1. Effective with the publication of a revised DA Pamphlet 27-162, Claims, the US Army Claims Service has imposed a maximum allowable (MA) payment limit of $1,500 on claims for damage, destruction or loss of personal property shipped pursuant to a unit deployment or redeployment (often referred to as “conex claims”). This MA will operate in conjunction with a long-standing DOD policy that the Army reiterated in 2008 via two communications to the field. ALARACT 019/2008, DTG 051649Z FEB 08, limits deploying Soldiers to four (4) duffle bags of gear as accompanied baggage (including any personal items), prohibits shipping personal items as cargo on Defense Transportation System (DTS) carriers, and requires shipping excess personal items at Soldiers’ own expense. A supplement to this message was provided in an October 2008 message, SUBJECT: Clarification of Existing Personal/Accompanied Baggage Policies For Travel Into/Out of the USCENTCOM AOR, DTG 301411Z Oct 08, to further explain the entitlement and add the following requirement, with certain limited exceptions (e.g., effects of human remains), that: any personal baggage in excess of service limitations for deployment to CENTCOM AOR must be shipped home at member’s expense via US postal service, UPS, FEDEX, DHL or similar means.”

2. Previously, USARCS has not paid for loss or damage to personal property incurred during a deployment/re-deployment shipment where the property was shipped on DTS carriers in containers that also carried military supplies and equipment. Shipping personal property violated DOD policy and payment was often denied unless the Soldier-claimant’s commander had authorized such a shipment in this manner. Post 9/11 despite DOD’s policy, commands have routinely permitted deploying Soldiers to pack personal items in cargo containers with military equipment. Flat-screen TVs, DVD players, laptops, DVD collections, I-Pods, I-Pads, musical instruments, and many other comforts sold by AAFES for use in-country have routinely been shipped home via DTS carriers. When Soldiers found their property damaged, destroyed, or missing they filed claims for such items. USARCS has been known to deny payment for such instances. DTS (CONEX) shipments are frequently opened at trans-shipment points and items are confiscated or pilfered. Other such shipments have been subject to attacks or other incidents. Tough boxes are not constructed to provide safe shipment for electronic items and even if the shipment arrives at the destination those items are often damaged or completely destroyed. What
initially was intended to benefit the Soldier, such as free shipment of those items, often results in those items being lost or damaged.

3. The new MA is not intended to relieve the Soldier of the need to substantiate the loss and value of the items claimed. An inventory of the property shipped should be prepared by the member and then verified and co-signed by a NCO or officer. The inventory should include a short description of the item as well as identifying information such as the name, model number, and serial number of the item if applicable and then inventory should be kept separate from the shipment to ensure further access to the record of shipment. The MA is intended to limit losses for Soldiers relying on their commands’ permission to ship personal property via DTS. As a preventive claims matter and in fairness to the Soldier and commander, claims personnel and unit legal advisors must coordinate closely with unit command and transportation staff to ensure that all parties are aware of the restrictive shipment policy, the dangers to personal property when shipping it via DTS carriers, and the MA in time to enable the deploying command’s leadership to effectively manage such shipments. This policy should be briefed by either the command or by the Transportation Office at every deployment/re-deployment briefing so that Soldiers may make other non-government shipping arrangements if needed. This briefing is necessary to make Soldiers aware of the limitations in payment for such damages or losses and allow the Soldier to make decisions regarding what items to ship or what items to leave behind. If you have questions contact the Center for Personnel Claims Support at 502-626-3000.