



December 4, 2014

*"The vitality of thought is in adventure.  
Ideas won't keep.  
Something must be done about them."*

Alfred North Whitehead  
English mathematician and philosopher  
(1861-1947)

Holiday  
[shipping deadlines](#)  
and other tools and tips  
have just been updated.

## Take Control of the Holidays

Most adults today harken back to their youth to pull out their favorite images of the holiday season. We remember the tree with its sparkling lights, laden with ornaments from Christmas past and present, with brightly colored packages crammed around its base, with smells of hot chocolate, cinnamon and vanilla wafting through the air.

But as we morph into adulthood, our images of the holiday season tend to change as well. Replacing thoughts of the tree, fuzzy slippers, presents and a roaring fireplace, are thoughts of crowded malls, insane traffic, frazzled, angry shoppers and a holiday budget that seems to shrink while prices tend to skyrocket. It makes us want to scream “enough already.”

Oftentimes the reality of getting through the holidays can be a mix of holding on to holiday traditions, while looking for new traditions that work in today’s environment. Get family, extended family and friends involved in planning holiday events. Get each person to go back to their childhood and pull out one or two traditions that can be freshened and updated to hold the interest of family members today and passed along to future generations.

There’s no need to spend a ton of money on these traditions; look for low- or no-cost activities such as ice skating, visiting a downtown holiday display or attend an interfaith or cultural celebration. Even start a tradition of volunteering in the community. If the family is split up across the country or on the other side of the world, look to take advantage of today’s technology and opportunities to video chat to bring the family closer together.

If holiday budgets seem to be getting less and costing more, consider alternatives to buying expensive gifts. Determine how much to spend on each person on your list and look for ways to stay within or even trim that budget. Look at such things as homemade gifts through handmade crafts, or baked goods to supplement store bought items. Try to buy gifts before the holiday season gets here to avoid last minute “spending sprees.” And, when possible, try shopping alone rather than with friends and other family members. It’s less distracting, and will help stay on budget.

When you’re in control of the holidays (instead of the other way around), you can greet the new year with an optimistic outlook instead of mounting debt.

### ► TRENDING...

“We are experiencing a lot of strain right now, as we are the smallest Air Force we’ve ever been, with the smallest number of people,” said [Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James](#) during her [visit to Yokota Air Base](#). “But we’re also a busy Air Force, whether it’s providing humanitarian missions here in the Pacific, fighting Ebola in West Africa or conducting air strikes in Iraq and Syria.”

## ►RESOURCES

Website access to the following resources can be gained by clicking on the name.

[AF.mil](#)

[Airman magazine](#)

[Military OneSource/HomeFront](#)

[Air Force Personnel Center](#)

[Air Reserve Personnel Center](#)

[Department of Defense News](#)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

[TRICARE](#)

[U.S. Government Website](#)

[Air Force Association](#)

[Scholarships](#)

[Air Force Safety Center](#)

[Civil Service Employment Opportunities](#)

[NAF Employment Opportunities](#)

[Air Force Bands/Outreach](#)

## ►THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

**Dec. 4, 1942** - Ninth Air Force sent 24 B-24s to attack ships at the Naples docks in the first U.S. Army Air Forces air strike against mainland Italy in World War II.

**Dec. 5, 1974** - Sikorsky Aircraft delivered the last HH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter to the Air Force.

**Dec. 6, 2002** - The Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB had the X-45A unmanned combat air vehicle and a Global Hawk airborne on test missions at the same time. This marked the first time that two unmanned aircraft from two different programs were airborne simultaneously.

**Dec. 7, 1941** - The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and brought America into World War II. Two waves of Japanese fighters sank four U.S. battleships and damaged nine others. Overall, the surprise attack killed 2,390 personnel, including 193 Airmen at Hickam, Wheeler, and Bellows Fields. They also destroyed 64 Hawaiian Air Force planes. Six Army Air Force pilots shot down 10 enemy planes with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. George S. Welch garnering four kills.

**Dec. 8, 1976** - The full-scale development version of the F-16A Fighting Falcon made its maiden flight at Fort Worth, Texas

**Dec. 9, 2006** - TSgt. Eric M. Olson, a loadmaster from the 313<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, helped his aircrew safely land a C-17 hit by enemy fire while leaving Baghdad International Airport. Olson executed his emergency checklists, tended to a wounded passenger, and calmly readied the other passengers for an emergency landing. For his actions, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross Jan. 11, 2005.

**Dec. 10, 1965** - Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara announced the development of the FB-111, a strategic and tactical F-111 bomber to replace the retiring B-58s and B-52s.

## ►CURRENT ISSUES

[New personal property allotment rule implemented to protect Airmen](#)

Enforcement action by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to eliminate a mechanism that predatory lenders use to take advantage of service members who finance purchases using the military pay allotment system has led to a policy of prohibiting paycheck allotments for consumer goods purchases.

[Thrift Savings Plan limits increase for 2015](#)

The Internal Revenue Service has increased both regular and catch-up limits for the coming tax year for Thrift Savings Plan contributions.

## ►PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Master sergeant evaluation board, SNCO promotion changes coming in spring 2015](#)

Focused on ensuring that job performance is the most important factor when evaluating and identifying Airmen for promotion, the phased implementation of the Enlisted Evaluation System and Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) will be implemented over the next 16 months.

[Officer attaché duty applications due Dec. 29](#)

Applications for senior defense official/defense attaché, air attaché and assistant attaché will be accepted until Dec. 29.

[Outstanding AF Civilian Employee of the Year nominations due](#)

Outstanding achievement is the criteria for nominations due Jan. 8.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>

The Defense Media Activity produces *Commander's Call Topics* weekly. For questions or comments about this, or other DMA products, send an e-mail to [afproducts@dma.mil](mailto:afproducts@dma.mil).

To subscribe to AF news and information products online, go to

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDODAF/subscriber/new>.