

# The Signature

Vol. 01 No. 01

Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily

Friday, Nov. 30, 2001

## Tis the season to avoid the flu

Article courtesy of Naval Hospital Sigonella

Influenza season is coming soon and here is some valuable information on how to protect yourself and your family. Influenza, which is also called the "flu", is a highly contagious viral infection. It infects the nose, throat and lungs most commonly. About 10-20 percent of Americans are affected each year by the flu. Most people who get the flu recover completely in one to two weeks, but some people develop serious and potentially life-threatening medical complications, such as pneumonia. In an average year, influenza is associated with more than 20,000 deaths nationwide and more than 100,000 hospitalizations. Flu-related complications can occur at any age; however, the elderly and people with chronic health problems are much more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection than are younger, healthier people. Flu season generally occurs from December to April but may begin as early as November here in Sicily.

The most common symptoms of the flu are the following:

- Fever up to 102-104F (39-40 C) with chills
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache
- Generalized muscle aches and tiredness.

Many people describe the flu as being the worst cold of their life. A common cold may have similar symptoms but will only last 3-5 days whereas the flu may last one-two weeks before someone recovers completely. Who is most at risk for severe flu symptoms and complications like pneumonia? Health care workers, the very young and old as well as those individuals with lung problems such as severe asthma, or emphysema. Anyone who has a suppressed immune system such as people on long-term steroids or people who have HIV are at high risk. People with kidney problems, diabetes, severe heart disease or other long-term health problems are all at increased risk. If you are in any of these groups you should probably get the influenza vaccine every year. Even if you are not high risk, you can get the vaccine so that you don't get sick with the flu.

The influenza vaccine is a shot that contains three different killed strains of the virus, which serves to improve your defenses. Scientists choose which strains are most likely to show up in the U.S. that year. You can't get the flu from the shot because the viruses are dead. The shot helps your body make antibodies to the virus to protect you. If you catch the flu, then your body is ready to fight off the virus. The flu changes type from year to year however, which means you must get the shot every year to be best protected against the influenza of that particular year. The flu shot may cause redness, swelling and soreness at the site of the shot for a few days. The vaccine is safe for everyone over six months of age. Children under age nine require a second shot a month later, only for the first year they get immunized, to give them maximum protection. A few people are allergic to the flu vaccine. Also, if you have a severe allergy to eggs, you probably shouldn't get the vaccine.

You should discuss your egg allergy with your doctor. If you get the flu, make sure you get plenty of rest, increase fluid intake such as water and juices, and use anti-inflammatory medications like Tylenol or Motrin. Antibiotics will not lessen flu symptoms because it is a viral infection. Antiviral medications are being developed and may be available in future years here in Sigonella.

The influenza vaccine is now available at the hospital and Preventive Medicine is making the shot available in various housing locations as well, so watch for more information on AFN. You may want to consider other ways to protect yourself and your family this winter. While awaiting the vaccine, you can eat a balanced diet, get plenty of sleep, exercise regularly, and avoid being close to someone who is ill if they are sneezing or coughing. You may want to avoid touching persons who have the flu or staying in the same room for more than an hour with a sick person.

## Home for the holidays



Official U.S. Navy Photo

Looking for a unique gift to give this year? Animal Control has a handful of dogs eager for a new home. The \$15 dollar adoption fee includes adoption papers, de-worming, micro-chipping, and vaccinations. As an added bonus, adopting an animal from Animal Control will reduce the price of sterilization by half. Call 624-4201 to adopt. And please, "Be responsible for your choices."

## Paying rent with new Euro currency

Article courtesy of Housing Public Affairs Officer

Jan. 1 will arrive soon, and finally the reality of the Euro will be here. Make sure that you are not taken by surprise and that you're ready for the change!

Beginning Jan. 1 you will be receiving Euro notes and coins from Italian banks, and the Italian lira that we are all used to will be withdrawn from circulation by Feb. 28, 2002. If you have Italian lira left over after Feb. 28, 2002, you can exchange the lira to Euro at the Bank of Italy located on Corso Sicilia in Catania. This currency conversion event will not only bring eleven member states of the European Union together monetarily, but it will also change the face of monetary transactions in Europe forever. So what does it mean for you as a tenant living in Italy? Will your current lease still be effective on Jan. 1? Which currency are you expected to use to pay your rent?

Currently, all military and civilian personnel living on the economy have lease agreements with their landlords stipulating rent be paid in Italian lira. As of Jan. 1, however, when the Euro becomes the national currency for Italy, will leases with clauses stipulating payment in lira still be valid and binding? Yes.

Economy residents will not be required to sign new leases with their landlords. According to European Union legislation, the introduction of the Euro will not affect the validity of pre-existing contracts. The term "contract" includes real estate leases. It is not, therefore possible for parties to have their lease cancelled or held invalid because of the change of currency. In fact, a lease stipulated in the national currency will automatically be re-denominated to Euro on Jan. 1, and the conversion of figures will be based on a fixed exchange rate.

Since Jan. 1, 1999 the exchange rate of the eleven member states has been fixed and will remain unchanged. For Italy, the exchange rate is fixed at 1,936.27 lire. In other words, one Euro is equivalent to 1,936.27 lire. Thus, beginning Jan. 1, all economy residents will need to know what the conversion amount from lira to euro is for their rent payment. To do the conversion, all you have to do is divide your current rent amount in lira by the fixed conversion rate, i.e., 1,936.27.

**Example 1:** 
$$\frac{500,000 \text{ (current monthly rent amount in lira)}}{1,936.27 \text{ (fixed exchange rate)}} = 258.23 \text{ Euros}$$

**Example 2:** 
$$\frac{1,000,000 \text{ (current monthly rent amount in lira)}}{1,936.27 \text{ (fixed exchange rate)}} = 516.46 \text{ Euros}$$

If your current rent payment is 500,000 lire per month, starting Jan. 1 you will be paying your landlord 258.23 Euros per month.

For help in converting lira to Euro you can find help online at the Official Euro website: [www.europa.eu.int/euro](http://www.europa.eu.int/euro) (simply click on "One Currency for Europe" and then click on "Euro Converter"). Once you have determined your rent amount in euros (by using the above formula), we recommend you stick the conversion amount on your fridge door, or somewhere you will easily see. This way, you do not have to recalculate the next time you must pay rent. The next step is simply to pay your rent (in Euros) as you normally would beginning Jan. 1.

## bin Laden: A man on the run

By Gerry J. Gilmore  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, -- With Al Qaeda terrorists and Taliban militia bottled up in the Afghan cities of Kunduz and Kandahar, and 75 percent of the country in opposition hands, senior DoD leaders suggested today that some Al Qaeda and Taliban chiefs might attempt to flee.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, joined by Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pentagon reporters that recent military reverses in Afghanistan have caused Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden to become "a man on the run."

Wolfowitz was responding to a journalist's question about reports that bin Laden recently asked his followers to kill him to prevent his capture. The U.S. State Department has offered millions of dollars to those who can provide information for the capture of bin Laden and other known terrorists.

"This is a man who is being deserted by the same people who've sheltered him not so long ago," Wolfowitz said of bin Laden.

Bin Laden "is a man with a price on his head," Wolfowitz emphasized. He noted that many people in Afghanistan would "like to collect that reward," including "any number of people who were associated with him in the past who are (now) trying to say they've had nothing to do with him."

Wolfowitz cautioned: "There is a whole (terrorist) network outside of Afghanistan that we have to get rid of that is more than just bin Laden."

"Substantial concentrations" of Taliban and Al Qaeda troops are still penned up by opposition forces in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz, east of Mazar-e Sharif, and at Kandahar in the south, Wolfowitz said.

So far, he added, there has been no great exodus of terrorists and their Taliban supporters from those cities. "They may be planning to head to the hills," but so far that hasn't occurred, Wolfowitz said.

"That is one of the reasons why we'd like to kill as many as we can or capture them while they're in places where they can be located," he remarked.

The capture of Kunduz and Kandahar -- and of the Taliban and Al Qaeda troops there -- by opposition forces would help to produce "a very different situation where we can continue the hunt for the (terrorist) remnants that remain" in the country, Wolfowitz said.

Wolfowitz noted that the Afghan people's hatred of the Taliban "is something that has worked in our favor, and has worked against the Taliban." Defense officials had noted that Al Qaeda and Taliban troops had seized warehouses filled with food that had been earmarked for hungry Afghans.

Wolfowitz said the United States with other nations, non-governmental agencies and the United Nations are working together to coordinate additional humanitarian relief for needy Afghans in the form of food, clothing and shelter. Mazar-e Sharif, which was abandoned Nov. 9 by Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, will be the hub of the effort. In fact, he added, some 50,000 metric tons of food had been delivered to hungry Afghans between mid-October and the middle of this month.

Pace noted that American ships continue to track shipping in the Arabian Sea to interdict vessels attempting to circumvent the trade embargo established against Iraq after the Persian Gulf War. Both ship and aircraft traffic, he added, are also watched to prevent Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders from fleeing Afghanistan.

Opposition forces are closing in on the terrorists in Afghanistan, Pace said, as Al Qaeda and Taliban troops lose more and more real estate. Pace had a ready solution in the event fleeing Taliban and Al Qaeda troops join those already seeking shelter in Afghanistan's mountainous regions. "Our specialized approach to caves and tunnels is to put 500-pound bombs in the entrance," he said.

The Signature  
Online

Italian phrase  
of the month

"Quando comincia la processione?"



(When does the procession begin?)