



IMCOM-EUROPE RETIREE BULLETIN



Dec 2017

IMCOM-Directorate Europe (IMEU-GB-RSO), Unit 23103, APO AE 09136-3103

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IMCOM-Directorate Europe Retiree Bulletins are available at <https://aepubs.army.mil/>.

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IMCOM-Europe publishes the Retiree Bulletin twice a year (June and December) in accordance with AR 600-8-7. The Retiree Bulletin is available at <http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/webs/sites/europelife/retiree/index.html> and is also distributed by e-mail to retirees who subscribed to receiving the Retiree Bulletin by e-mail. The purpose of the Retiree Bulletin is to keep retirees, their spouses, and family members informed of their rights and privileges, to update them on developments in the Army, and to inspire goodwill and a desire to support the Army in the civilian community. You may send inquiries or comments to the Editor about the IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin to IMCOM-Europe (IMEU-GB-RSO), Unit 23103, APO AE 09136-3103. You may also contact the IMCOM-Europe Retirement Services Officer by calling military 544-1530, civilian 0049-611-143-544-1530, or e-mail: usarmy.sembach.ret-svcs@mail.mil.

Please direct all other questions to the retirement services office at your local United States Army garrison (page 9).

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Dear Retirees, Family Members, and Annuitants:

Hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you at one of the retiree events during 2018. Remember, the quicker you bring up issues and problems, the quicker we can tackle them and find solutions where possible.

Stacy Hendrix
IMCOM Directorate-
Europe RSO

CONTACTING THE IMCOM DIRECTORATE EUROPE RSO

The IMCOM Director-Europe RSO is located on Sembach Kaserne and may be contacted by telephone at military 314-544-1530 or civilian 0049-(0)611-143-544-1530, Monday through Friday only, from 0800 to 1600.

CONTACT DETAILS AND SERVICE HOURS FOR THE FEDERAL BENEFITS UNITS, EUROPE CONSULATE

The Federal Benefits Unit (FBU), Consulate, administers Federal benefits programs for Americans residing in **Rome(Italy)**, **Benelux**, **Austria**, **Germany**, **Liechtenstein**, and **Switzerland**.

The FBU may be contacted as follows:

Rome, Phone: 0039-06-46741, E-mail: uscitizensrome@state.gov

Benelux, Phone: 0031-30-253-1240, E-mail: fbu.netherlands@ssa.gov

Austria, Contact Frankfurt FBU

Liechtenstein and Switzerland, phone: 0033-143-12-2222, E-mail: FBU.Paris@ssa.gov

Frankfurt, Phone: 0049-69-90-555-1100, E-mail address: fbu.frankfurt@ssa.gov
Opening Hours: Monday through Friday 0800 to 1100

The office is closed on German and American holidays and on the last Thursday of the month. The FBU does not help retirees and annuitants with military retired-pay issues. Please refer to the last page of this bulletin to find an RSO to help you with issues involving DFAS-Cleveland. You may also contact DFAS-Cleveland directly (contact information is on page 6).

SCHEDULED USAG RETIREE APPRECIATION DAYS (RADS) IN 2018

Please note that event dates are subject to change based on military priorities. Always check with your local garrison Soldier for Life – Retirement Services Office before departing for an event.

USAG Ansbach: A RAD will be held on Wednesday, 17 October 2018, at the Von Steuben Community Center on Bismarck Kaserne from 0900 to 1400 (doors open at 0900 for registration and close at 1300). Medical services will include flu shots and other vaccinations, medical screening, diet counseling, eye exams, blood-pressure screening, blood-sugar testing, and pharmacy information. Representatives of the following services will attend: The Chaplain's Office, customs, Red Cross, Army Community Services (ACS), the ID-card office, the passport office, the Installation Access Control System, the legal office, local associations, AAFES, and the Service Credit Union. Representatives of the following outside agencies will attend: The Veterans Administration, and DFAS-Cleveland for Retired-pay records audit and assistance. In addition, the USAG has requested the FBU, Frankfurt, to attend the event. Please note that military missions may cause the location to change.

USAG Bavaria: The RAD will be held on Tuesday, 16 October 2018, in Tower View Conference Center (TVCC), BLDG 209, Tower Barracks, from 0830 to 1500 (doors open at 0730 for registration and close at 1500). The opening ceremony will begin at 0830. Medical services will include flu shots and other vaccinations, pharmacy services, blood-pressure screening, diabetes visual screening of feet, nutrition counseling, prescription refills, ordering of eyeglasses, education and counseling on smoking cessation and exercise/fitness. Dental services will include exams, cleanings, oral cancer screening, and x-rays. Representatives of the following agencies will attend: Red Cross, ACS/SOS, AAFES, Service Credit Union, DFMWR, VFW, Veteran's Administration, and USO. Representatives from DFAS and the

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FBU (for SSA information), will attend if they have funding. Please note that military missions may cause the location and services to change.

USAG Benelux: On Saturday, 20 October 2018, the USAG will host a RAD in the medical clinic at SHAPE from 0800 to 1200 (doors open at 0800 for registration and close at 1100). Garrison support agencies will be represented. Representatives from DFAS-Cleveland will also attend to audit retired-pay records and provide assistance. Please note that military missions may cause the location to change.

Schinnen Community: On Friday, 19 October 2018, the RAD will be in building 39, Community Activities Center, from 0900 to 1400 Garrison support agencies will be represented. Representatives from DFAS-Cleveland will also attend to audit retired-pay records and provide assistance. Please note that military missions may cause the location to change.

USAG Italy: On Friday, 12 October 2018, the USAG will host a RAD from 0800 to 1300 for all retirees and their family members. Anticipated services include dental and medical (for example, audiology, blood-pressure screening, diabetes information, family practice, immunizations, infection control, nutrition care, occupational therapy, orthopedics, optometry, pharmacy, TRICARE services, wellness advice). A representative from DFAS-Cleveland will be available, and the FBU, Rome, has been invited to attend. Currently, the event is scheduled to be held at the Golden Lion Conference Center (Bldg 311) on Camp Ederle. Please note that military missions may cause the location to change.

USAG Rheinland-Pfalz and Ramstein AFB: A joint RAD will be held on Thursday, 18 October 2018, at the Ramstein Officers Club from 0800 to 1400 (doors open at 0800 for registration and close at 1400). Community services will be available. DFAS-Cleveland and other community support agencies will be represented.

USAG Stuttgart: The RAD will be held on Thursday, 25 October 2018, at the Swabian Special Events Center on Patch Barracks (subject to change) from 0800 to 1400 (doors open at 0800 for registration and close 1300). Medical services will include flu shots and other vaccinations, diet counseling, eye exams, medical screening, blood-pressure screening, blood-sugar testing, and pharmacy information.

Ophthalmology services may also be offered, depending on personnel availability. Dental services will provide retirees only with oral hygiene information and exams. Representatives of the following services will attend: the Office of the Chaplain, customs, Red Cross, ACS, the ID-card office, the passport office, the Installation Access Control System, the National Archives and Records Administration, the legal office, local associations, the USO, AAFES, and the Service Credit Union. Representatives of DFAS-Cleveland, and the FBU, Frankfurt (for Social Security Administration (SSA) and Veterans Administration (VA) information), will attend if they have funding. The VFW and USAA will also attend.

USAG Wiesbaden: The Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day (AE RAD) hosted by USAG Wiesbaden will be on Saturday, 27 October 2018, in the USAREUR MCC from 0800 to 1400 (doors open for registration at 0800 and close at 1200). The event will include a speakers' program. The Commanding General, USAREUR, and the Co-Chairman, Chief of Staff, Army Retiree Council, are invited to speak. The speakers' portion of the event will be from 0900 to 1000. Representatives from garrison agencies (for example, the ID-card office and Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, the Installation Access Control System, legal assistance, USAREUR Regional Medical Command, USAREUR Regional Dental Command) will be available during the day to answer questions and provide services. In addition, a representative from the FBU, Frankfurt will assist with SSA and VA

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questions.

Would You Like a Speaker from HQDA at Your Next RAD?

Here's your opportunity to invite a speaker from HQDA to speak at your installation's Retiree Appreciation Day! Please contact Ms. Maria Bentinck at (703) 571-7230. Available speakers include LTG (Ret) Jim Lovelace and SMA (Ret) Ray Chandler, the co-chairs of the CSA Retired Soldier Council, Mr. Mark Overberg, Director, Army Retirement Services, and Ms. Bentinck, the Deputy Director.

New and Renewed Military Retiree ID Cards

Did you know that Military Retirees must update their DEERS record and Retired Identification Card when becoming eligible for Medicare, normally at age 65. Once updated, your new Identification Card will never expire. Additionally, the new Identification Cards no longer display your Social Security Number. There is a new DoD ID Number on the front and a DoD Benefits number printed on the back. If your Retiree Identification Card currently displays your Social Security Number, you may get a new Identification Card anytime. Save time by making an online appointment. Visit the Appointment Scheduler at <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>. Remember to bring 2 forms of government issued Identification. If you need to locate your nearest Identification office, use the DEERS/RAPIDS Site Locator at [/www.dmdc.osd.mil/rs/](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rs/).

Veterans Identification Card

All honorably discharged veterans of every era will be able to get a photo identification card from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) starting in November due to a law passed in 2015.

The law, known as the [Veterans Identification Card Act 2015](#), orders the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID to any honorably discharged veteran who applies. The card must contain the veteran's name, photo and a non-Social Security identification number, the law states. A VA official on Wednesday confirmed the cards are on track to be available nationwide starting in November. Veterans may apply for the card online, but a timeline for how long it will take to receive a card after application has not been finalized, the official said. No details were released on when that application process will open, what information veterans will need when applying or the web address they will use.

Although the law states that the VA may charge a fee for the card, the official said no fee is planned. Only **Veterans** enrolled in the **VA** health care system may receive a VHIC. If you are not currently enrolled, you may **apply** online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387). You may also **apply** for enrollment in person at your local **VA** medical facility.

However there is no details about issuing the VA card here in Europe, we are checking on this issue. Honorably discharged veterans of all eras can now apply for a new veterans ID card, officials with the Department of Veterans Affairs said Wednesday. To receive the card veterans must log in to Vets.gov using either the ID.me verification system or a DS log-in. Users will then be able to apply for the hard-copy card by verifying their personal details through the website and by submitting a copy of a valid government issued-ID as well as a shoulders-up photo to the site. Once the application is complete, users can expect to receive their new ID card within 60 days, officials said in a release. Officials said users will also be able to receive a digital copy of the card by mid-December. The link for the application is found at the bottom of the Vets.gov homepage under the words "Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card." The ID cards are meant to offer a way for veterans to prove their service without carrying a copy of their DD-214 form, which contains sensitive personal information, such as veterans' Social Security numbers. The new IDs will not, however, qualify as official government-issued identification for air travel or other uses. The ID card program is voluntary. The VA was ordered to provide the cards in a law passed by Congress in 2015. Some veterans, such as those who receive health benefits from the VA and military retirees, already have IDs that can provide proof of service. WWW.VETS.GOV

Headstones, Markers and Medallions for Retirees

General Information

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible Veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death. A Government-furnished headstone or marker may be provided for eligible Veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone. A Government-furnished medallion may be provided for eligible Veterans who served on or after Apr. 6, 1917 and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. Bronze niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains. The style chosen must be permitted by the officials in charge of the private cemetery where it will be placed. When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, state Veterans' cemetery, or military post/base cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next of kin or authorized representative. Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a Government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state Veteran's cemetery, or military post/base cemetery. Contact information is 1-800-697-6947, or via e-mail at: mps.headstones@va.gov

Note: There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself, however arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense.

Presidential Memorial Certificate

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is a gold-embossed paper certificate bearing the official signature of the President of the United States. It honors the memory of a deceased Veteran and expresses the country's grateful recognition of his or her service in the Armed Forces.

HISTORY

This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by each subsequent President.

ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program through the National Cemetery Administration.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible recipients include the deceased Veteran's next of kin, relatives and friends, or an authorized service representative acting on their behalf.

REQUESTS

A copy of the deceased Veteran's military discharge document along with a copy of the death certificate must be provided when requesting a PMC. Eligible recipients may request a PMC in person at any VA Regional Office, by U.S. mail or by toll-free fax.

A request form is available on the National Cemetery Administration website, www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp.
By Mail: Presidential Memorial Certificates (41B3) 5109 Russell Road
By Toll-Free Fax: Quantico, VA 22134-3903 (800) 455-7143

To check on the status of your request please call (202) 632-7300.

The DFAS-Cleveland centralized mail-handling operation addresses and telephone numbers are as follows:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service

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U.S. Military Retirement Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200

Telephone: 1-800-321-1080
Telephone: 216-522-5955
Fax: 1-800-469-6559

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1300

Telephone: 1-800-321-1080
Telephone: 216-522-5955
Fax: 1-800-982-8459

For Germany only (toll-free): 0800-5891634 (dial as shown). This number cannot be reached from a military telephone.

Ensure the last four digits of your Social Security number and your signature are on all pages sent by fax. You can change your address online through the MyPay website at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

2018 Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA)

The 2018 COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustments) increase is 2.0% according to the U.S. government. COLA is based on the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers for the third quarter of this year. The 2.0 percent increase in the cost-of-living adjustment is about a \$25 monthly benefit increase for the average retiree, or about \$300 per year.

Hurricanes Harvey and Irma caused a lot of damage and hardship but may have also contributed to the highest increase since 2012 through higher gas prices and other increased costs due to the storms.

The 2017 COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustments) increase was just 0.3%. COLA impacts benefits to about 61 million social security recipients, 1.96 million military retirees and 4 million disabled veterans and 8 million SSI beneficiaries.

2018 Cola Effective & Payment Dates:

- Retired military veterans, VA rates for compensation and pension for disabled veterans and surviving families will be effective December 1, 2017 and will be reflected on the first check to be paid on December 31, 2017.
- Social Security benefits will be effective beginning with December 2017 benefits, which are payable in January 2018.
- Federal SSI payment levels will begin on December 29, 2017.

PROBLEMS WITH APO ADDRESSES

Many retirees maintain an APO mailing address for both DFAS-Cleveland and DOD civilian pay. That in itself is not a problem. The problem is the way the address is written. The address should not have anything other than the following items in the address: CMR, Box number, and APO number. There should not be a city, location, or other identifying feature indicated.

Here is a sample of a properly addressed APO address:

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CMR 467, BOX-R 0001
APO AE 09096-0001

Here is a sample of an improperly addressed APO address:

Wiesbaden Army Post Office USAREUR IG Office
CMR 467, BOX 0001
APO AE 09096-0001
Wiesbaden, Germany

Adding the additional items could cause a delay in delivering your mail. Also, if the address includes a German city or location, the marked item could be subject to German customs control. Postal code plus-4 addresses should be used when addressing an APO box number. If you do not know your plus 4 postal code, ask your local community mail-service center for assistance.

RETIREE BULLETIN BY E-MAIL

The IMCOM-Europe Retiree Bulletin is issued only by e-mail. IMCOM-Europe stopped hard-copy mailings in June 2013. If you did not receive a copy by e-mail, please contact your local retiree council, RSO, or send email to usarmy.sembach.ret-svcs@mail.mil.

RETIREE INFO LIST SERVER

The Retiree Info List Server is a means of automatically receiving e-mail containing information of interest to retired Soldiers and their families and survivors living in Europe. If you do not receive postings but would like to, you can subscribe to the Retiree Info List Server by clicking on the Subscribe Here link at the lower right-hand corner of the USAREUR G1 website <http://www.eur.army.mil/g1/> and following the instructions that come up. Should you later decide you no longer want to receive postings, follow the instructions for unsubscribing, which are provided at the bottom of each posting?

Absentee Voting Overseas

Overseas citizen voters face a specific set of voting challenges but we provide you the information and resources so you can successfully vote absentee. Regardless of where you are in the world, it is important to know there are people and resources available to assist you with the absentee voting process. We can help!

Start the process as soon as possible with an FPCA

Most States require you to register to vote to start the absentee voting process. We encourage you to use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The FPCA is a form you can use to register to vote and request absentee ballots for the year. We suggest that you send in a new FPCA every year and when you move.

Many States allow you to submit your FPCA electronically and all States allow for at least one form of electronic transmission of your blank ballot. Mail delivery times will vary based on where you are and customs requirements. Mail your materials early enough to account for the mail delivery time. Using electronic options can help reduce the ballot transit time for your election materials.

It only takes a few quick steps to make sure your vote is counted no matter where you are in the world. The FPCA can be completed by using the FPCA online assistant, filling out the PDF or picking

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up a hard copy version from your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. The online assistant will guide you through the process of completing the form. Once you complete the form, you will be able to download and print the PDF package to sign and send to your election office. This PDF package even includes a pre-addressed and postage-paid label so you don't have to worry about finding stamps!

What to do if you do not receive your requested State absentee ballot

If you requested your absentee ballot and haven't received it from your State at least 30 days before the election, you can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The FWAB is an emergency backup ballot. This backup ballot can be completed using our FWAB online assistant, by filling out the PDF or picking up a hard copy version from your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. The online assistant will guide you through the process of completing the form. Once you complete the form, you will be able to download and print the PDF package to sign and send to your election office. This PDF package even includes a pre-addressed and postage-paid label so you don't have to worry about finding stamps! Don't forget a security envelope. (Use a separate blank envelope and write "Security Envelope" on it and place your voted ballot in it. This keeps your vote private.)

Voting Officers Contact Info below:

- IMCOM Europe (Sembach) 0611-143-544-1530
- USAG Ansbach 0980-283-3793
- USAG Bavaria 09641-83-8855
- USAG Benelux 32-65-32-5973
- USAG Italy 39-0444-61-7491
- USAG Rheinland-Pfalz 067-836-7255
- USAG Stuttgart 0703-115-2865
- USAG Wiesbaden 0611-143-548-1402

The Retirement Appreciation Days have ended and overall they were successful. The total participation for each Garrison's are below.

- USAG-Ansbach-120 Retirees and family members
- USAG-Bavaria- 240 Retirees and family members
- USAG-Benelux- 30 Retirees and family members
- Site-Schinnen- 83 Retirees and family members
- Kaiserslautern/Ramstein- 405 Retirees and family members
- USAG-Italy- 107 Retirees and family members
- USAG-Stuttgart- 179 Retirees and family members
- USAG-Wiesbaden- 250 Retirees and family members

A total number of 1,414 Retirees/family members attended the events throughout Europe. Most provide services such as medical, dental, Tricare, FBU, DFAS, AAFES, Banking service, VFW, legal, ACS, American Legion and many more services were available. There were no issues overall, however the USAG-Benelux RSO brought up possibly combining Schinnen and Benelux. The below personnel are receiving Vietnam Lapel Pins from Deputy USAG Benelux Garrison Commander Mr. Thomas Joyce during Retirement Appreciation Day.



**IMCOM Directorate-Europe
Retirement Services Offices**

GERMANY

USAG Ansbach

Unit 28614
APO AE 09177-8614
Tel: 0049-(0)9802-83-3301
usarmy.ansbach.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

USAG Bavaria

Unit 28130
APO AE 09114-8130
Tel: 0049-(0)9641-83-8709
usarmy.bavaria.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

USAG Stuttgart

Unit 30401
APO AE 09107-0401
Tel: 0049-(0)7031-15-2010
usarmy.stuttgart.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

Baumholder

Community Unit 23746
APO AE 09034-3746
Tel: 0049-(0)6783-6-7255
usarmy.baumholder.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

**USAG Rheinland-
Pfalz**

Unit 23152
APO AE 09227-3152
Tel: 0049-(0)631-411-8405
usarmy.rheinland-pfalz.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

USAG Wiesbaden

Unit 29623
APO AE 09096-9623
Tel: 0049-(0)611-705-7668
usarmy.wiesbaden.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

BELGIUM

USAG Benelux
US NATO/SHAPE SUPT GP
CMR 451
APO AE 09708
Tel: 0032-65-44-6293
usarmy.benelux.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

NETHERLANDS

Schinnen Community
Unit 21602
APO AE 09703-1602
Tel: 0031-45-526-3475
usarmy.benelux.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

ITALY/AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST

USAG Italy
Unit 31401
APO AE 09630-1401
Tel: 0039-0444-61-7747
usarmy.italy.ret-
svcs@mail.mil

**HQ IMCOM DIRECTORATE-
EUROPE**

IMCOM-Europe RSO

(IMEU-GB-RSO)

Unit 23103
APO AE 09136-3103
Tel: 0049-(0)611-143-544-
1530

usarmy.sembach.ret-svcs@mail.mil

If you are calling from outside of Germany, the country code is 0049.
Do not dial the (0) prefix. (For example, if dialing a number in Frankfurt, dial 0049-69-xxx).

NOTE: RSO offices are open during normal duty hours only.

To report a retiree's death, call the IMCOM Directorate-Europe Casualty Assistance Center at 0049-(0)611-143-544-1340 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).