



IMCOM-Europe RETIREE BULLETIN



VOLUME VII

December 2010

Produced by Retirement Services Office, IMCOM-Europe
ATTN: IMEU-HRM-RSO, Unit 29055,
APO AE 09081-9055

Expires 1 year from the date of publication.

The IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin is an authorized periodical published in accordance with AR 600-8-7 by the RSO, IMCOM-Europe (IMEU-HRM-RSO), Unit 29055, APO AE 09081-9055.

- Telephone: DSN 379-6029 or civilian 06202-80-6029, e-mail: rsoae@eur.army.mil
- Website: http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/divisions/hr_milper_serv_rso.asp

The Director, IMCOM-Europe, has determined that publication of this bulletin is necessary in the transaction of public business as required by law. Use of funds for printing this bulletin was approved by IMCOM-Europe on 1 December 2008 in accordance with AR 25-30. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information and guidance on laws, regulations, and policy affecting retirees and their Family members or survivors in Europe.

The views and opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army, USAREUR, or IMCOM-Europe.

COMMANDER AND EDITORIAL STAFF:

General Carter F. Ham
Commanding General, USAREUR
Ms. Diane M. Devens
Director, IMCOM-Europe
Mr. Michael L. Malone
IMCOM-Europe Retirement Services Officer/Editor

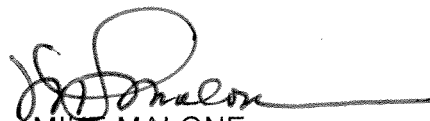


GLEN L. SNOW
Chief, Personnel Services Branch

Dear Retirees, Family Members, and Annuitants:

Hopefully you all will have a happy holiday season and I look forward to meeting and talking with you about the Retiree issues. The more we talk, the better I understand the individual issues facing you all. Please support the garrison Retiree Appreciation Days in your local area; it's a great place to get answers to your questions – either from the garrison agency staffs or your fellow Retirees. If nothing else, it's a super social event. We would really like to see you attend. Again, please come! Tentative schedule for 2011 is in this issue.

Sincerely,



MIKE MALONE
IMCOM-Europe RSO



IMCOM-EUROPE RETIREE BULLETIN



DECEMBER 2010

CONTENTS

Transfer of Mannheim RSO Office Duties	2
TRICARE Claims Must Be Filed Within 1 Year.....	2
Medical Services.....	2
Exchange and Commissary Shopping in Germany After Retirement	2
R Boxes in Germany.....	3
German Economy Mailing Address	4
No Social Security COLA for 2011.....	5
Retiree Burial Information.....	5
SOS Outreach Contact Numbers.....	5
Proposed RADs Planned for 2011.....	6
DFAS-Cleveland Representative Visit for October 2011	6
Spouses – Do You Know Where These Documents Are?.....	7
DFAS-Cleveland Mailing Address and Telephone Numbers	7
Who is Your Arrears Beneficiary?.....	7
Retiree’s Last Month Pay.....	8
Retiree Bulletin by E-Mail.....	8
Looking for an RSO	8
MyPay Correspondence Mailing Address.....	8
Army in Europe Retiree Council Website.....	8

Transfer of Mannheim RSO Office Duties

The U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim Retirement Services Office (RSO) will transfer services to the U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg/Heidelberg RSO effective 18 January 2011. Any Mannheim area military retiree or surviving spouse of a military retiree needing retirement services should call the U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg Retirement Services. SSG (R) George Hall, the Garrison Retirement Services Office Volunteer, is in the office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Telephone number is DSN 370-8236, or from a civilian phone 06221-578236. If you cannot reach him and need immediate service, please call Mr. Richard McKeller, the Garrison Retirement Services Officer, at DSN 370-8399, or from a civilian phone 06221-578399. The Baden-Württemberg/Heidelberg RSO is located at the Heidelberg Community Support Center/PX Shopping Center, Bldg 3850, Room 180. GPS Address is Czernyring 14, 69115 Heidelberg

To receive the U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg Retiree Newsletter, call the Retiree Council President Mr. Larry Applebaum at 06224-52741, or e-mail: L-M.Applebaum@t-online.de. Include your full name and mailing address (APO or economy address) in the text of the e-mail.

TRICARE Claims Must Be Filed Within 1 Year

All bills and claims must reach the TRICARE claims center no later than 12 months after the first day you receive care. Claims for inpatient services must be received no later than 12 months after the day you leave the hospital. Claims are filed by completing DD Form 2642.

(Source: United States Army Medical Activity)

Medical Services

Retirees and survivors are reminded that not all medical services offered by host-nation doctors, clinics, or hospitals are covered under

TRICARE. When services are offered by the host-nation medical personnel, individuals need to check with the TRICARE service representative in their area to ensure that TRICARE will cover the service or what part of the service, if any, TRICARE will cover.

By doing this, it could save individuals out-of-pocket expenses.

Exchange and Commissary Shopping in Germany After Retirement

Retired members of the U.S. military services living in Germany (with residence permit), their accompanying dependents, and widow(er)s of Retired military personnel and their dependents, retired reservists (reservists who are otherwise eligible for retirement, but are under 60 years of age – “gray area”), and visiting retirees who are staying in Germany for 30 days or more are authorized use of PX (Post Exchange) and DECA (Defense Commissary Agency) sales facilities in Germany under an agreement between the Customs Executive Agent and the German Ministry of Finance. This agreement **does not apply to retired civilian employees and does not apply in other countries.**

For you and your dependents to shop in U.S. sales outlets, you must first obtain a U.S. Forces Verification of Status of U.S. Forces Retired Personnel / Unaccompanied Dependents (AE Form 550-175K) from military customs offices in Germany. For this, you will need to present the documents listed below in person, and you must intend to live in or visit Germany for 30 days or longer. Military widow(er)s must be residents of Germany. Then take the verification to the German customs office serving your area of residence and you will receive a German Customs Certificate (Pink Card). The Pink Card and your retiree ID card allow you access to post exchanges and commissaries in Germany where you may only buy nonrationed items.

Dependents visiting Germany without their retiree sponsors do not qualify for AE Form

550-175K. Likewise, widow(er)s of military personnel visiting Germany do not qualify for AE Form 550-175K. In addition, military retirees visiting Germany for less than 30 days also do not qualify.

Present the following documents to U.S. Forces Customs office:

Military Retirees

- Military retiree ID card
- Passport (with **valid residence permit** if ordinary resident in Germany)
- For initial registration: DD Form 214

Dependents

- Dependent retiree ID card
- Passport/Personalausweis
- If applicable, valid residence permit

Widows/Widowers

- Dependent retiree ID card
- Passport/Personalausweis
- If applicable, valid residence permit
- For initial registration: death certificate of spouse

Visiting retirees **MUST** stay in Germany for 30 days or longer to qualify and present the following documents:

- Military retiree ID Card
- Passport with entry stamp for Germany
- Proof of length of stay (for example, airline tickets, hotel reservations)

Pink Card holders are required to return to this German customs office no later than the 5th day of every month and present all original cash register sales receipts for the previous month. German customs will levy duties in the amount of 17.5% for items with a single item sales price of less than U.S. dollar equivalent of 50 euros; for items with a single item price of the U.S. dollar equivalent of 50 euros and more, German customs will charge the regular tariff rate, plus 19 percent VAT (Mehrwertsteuer).

Websites are available to help retirees determine their duty rates. A list of the tariff rates used to determine duty rates for specific items in English can be found at <http://www.zolltarifnummern.de>. The euro rate German customs uses to calculate the value of times is available at <http://www.zoll.de>.

If the Pink Card was not used for the validity period, German customs will request a written statement verifying that no purchases have been made and this allows German customs to forward the pink card holder's information to the U.S. Forces for verification purposes.

BEWARE: German Customs has the authority to withdraw your Pink Card if you fail to meet your obligations.

Individuals seeking information should contact their local U.S. Forces Customs Office or the CEA SOFA Office at DSN 370-4996 or civilian 06221-574996 for assistance.

(Source: Information Sheet #4, HQ USAREUR Customs Executive Agency, dated June 2010)

R Boxes in Germany

All authorized Box R patrons are restricted to a 16-ounce limit on mail, both incoming and outgoing, in accordance with DOD policy.

European Union (EU) regulations limit all Box R authorized personnel in Germany to receipt of shipments from commercial mailers that do not exceed 22 euros (30 dollars) in value. The value, as stated on the customs labels or determined by German customs authorities, will be used to determine this threshold. Commercial mailers are for-profit businesses such as Amazon.com, JC Penney, Barnes & Noble, etc.

European Union regulations also limit all Box R authorized personnel in Germany to receipt of shipments from private mailers that do not exceed 45 euros (60 dollars) in value. The value, as stated on the customs labels or determined by German customs authorities,

will be used to determine this threshold. Private mailers are Family members, friends, and relatives.

The above EU restrictions are presently only being enforced in Germany, but other EU countries could enforce them at any time.

The dollar value on the customs form is only used by the postal clerks to determine whether the parcel exceeds the maximum allowable value for delivery. German customs officials will not use the dollar limits shown but normally will use the euro rate applicable for the month the purchases were made. They may also use the actual value based on an examination of the contents. Should there be significant changes in the conversion rate, new dollar values will be established.

Box R personnel should also check with the servicing APO/FPO for any USPS or host-nation specific mailing prohibitions or restrictions before mailing. Some common prohibited, nonmailable items are butane and Zippo lighters, weapons, aerosol cans, alcohol, and lithium batteries.

Some host-nation restricted items may include tobacco, meat or meat by-products, medicines, plants or plant products, perfume, and precious metals.

All Box R mail that exceeds the 16 ounce weight limit or exceeds host-nation monetary limits will be immediately returned to the sender. The intended recipient will be notified in writing of the return. Should an article be seized by German customs authorities the customer will be notified of the seizure and be provided with the address where customs fees can be paid and the article picked up. Items that are prohibited or restricted will not be transferred to the customer. Prohibited or restricted items may be seized, destroyed, or returned to the sender depending on the item and the point where the item was discovered.

(Source: IMCOM-Europe Postal)

German Economy Mailing Address

Over the past couple of years, I have spent a lot of time helping retirees and annuitants correct their German economy addresses and I must say that 95 percent of the addresses now include the 5-digit German postal code and the word Germany in their address.

Three problems still remain:

One is that some retirees and annuitants still insist on putting a "D" before the postal code. Deutsche Post states the "D" should not be entered anymore.

The second problem is the address includes the German state, for example, Hessen, Bavaria. Some people also include Europe in their address. German states or the word Europe should not be included according to the Deutsche Post.

The last problem is the way the address is arranged. Do not use a combination of economy and APO address.

The following is an example of a properly addressed letter according the Deutsche Post:

Ron Retiree
Hauptstrasse 99
11111 Some Town
Germany

If not addressed as shown above, the German Post can return it as an insufficient address (postal codes are extremely important).

Avoid putting symbols in the address, for example, #.

Remember that you receive a lot of mail from other Government agencies, like Army Echoes and documents from DFAS-Cleveland.

Following the above rules will help you stay informed about retiree issues and pay.

(Source: Die Postleitzahlen, Deutsche Post, page 22)

No Social Security COLA for 2011

Monthly Social Security benefits for more than 58 million Americans will not automatically increase in 2011, the Social Security Administration announced in a News Release, October 15, 2010. Making this the second straight year that Social Security beneficiaries will not see an increase in their monthly benefit.

Enacted by Congress in 1972, COLA (cost of living adjustment) is an automatic adjustment in benefits that occurs annually.

The purpose of the COLA is to ensure that the purchasing power of the Social Security Income benefits is not eroded by inflation. It is based on the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers from the third quarter of the last year a COLA was determined (2008) to the third quarter of the current year. If there is no increase, there can be no COLA.

(Source: SSA website)

Retiree Burial Information

Military retirees, their spouses, and minor children may be buried in national cemeteries. There is no charge for opening or closing of graves. **Arrangement and expenses** such as obtaining the services of the funeral director, selecting a funeral home, preparation of the remains, casketing, and transportation to the national cemetery **are the responsibility of the survivors or the deceased's estate.**

The remains of retirees or their Family members who die while overseas may be transported to CONUS aboard military aircraft or DOD contracted aircraft from the overseas point of debarkation to the nearest point of embarkation in CONUS at no cost, on a space-available basis. All onward costs are the responsibility of the survivors or deceased's estate. Survivors or the deceased's estate must pay all transportation costs from place of death to point of debarkation and are responsible for

all customs requirements if transporting remains over international boundaries.

In most cases, retirees will receive 300 dollars from VA for nonservice-connected deaths or up to 2,000 dollars if service connected.

Note: Most Retiree deaths are not service connected.

In addition, Social Security Administration will provide a lump sum death payment of 225 dollars.

The average retiree is entitled to 550 dollars in burial expenses. In addition, a headstone or marker may be provided by the VA. The VA will ship the headstone or marker free of charge, but will not pay for its placement. All other expenses are the responsibility of the survivor or the deceased's estate.

SOS Outreach Contact Numbers

Benefit Coordinator: Ms. Jodi Motszko
Kilbourne Kaserne, Schwetzingen, Germany
DSN (314) 379-8610 or civilian 0049-(0)6202-80-8610
(Heidelberg, Mannheim, Wiesbaden, Kaiserslautern, Baumholder, BENELUX, Schinnen)

Benefit Coordinator: Ms. Shelley To
Kilbourne Kaserne, Schwetzingen, Germany
DSN (314) 379-6080 or civilian 0049-(0)6202-80-6080
(Grafenwöhr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Bamberg, Garmisch, Schweinfurt, Stuttgart, Vicenza)

Support Coordinator (Germany): Ms. Janine Smith
Kilbourne Kaserne, Schwetzingen, Germany
DSN (314) 379-6560 or civilian 0049-(0)6202-80-6560

Support Coordinator (Italy): Ms. Hallan Batts
Vicenza, Italy
DSN 634-7500 or civilian 0039-(0)444-71-7500

Proposed RADs Planned for 2011

The following RADs are currently planned for 2011:

Heidelberg: Saturday, 15 October 2011, at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion, to commence at 0900 (doors open at 0800 for registration). Representatives from various agencies will be present to answer questions and provide assistance. The following agencies will be represented: DFAS, Federal Benefits Unit, Frankfurt (Social Security Administration (SSA) and VA), and other garrison support agencies. The following issues will be addressed: ID cards and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS); the Installation Access Control System (IACS); and legal, medical, and dental services.

Grafenwöhr: Either 21 or 22 October 2011, final date to be determined, in building 244, to commence at 0900 (doors open at 0800 for registration). Representatives from various agencies will be present to answer questions and provide assistance. The following agencies will be represented: DFAS and other garrison support agencies.

Vicenza: Thursday, 20 October 2011, in the Luna Bubble Annex, to commence at 0900 (doors open at 0800 for registration). Representatives from various agencies will be present to answer questions and provide assistance. The following agencies will be represented: DFAS and other garrison support agencies.

Benelux: Saturday, 29 October 2011, on SHAPE, to commence at 0900 (doors open at 0800 for registration). Representatives from various agencies will be present to answer questions and provide assistance. The following agencies will be represented: DFAS and other garrison support agencies.

Others garrisons have not determined date of event as of date of printing of this bulletin. Most events will end at approximately 1300-1500, depending on attendance.

Always check with your local Retirement Services Officer (RSO) before any event to ensure the location, times, and date have not changed because of military priorities. Events may close earlier, if attendance is down, so do not wait until the last hour to attend.

DFAS-Cleveland Representative Visits for October 2011

A representative from DFAS-Cleveland will travel to Europe to help retirees and annuitants with pay issues and provide one-on-one audits of their pay records.

Below is the tentative schedule and is subject to change:

14 Oct 11: Ramstein AFB 0800-1100 at RSO Office across from ID-card section.

14 Oct 11: Kaiserslautern, Kleber Kaserne 1300-1600, building 3245, room 6.

15 Oct 11: Heidelberg, PHV Pavilion at the RAD.

17 Oct 11: Schinnen, Headquarters Building, RSO Office.

18 Oct 11: Wiesbaden, building 1023W, RSO Office, room 106.

20 Oct 11: Vicenza, Luna Bubble Annex, at the RAD

21 Oct 11: Garmisch, ACS Bldg Artillery Kaserne 1300-1600 (could be canceled if Grafenwöhr holds RAD on this date.

22 Oct 11: Grafenwöhr, building 244, at the RAD (May be 21 Oct 11).

24 Oct 11: Hohenfels, 0900-1500, building 10, CPF Bldg.

25 Oct 11: Bamberg 0800-1100, building 2790, 2d Floor, RSO Office.

25 Oct 11: Schweinfurt, Conn Bks, 1300-1600, building 40, Basement

26 Oct 11: Ansbach, 0900-1500.

27 Oct 11: Stuttgart, 0900-1600.

29 Oct 11: Benelux, 0900-1300 SHAPE Chapel at the RAD.

Check with your local RSO for the hours of these events.

Spouses—Do You Know Where These Documents Are?

Spouses should know the location of the following documents:

- Marriage certificate (and divorce papers if the deceased or spouse were married before).
 - Immigration or naturalization papers.
 - Separation documents from each period of military service (DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) and a copy of the retirement orders if the reason for separation from Service is not shown on the latest DD Form 214 as “retirement.” It is **essential** that this document is **on hand**.
 - Military health records pertaining to the condition of the Soldier at the time of retirement, plus all correspondence with the Department of Veterans Affairs pertaining to any medical claims.
 - Social security number (SSN), taxpayer identification number (TIN), and cards (for all Family members).
 - Last (or recent) RAS from DFAS-Cleveland. DFAS-Cleveland normally issues one RAS per year in December.
 - Wills, titles, and other applicable documents concerning personal property owned.
 - All insurance policies. U.S. companies will request copies of the original death certificate, including cause of death, in English.
 - Income tax records (for the last 3 years recommended).
 - Copies of deeds, mortgages, rental contracts, and other applicable documents for all real estate owned.
 - Documents referring to bank accounts (for example, checking, savings, loans, annuities, securities, stocks, bonds).
 - References to safe deposit boxes.
 - Any reference to outstanding debts.
- (NOTE:** Many credit card companies carry insurance on the life of the cardholder. This may pay off any outstanding debts on the card when the company is notified of the death of the cardholder).

DFAS-Cleveland Mailing Address and Telephone Numbers

DFAS-Cleveland addresses and telephone numbers for mail-handling operations are as follows:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retirement Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130

Telephone: 800-321-1080
216-522-5955
Fax: 800-469-6559

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London, KY 40742-7131

Telephone: 800-321-1080
216-522-5955
Fax: 800-982-8459

For Germany only: telephone 0800-5891634

NOTE: “800” numbers are not toll-free when calling from Europe except for the Germany only number indicated above. You must dial “001” instead of “1” to call from Europe. Ensure that the last four digits of your SSN and signature are on all faxed pages. Addresses may also be changed online through the MyPay website at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

Who Is Your Arrears Beneficiary?

This area continues to be a major problem at DFAS-Cleveland.

Who have you designated as your arrears beneficiary for your last month of retirement pay? We do not know on which day we will die; therefore, you should ensure that information on your arrears beneficiary is current. Contact your local RSO about completing DD Form 2894 (Designation of Beneficiary Information).

Retiree's Last Month Pay

The month a retiree dies, his or her last-month check will be recouped by DFAS either from the bank or the spouse and the retiree will have his or her account audited and then closed. There are many cases where monies are not returned; therefore, the annuitant payments of the Survivor Benefit Plan are not started because the retiree's account cannot be closed out.

Retiree Bulletin by E-Mail

If you wish to receive the Retiree Bulletin by e-mail, please go to <https://aepubs.army.mil/ae/public/index.aspx>, at the top, click on *Retiree*, provide the information requested in either Section I (add new) or Section II (update or delete). This is a one-time registration. Once you subscribe all future Retiree Bulletins will be sent to you automatically by e-mail. If you change your e-mail address, you must register again.

Looking for an RSO

If you live outside Belgium, Germany, Italy, or the Netherlands and need to contact an RSO, contact the IMCOM-Europe RSO at DSN (314) 379-6029 or civilian 0049-06202-80-6029.

MyPay Correspondence Mailing Address

If you are a retiree, work for the Government as a civilian, and use MyPay, remember that changing your address on the civilian side of the MyPay screen will not automatically change your retiree correspondence mailing address. You must also enter the information on the retiree side. In addition, when changing an address in MyPay, remember that APO and FPO addresses are not foreign addresses; they should be entered in the continental United States portion. Many APO and FPO addresses include information that causes problems at postal operations. APO and FPO addresses should include only the information that the postal personnel provided you. Please take the time to ensure that the correct section was used and all required information was inputted.

Individuals must manually remove all previous inputted information on all lines when changing an address. In Europe, there are currently approximately 650 APO and FPO addresses that are nondeliverable because of incorrect address information.

Army in Europe Retiree Council Website

The Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC) website can be found at a link at the bottom right of the USAREUR G1 website at <http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/index.htm>.

Individuals desiring information about the council are welcome to visit the site. The site includes information on mission, history, achievements, current objectives, composition, functions, representation, liaison, and links.

IMCOM-Europe RSOs

GERMANY

ANSBACH

USAG Ansbach
(RSO)
Unit 28614
APO AE 09177-8614
Tel. 49-0981-183-3301
rsoansbach@eur.army.mil

BAMBERG

USAG Bamberg
(RSO)
Unit 27535
APO AE 09139-7535
Tel. 49-0951-300-7514
rsobamberg@eur.army.mil

BAUMHOLDER

USAG Baumholder
(RSO)
Unit 23746
APO AE 09034-3746
Tel. 49-06783-6-6080
rsobaumholder@eur.army.mil

GRAFENWÖHR

USAG Grafenwöhr
(RSO)
Unit 28130
APO AE 09114-8130
Tel. 49-09641-83-8539
imae-graf.rso@eur.army.mil

HEIDELBERG

USAG Baden-Württemberg
(RSO)
Unit 29245
APO AE 09102-9245
Tel. 49-06221-57-8399
rsohd@eur.army.mil

KAISERSLAUTERN

USAG Kaiserslautern
(RSO)
Unit 23152
APO AE 09227-3152
Tel. 49-0631-411-8838
rsokl@eur.army.mil

MANNHEIM (CLOSES 2011)

See Heidelberg

SCHWEINFURT

USAG Schweinfurt
(RSO)
CMR 457
APO AE 09033
Tel. 49-09721-96-8812
rso.schweinfurt@eur.army.mil

STUTT GART

USAG Stuttgart
(RSO)
Unit 30401
APO AE 09107-0401
Tel. 49-07031-15-3442
usag-s.rsc@eur.army.mil

WIESBADEN

USAG Wiesbaden
(RSO)
Unit 29623
APO AE 09096-9623
Tel. 49-0611-705-7668
rsowiesbaden@eur.army.mil

BELGIUM

USAG Benelux
US NATO/SHAPE SUPT GP
(RSO)
CMR 451
APO AE 09708
Tel. 32-65-44-6238
rso.usagbenelux@eur.army.mil

THE NETHERLANDS

USAG Schinnen
(RSO)
Unit 21602
APO AE 09703-1602
Tel. 31-46-443-7320
rso.schinnen@eur.army.mil

ITALY

USAG Vicenza
(RSO)
Unit 31401
APO AE 09630-1401
Tel. 39-0444-71-7262
rsovicenza@eur.army.mil

IMCOM-EUROPE/OUT OF SECTOR

IMCOM-Europe
(IMEU-HRM-RSO)
Unit 29055
APO AE 09081-9055
Tel. 49-06202-80-6029
rsoae@eur.army.mil