

Christmas scammers lurking in cyberland

Chances are that you are getting fewer Christmas cards than you used to — and when you do, they are just as likely to be the electronic kind as opposed to those that show up in the mailbox at the curb. In some cases, these e-cards don't even say who sent them. Don't click on any links or attachments, even if you think you know who addressed them to you. Even the most well-meaning friends and family can inadvertently send malware with their holiday wishes.

Scam artists are looking to take advantage of your good nature in this giving season. All kinds of legitimate nonprofits are asking for donations to give kids gifts, collect for the homeless or help with the recent tragedy. Charity scams, especially this time of year, may try to look legit by copying the look or links from these real organizations. Don't click on any of those links or give to an online solicitation. Look up the charity yourself, ensure that it is real, and make a donation through the public web portal.

Package delivery scams are a real problem this time of year, too. If you get multiple shipments to your home — sometimes daily — you may forget what you ordered when. In this scam, the fraudster texts or emails you to tell you there was a problem with

a package delivery. He may ask for a "redelivery fee" — or the link you just clicked on is a "phishing" attack where you have given the scammer access to your computer. Keep track of what you bought and when it should arrive. If you receive such a notice from a delivery company — don't respond to the text or email — call the company directly.

In a twist to this scam — you pay for an item, but the seller takes your money and never sends you the package. He spoofs a tracking number and makes it look as if a delivery company dropped the package at your home. You assume someone stole the item from your front porch. In this case, make sure you check with the delivery company to ensure that your address matches the tracking company's info.

After all this holiday stress, you may be looking to get away. This is the perfect time for the fraudster to pitch you on a cheap vacation to a luxury resort. The plane tickets and hotel stay may not be real, or you may get to the "resort" and find out it wasn't what you were expecting. If you need a tropical escape, deal with mainstream companies and travel agents to ensure you get the trip you need.

If you have been a victim of a cyber scam, file a report at www.ic3.gov.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters Band of Brothers hosted Robert Maxwell, Medal of Honor recipient.

Veterans host MOH recipient

Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and U.S. Army veteran Robert Maxwell of Bend was the honored guest of the Oregon Band of Brothers Sisters Chapter at their regular weekly luncheon.

Maxwell was recognized for his courageous and selfless combat action in World War II, which saved the lives of a number of fellow soldiers. The Congressional Medal of Honor is our nation's highest military honor. At 97, Maxwell is the oldest living recipient of the medal.

To honor Maxwell and other Medal of Honor recipients, the State of Oregon has designated Highway 20 from Newport to Nyssa, Idaho, as a Medal of Honor Highway.

Highway 20 runs through Sisters. "I felt honored to be in the

presence of, and to shake Mr. Maxwell's hand," said Lyle Musel, Band of Brothers secretary, a sentiment shared by all members present.

The Sisters Band of Brothers is a veterans fraternal and support group open to

anyone who has served in the military. The group meets for luncheon every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. at Takoda's Restaurant in Sisters.

Veterans of all the U.S. military branches are welcome.

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