skis waxed. Items can be checked out and services can be performed at very competitive rates.

To make certain that your car doesn't break down on the way to the slopes, take it to the Auto Craft Shop for a class on winterizing your vehicle.

The two-hour class takes place in the shop, located in Bldg. 351, on Thursday, Dec. 14, at 5 p.m. The fee is \$5.

Call Ext. 2-8631 to reserve your spot in the class. The Outdoor Recreation Equipment Center can be reached at Ext. 2-8630.

## IS YOUR TANNENBAUM A TANNEN-BOMB?

According to the National Fire Safety Association, Christmas trees cause about 500 home fires a year, at a cost of more than 20 lives and \$9 million in property damage. To keep your Tannenbaum from becoming a Tannen-bomb, follow these safety pointers:

- If you use a real tree, select the freshest one you can find. Your tree should have a strong scent and a deep color, and should have firm, flexible needles that don't come off at a touch.

- When you get your tree home, cut off the bottom two inches, at an angle if your tree stand allows. Immediately place the tree in the stand, fill it with water, check it daily and keep it filled.

- If you use an artificial tree, be aware that they can burn too. Buy artificial trees which are rated low in flammability, and follow all safety instructions.

- Whether it's real or artificial, your tree should be placed away from radiators, heaters, fireplaces, doorways and other high traffic areas.

- Before you string your lights, check them for frayed wires, broken bulbs and other damage. When in doubt, toss the old lights out and get new ones.

- Don't run power cords under rugs, carpet or mats, and don't plug more than three sets of lights into a single extension cord. Make sure that all lights and cords are "UL" or "FM" rated.

- Turn off and unplug your lights and decorations when you leave your house or go to bed.

Graph by STEVE WIELAND

## WILL YOU BE NEXT?



Two in every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol related crash at some time in their lives.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Graph by STEVE WIELAND

## Progress made against drunk driving

While the number of traffic fatalities caused by drunk driving continues to fall, it's still a long way from zero.

According to statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, alcohol-related vehicle crashes caused 16,589 deaths in the United States in 1994. That's a five percent drop from the number of deaths caused by drunk driving in 1993, and a drop of more than 20 percent when compared to 1984.

Safety officials attribute the downward trend to tougher laws, better enforcement, and increased public awareness of the problems caused by drunk driving. Yet a few more numbers illustrate why it's far too soon to become apathetic.

Last year, 297,000 people were injured in alcohol-related crashes. That's an average of about one every two minutes.

Drunk driving is so pervasive that, given current conditions, 40 percent of all Americans will be involved in some way in an alcohol-related crash sometime in their lives. In other words, even if it hasn't happened to you yet and never will, chances are that it already has happened or will happen to someone you know.

The odds grow a little worse in December, when holiday parties lead to the increased consumption of alcoholic beverages.

## Donations sought for Giving Tree

For the second year in a row, a Giving Tree has been put up in RIA's Child Development Center.

The Giving Tree can be found in the lobby of Bldg. 11, which is used as the center's pre-schooler facility. A box for donations for the tree has been placed next door in Bldg. 16.

All are welcome to donate for the Giving Tree. Donated items can be brought to the Child Development Center, which is located on King Drive and is open from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The purpose of the Giving Tree is to collect items which will be donated to local shelters for abused women and children. The items being sought include personal care items such as soap, linens, toothpaste and toothbrushes, non-perishable food, and toys.

Giving Tree donations should be made no later than Dec. 21. For more information, contact the Child Development Center at Ext. 2-2822.

The RIA Chapel will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service on Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The service will be conducted following a general Protestant liturgy. The chapel is located on the second floor of Bldg. 60.

More information is available by contacting the Chaplain's Office at Ext. 2-5000.

**Season's Greetings**  
From the Target and  
The Times Record Company

## It's almost like being there

Holiday visits available through VENUS video teleconference studio

If you'll be separated from any of your loved ones this holiday season, you can be brought face-to-face with them thanks to a free service available to Arsenal Island employees.

The service will be offered from Monday, Dec. 11 through Friday, Dec. 29, when the VENUS video teleconference studio will be made available for holiday visits. The studio, which is operated by RIA's Information Technology Directorate, is located on the third floor of Bldg. 350.

Holiday visits can be scheduled on weekdays between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. Central time. All visits are scheduled for 30 minutes; however, participants are asked to arrive at the studio a half-hour early in order to maximize all available time as soon as a connection is made.

Unlike standard telephone calls, holiday visits via VENUS allow groups of people on both ends to see and hear one another. The local VENUS facility can also be used to display videotape segments (VHS size only), photographs and other objects to the folks on the other end.

By bringing your own VHS videotape, you can be provided with a copy of your holiday visit.

Holiday visits can be arranged between the local VENUS studio and video teleconference studios located at more than 220 sites throughout the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. Currently, overseas visits can only be arranged with a studio in Haiti.

Video teleconference studios are now in place at virtually all major military installations. If you're not sure which studio should be used by the people



Photo by TED CAVANAUGH

Holiday visits via VENUS can bring you fact-to-face with your loved ones.

You'd like to visit, local VENUS coordinators can assist you.

The people you'll be visiting, and the people who'll join you in the local studio, need not be connected with the Department of Defense in any way, though they will be expected to comply with local security procedures. Badges are not required to enter the VENUS studio in Bldg. 350.

## Water treatment changes take effect Dec. 15

A project to modify RIA's water treatment system is still on schedule.

Barring any last minute snags, this means that the new system will be activated on Dec. 15. The completion of the project will mark the first major renovation of the Arsenal's water treatment plant since it was constructed in 1944.

The purpose of the change is to bring RIA's water into full compliance with state environmental and health regulations by lowering the level of a chemical known as THM.

THM is formed when the chlorine used to disinfect the water reacts with traces of organic matter. When the new system is activated, ammonia will be injected into the water during the treatment process.

The ammonia and chlorine will react to form a new disinfecting agent known as chloramine. Unlike chlorine, chloramine does not produce THM.

Consumers of the Arsenal's water may notice a difference in the water's taste. However, the taste may be familiar to some people, because the chloramine system is already in place in several communities, including East Moline.

Arsenal Island employees and residents are cautioned that tap water containing chloramine should not be used in kidney dialysis machines. If you or a member of your family is undergoing dialysis, consult your doctor or technician about what sort of water you should use.

Chloramine can also affect the environment in aquariums, to the point where it could be harmful or even fatal to fish. Filters and aerators can remove chloramine from aquarium water. Contact your pet care center for details.

## Government Benefits for R.I. Arsenal Employees From the Financial Services Professionals

**QUESTION:** I'm not certain just what retirement benefits I can expect. I've taken the maximum life insurance to which I'm entitled but I'm not sure if that's the best investment for me. Would I be better off to invest in a supplemental retirement program with a part of those premiums?

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Above FunSaver rates reflect \$25 per person savings with coupon for April 14 & May 10, 1996 departures. Additional hotels available. Departures also available Feb. 9 & 11 and March 7.

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DCC2107A Litho in U.S.A. (95-11)

## Payroll system Continued from page 1

Why DCPS? In 1991, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service was formed and given the mission of standardizing and centralizing DoD's finance and accounting systems, in order to achieve efficiency and cost savings.

At the time DFAS was created, DoD used 18 different payroll systems operated at more than 350 scattered payroll offices to calculate and account for civilian pay. DFAS was given the task of taking all that and rolling it into one standardized system operated at a small number of central payroll offices.

The standardized system selected by DFAS was dubbed the Defense Civilian Payroll System. DCPS is basically a modified version of a payroll system used by the Navy. Under current plans, DCPS will be implemented DoD-wide by March 1997.

The operation and administration of DCPS will take place at DFAS's four payroll sites in Denver, Charleston, S.C., Pensacola, Fla., and Omaha, Neb. Local payroll offices, including the one on the Arsenal, will be closed (see related story, this page).

Paperless and powerful. DCPS is a nearly paperless system which takes advantage of the fact that powerful personal computers can now be found on the desk of every administrative worker.

Once DCPS is implemented, that venerable form known as the time card will disappear. All time and attendance data will be entered electronically via a direct link into DFAS. In turn, electronic reports can be sent back to timekeepers.

The modern hardware and software which power DCPS give it flexibility and capability unknown in past systems. As a result, DCPS can automatically accept and process data from a number of different standard time and attendance reporting systems, as well as standard personnel, labor and productivity reporting, and accounting systems.

The power and flexibility of DCPS are at the heart of many of the system's advantages. But, unlike STARCIPS, one thing DCPS won't do is automatically default an individual's time for a pay period to 80 hours by adding or subtracting annual leave.

This makes it doubly important for employees to accurately report their use of time and for timekeepers to accurately input it. To make sure that no one gets short-changed, DCPS will automatically issue discrepancy reports whenever an individual's time adds up to other than 80 hours so that any errors can be corrected.

A penny here, a penny there. As it stands now, your paycheck is posted for the same net amount every time. (This assumes no overtime, step increases, promotions, allotment changes, etc.) But when DCPS is implemented, you may notice slight variations in your net pay, ranging from as little as a penny to as much as ten cents from one paycheck to another.

Why the variation? It has to do with the way DCPS rounds out your net pay, compared to the way the present STARCIPS system does it.

The amount of your taxable pay is rarely, if ever, a perfectly even number, or are income tax rates always an even percentage. Since you can't be paid in actions of pennies, your pay must be rounded off somehow.

Because of the limitations of STARCIPS, your pay is now rounded off the same way every time. But DCPS is sophisticated enough to compute net pay out to six digits. It can use this information to round your pay up one time and round it down the next, "remembering" what it did for each paycheck.

In the long run, it will all come out about even. Still, the improved rounding capabilities of DCPS will make your total net pay amount more accurate, and could even put an extra penny or two in your pocket.

Save that LES! STARCIPS will cease to exist on March 16, 1996, the end date of a typical two-week pay period. The paychecks for that date will be officially posted on March 28; on or before that date, employees will receive their final STARCIPS leave and earnings statement.

If you remember nothing else from this article, remember this: Save that leave and earnings statement! That's because certain information listed on the LES you'll receive during the last week in March will not be rolled forward to the first LES you'll receive under DCPS.

The column marked "cumulative retirement" — a figure which shows the total dollar amount you've paid into your own annuity — will reset to zero when DCPS is implemented. And, while your cumulative annual and sick leave balances will be posted along with your "use or lose" status, the amount you've used and accrued for the year to date will reset to zero. Finally, cumulative deductions for federal and state income taxes will also start again at zero. Everything else (e.g. savings bonds, Thrift Savings Plan, health and life insurance) should roll forward.

The reasons why some cumulative totals won't roll forward have to do with the technical limitations of the conversion programs used to move from STARCIPS to DCPS. Also, please note that your true "cumulative retirement" total is kept by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, not your payroll office. As it's now stated on your LES, it may not reflect a complete total, especially if you've moved from one federal agency to another during your career.

The year of two W-2's Because of the conversion limitations noted above, you will receive two W-2 forms sometime in January 1997. One W-2 will account for the pay you received under STARCIPS, while the other will account for your pay under DCPS.

You must use and submit both forms while figuring and filing your income taxes for 1996. To repeat, this won't happen until next January; next month, you should receive only one W-2 to be filed with your 1995 tax forms.

A new, improved statement. April 11, 1996, is the date on which the first DCPS paychecks will be posted. At about the same time, employees will receive their first DCPS leave and earnings statement.

Unlike the LES you now receive, the new LES will have no categories marked in code or as "other." Every pay input, deduction and allotment will be clearly listed in categories headed with plain English titles.

In general, information on a DCPS leave and earnings will be easier to read and understand, and there will be more

## Payroll function moves in March

The implementation of the Defense Civilian Pay System isn't the only significant pay-related event that will take place in March 1996.

During the same month, all payroll functions now performed on Arsenal Island will be transferred to a Defense Finance and Accounting Service center in Denver. Payroll will not be among the functions performed at the local DFAS site, which is centered in Bldg. 68.

Though your paycheck will originate from Denver, someone on the Arsenal will be available to answer pay-related questions and help make updates and changes.

RIA's Resource Management Directorate will designate a customer service representative for pay. The customer service representative will serve as a liaison between employees on the island and the DFAS center in Denver, and will also be responsible for entering and verifying data in areas such as taxes, allotments, leave balances, CFC contributions, and savings bond deductions.

If your tax status changes or you'd like to increase your bond deduction, the customer service representative will have the forms you need. The representative will also be able to print out copies of any of your leave and earnings statements.

When the transfer to Denver is complete, pay will be posted to financial institutions via electronic fund transfer on the same day that hard-copy checks are mailed. Regular first-class postage will be used to mail the checks.

Since electronic transfers move at the speed of light, employees now on direct deposit won't notice any difference. In contrast, first-class mail can take up to five days to make it from Denver to the Quad Cities.

You can avoid waiting for your paycheck by signing up for direct deposit now. To get the form needed to do that, and for more information, call DFAS at Ext. 2-9063.

## Megacenter employee likes DCPS

The Defense Civilian Pay System will be new to most employees on Arsenal Island when it's implemented next March at RIA, IOC Headquarters, ACALA and a number of tenant agencies. But employees at the Defense Megacenter, a tenant agency centered in Bldg. 350, have been paid under DCPS for over two years now.

Valerie Brekke, executive assistant at the Megacenter, said that the transfer to DCPS had seemed "very smooth" to her.

"I've never had a problem with the system," she said, "and I haven't heard of anyone else having a problem either."

Ms. Brekke described the leave and earnings statements received under DCPS as being "very nice" and said that they represented an improvement over the statements she used to receive.

"I don't know if they contain more information or if it's just that they're easier to read," she remarked, "but the statements I now receive seem to tell me a lot more than the old ones."

of it. For example, the scheduled date of your next step increase will be listed. An expanded "remarks" section will describe and explain any changes in pay which occurred.

The new LES will be printed on a form that's the same size as a standard letter-sized piece of paper. But it will no longer be delivered to you in your work area. When DCPS is implemented, all leave and earnings statements will be mailed to employees' home addresses.

It is your responsibility to assure that this address is correct. Though you can designate a box number or any street address you'd like, you will not be allowed to use a government address.

The address you designate won't just be used for delivery of your LES. It's also where your savings bonds, any checks you receive, and any correspondence related to your pay will go. So check the address on your LES now; errors most commonly occur in street name or number, apartment number and ZIP code.

When DCPS is implemented, any performance or suggestion awards you receive will be sent to you in the same manner that your paycheck is delivered. If you are paid by direct deposit, award money will be paid to you via electronic fund transfer; if you still receive a hard-copy paycheck, you'll get your award checks in the mail.

Check your records. DCPS will draw the information needed to calculate pay from the Army Civilian Personnel Sys-

tem. ACPRS is a data base used to account for pay system and grade, health insurance carrier, Thrift Savings Plan contributions and other items related to pay and personnel status.

In January, all employees will receive a copy of their master records, a listing of information on your pay and personnel status as it appears in ACPRS. This will be your opportunity to check your record and make certain that it is accurate. If not, you'll be able to make any needed corrections or changes well in advance of your first DCPS paycheck.

Will we be ready? Though they can't guarantee an error-free transition, the DCPS Conversion Team has set a goal of making the move to the new pay system as smooth as possible.

By the time the implementation of DCPS actually takes place, the team will have been in place for over a year. In September, the team conducted a test of conversion procedures, and has reviewed the results of that test to apply "lessons learned" to the actual conversion.

The training of timekeepers and managers has already begun. In February, a live test of DCPS will take place, with timekeepers entering data under both the old and the new systems.

Employees should look for more updates and reminders on the Defense Civilian Pay System, both in the *Target* and through other media.

## World War II Veterans Memorial site is dedicated during Veterans Day ceremony

A site in Washington, D.C., that will serve as the site for the World War II Veterans Memorial has been dedicated.

The dedication ceremony, which was led by President Clinton, took place on Veterans Day. In his speech, the president said that the memorial "will serve as a permanent reminder of how much we Americans can do when we work together."

The process of building the monument began in March 1993, when President Clinton signed a law

authorizing the project. In September 1994, an advisory board was formed and was given responsibility for proposing a site, selecting a design and raising the money needed to build the memorial.

The site requested by the board covers more than five acres on the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. Earlier this year, the site was approved.

The next step will be selecting a design for the memorial, a process which in itself could take up to

two years. No precise estimate of construction costs can be made until a design proposal is approved.

By law, all costs related to the construction of the memorial must be paid for through corporate and private donations. Proceeds from the sale of World War II commemorative coins have already raised \$5 million, but more will be needed.

Those interested in making a donation should send it to: World War II Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 75071, Washington, D.C. 20013.



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**Target announces publication dates**  
Throughout 1996, the *Target* will be printed and distributed on Arsenal Island on the second Friday of each month.  
Here is a listing of *Target* publication dates for 1996:  

Jan. 12	May 10	Sept. 13
Feb. 9	June 14	Oct. 11
March 8	July 12	Nov. 8
April 12	Aug. 9	Dec. 13

  
Employees who have items which they'd like to have printed in the *Target* should submit those items as far in advance of the publication date as possible. Though exceptions are made, items will generally not be accepted unless they are submitted at least five working days before the publication date. More information is available from the *Target* office at Ext. 2-6754.  
Inquiries about advertising should be directed to Russ Myers at (319) 332-4126. Arsenal Island employees are permitted to advertise their off-duty goods, services and businesses in the *Target*, though they may not use government telephone numbers or addresses in their advertisements.

**Call Russ at 319-332-4126 to place your ad in the Target**

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**Downtown Moline 1409 - 5th Avenue Moline, IL**  
**Just Off The Arsenal 14th Street Exit to Downtown Moline!**  
**CALL: 736-5653**

**WEL program applications available**  
Applications for the Women's Executive Leadership program for fiscal year 1996 are now being accepted.  
Since WEL applications are due in RIA's Civilian Personnel Office no later than Jan. 4, employees who are interested in the program should contact their training coordinators as soon as possible.  
WEL is a year-long program that provides leadership training and developmental opportunities to high-potential federal employees. It is open to both men and women at the GS-11 and GS-12 grade levels, and equivalent grades in other systems. Applicants must either be in non-supervisory positions or have no more than one year's supervisory experience.  
Employees who participate in WEL are placed in details, assignments and formal training classes which will take them away from their regular jobs for at least five months. Some travel is required.  
While the nominating organization is responsible for tuition, travel and per diem costs, a limited amount of centralized funding for WEL is available for RIA and IOC Headquarters employees.  
For more information on the Women's Executive Leadership program, contact your training coordinator or call Wendy Cole at Ext. 2-1851.

**TROA offers educational assistance**  
The Retired Officers Association is now accepting applications for interest-free loans and grants available through the TROA Educational Assistance Program.  
Eligibility for the program is restricted to unmarried, undergraduate students under age 24 who are the dependent children of active, reserve or retired service personnel and their surviving spouses.  
TROA plans to distribute \$2 million in interest-free loans for the 1996-97 academic year. Individuals who receive the loans can borrow \$2,500 annually for up to five years of study. Repayment is not due until after graduation.  
All loan applicants will automatically be considered for outright grants, which range from \$500 to \$2,500. Applicants will be selected for loans and grants based on scholastic ability, participation in extracurricular and community activities, and financial need.  
Applications for TROA educational assistance are now available. They must be requested by Feb. 15 and postmarked on or before March 1.  
For applications and more information, write to: TROA Educational Assistance Program Administrator (09D), 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2539 or call (800) 245-TROA (8762), Ext. 169.

**Car Pools**  
• Ride needed from 740 Mississippi Blvd., Bettendorf, to Bldg. 68, 6:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., flexitime. Call Dawn Murphy, Ext. 2-9707.  
To place your free car pool notice, send the following information to SIORI-RM-PA (Target) or to the e-mail address "target": Your name, telephone extension, work hours (indicate flexitime and/or AWS / CWS), home address or location, and work location. Specify if you need a ride, or riders and/or drivers for an existing car pool.



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**December 20-23 Bert Chalis Dec. 20-23**

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**December 27-31 Denny Johnston featuring Scott Wickman**  
"Denny Johnston has appeared on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and is Winner of the San Francisco Laugh Off!"

**December 27-31 Denny Johnston**

**Scot Wickman**

**736-JOKE (5653) 1409 - 5th Ave. Downtown Moline**

**In The Spotlight**  
• Sometimes, it pays to look at your telephone bill. Just ask Eralinda Ramirez of RIA's Information Technology Directorate, who led a review of the Arsenal's phone bill that saved \$37,000.  
It all began when the U.S. Army Information Systems Command requested an additional \$63,000 for long-haul communication (basically, long distance calls) for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 1995, in addition to an amount requested earlier. Finding that hard to believe, Ms. Ramirez conducted a thorough review of invoices for the quarter and found a questionable charge on one of them.  
After being contacted for an explanation, the Information Systems Command conducted its own review. As a result, \$37,000 was returned to RIA, a savings which directorate officials attributed to Ms. Ramirez's diligence.  
• Dr. James Becker, who serves as dean of curriculum and instructional development at the Army Management Engineering College, has been named to the evaluation committee for the President's Award for Quality.  
The committee consists of 60 people from the public and private sectors who will evaluate applicants for the award, which honors those government agencies which exemplify outstanding quality performance. The evaluation criteria for the award will be the same used for the private-sector Baldrige Award for Quality.  
A member of AMEC's faculty for 13 years, Dr. Becker currently teaches a course on the Baldrige criteria and how applying them can help improve an organization's performance.  
• The Red Cross Certificate of Merit has been presented to Nancy Busch of IOC's DCS for Single Manager for Conventional Ammunition.  
Ms. Busch earned the certificate, signed by President Clinton, for saving the life of her son, Chad, earlier this year. (The story was featured in the April *Target*.) She learned the life-saving techniques at a first aid course taught at the Arsenal by Red Cross instructors.  
If you know of an individual or group of individuals who belong in the spotlight, send your information to the *Target* at SIORI-RM-PA or to the e-mail address "target."

**Arsenal Island People**

<b>Retirees</b> Gerald Apperson Rodney Dunn George Gravelle Sandra Jorgensen	<b>Suggestion Awards</b> John Allcott Karen Bartel Eugene Duncanson Vivian Emler Janene Epping Michael Ethington Raymond Foster	<b>Charles Stanckiewicz</b> Arsenio Tolentino Harold Watts
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**Talk of the Town**  
Arsenal Island's recent community speakers included:  
• Dan Whiteman of the RIA Museum, who spoke to the Masonic Booster Club in Clinton about the Arsenal's history.  
• SFC Gary Sizemore, who spoke to the Golden K Club about Veterans Day and also gave a Veterans Day speech in Geneseo.  
If you'd like to become a member of the Speaker's Bureau, or would like more information about the Arsenal's community relations program, contact Vicki Stapes at Ext. 2-4786.

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**SGT. DAPHNE BROTHERS**  
**SPEC. CHRISTY GREGG**

**NCO, Soldier of the Year are named**  
Two soldiers assigned to the Defense Megacenters have been named as winners of Rock Island Arsenal's NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year awards.  
Sgt. Daphne Brothers was named as NCO of the Year, while the Soldier of the Year award went to Spec. Christy Gregg.  
Nominees for the awards went before a panel of senior non-commissioned officers assigned to the Arsenal. They were tested on their knowledge of military customs and courtesy, and then conducted a class in front of the senior NCOs.  
When this process ended, Sgt. Brothers and Spec. Gregg were selected for the awards based on their overall knowledge, professionalism and bearing.

**IOC energy slogan contest winners announced**  
Marge Dille of IOC's DCS for Resource Management took second place in the 1995 IOC energy slogan contest for submitting the slogan, "Show You Care - Be Energy Aware."  
Ms. Dille received a \$100 U.S. savings bond as an award. First place in the contest, and a \$200 savings bond, went to Maggie Barry of Pine Bluff Arsenal for her slogan, "Do Your Part - Be Energy Smart."  
More than 500 slogans were submitted during the contest, which was held in conjunction with National Energy Awareness Month.

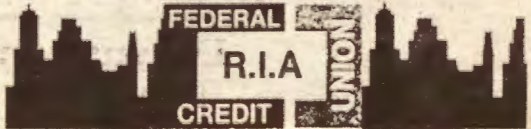

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