

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - Active-duty Soldiers nearing the end of their service contract may not be getting out of the Army as soon as they might have expected.

Army officials announced June 1 the latest Active Army Stop Loss/Stop Movement Program for active Army units preparing for deployment overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Policies in place for reserve-component Soldiers have not changed.

The changes in the Active Army program synchronize the process of units being notified of deployments with the Stop Loss actions, according to Lt. Col. Franklin Childress, public affairs officer with the Army's G-1. The previous process required a separate action to request the initiation of Stop Loss after the unit received official deployment notification.

The Active Army Stop Loss/Stop Movement program will be effective 90 days prior to the Earliest Arrival Date, or EAD, specified in the deployment order, according to Childress. Soldiers will remain affected by Stop Loss/Stop Movement under the program up to 90 days after they redeploy to their home station.

The additional days following redeployment, according to Childress, are to take care of the Soldiers. The time will be used to allow for any medical or dental needs to be taken care of as well as any other out-processing that needs to be completed.

"The focus is on Soldiers taking care of Soldiers," said Childress. Soldiers who have completed all of their out-processing needs can get approval from their command to be released in less than 90 days.

The new program does allow for some separations of Soldiers. The following active-Army soldiers are normally not subject to Stop Loss:

- Soldiers eligible for mandatory retirement;

- Soldiers eligible for disability retirement, separation for physical disability or other physical conditions;

- Soldiers pending separation for the convenience of the government such as surviving sons and daughters, parenthood or pregnancy;

- Soldiers pending separation because of dependency or hardship;

- Soldiers whose quality of service warrants separation;

- Soldiers in violation of the Army's homosexual conduct policy;

- Soldiers pending separation who are conscientious objectors, and;

- Soldiers who do not meet military personnel security program standards.

The focus of Army deployments is on trained and ready units, not individuals, Army personnel officials said. They explained that losses caused by separation, retirements and reassignments have the potential to adversely impact training, cohesion, and stability in deploying units.

Without a Stop Loss/Stop Movement program, an Army divisional-sized unit may require the reassignment of more than 4,000 Soldiers from other units to achieve a complete reset of the division and ensure a deployable strength of 100 percent, officials said. They said this unmanaged turbulence would preclude the delivery to the warfight of units which have an enhanced combat effectiveness based on stability and having trained together for long periods of time.