

U.S.ARMY GARRISON
RHEINLAND-PFALZ,
Military Personnel Division
Retirement Service



FALL IS COMING AND OUR OFFICE TURNS UP THE HEAT!

Greetings for the month of August. My apologies that the newsletter is tardy as we have had many things going on at the same time in your Post-Retirement Services Office. There are some really important events coming up as we enter the latter part of 2024.

The first of these events occurs on 19 Sept. This office and the 21st TSC Legal Team have partnered to present an Estate Planning Workshop. This will be held at the Kleber Kaserne Clock Tower Cafe Conference Room. There will be signs in front of the DFAC to guide you to the right room. The event begins at 1300 - UTC and will feature topics; such as, updating or preparing wills, Advance Directives, and other end of life topics. Of course, we will be present with information on the Next Chapter Preparation and Counseling Service. I encourage you to bring your booklets and pick up the legal document (German and English) that allows your spouse to retrieve your cause of death. This is extremely important when it comes to CONUS agencies.

Many retirees and spouses have shared the challenges they face living in Europe. I will forward these challenges to the local KMC Retiree Council for consideration and possibly escalate them to the USAREUR-AF Retiree Council. Your concerns and comments have made a difference over the past year.

In this edition, we highlight some of the issues reviewed by the April 2024 Council. Special thanks to SGM (RET) Michael Richter, our area's USAREUR-AF representative, for his dedication to elevating your concerns to higher Command.

Only 69 days left until the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD). RSVP's will be going out shortly. We will have Joint Medical and Dental present and flu shots will be issued; plus 28 other agencies just for Retirees. Stay tuned for more details!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Fall is coming and our office turns up the heat.....	1
Erik's Message.....	2
DFAS Information.....	2
European Vacation.....	3
It's Voting Time.....	3-4
August Dates to Remember....	5
Trusted Agents.....	7
Just for Retirees Show.....	7
Estate Planning Workshop.....	7
How can you contact our offices.....	8



**DFAS CUSTOMER SERVICE
INFORMATION**

Military Pay-Army/Navy/Marines

888-332-7411, Option 4, then Option 3

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

Military Pay-Air Force/SpaceForce

800-525-0102 or submit a MyFSS ticket (Total Force Service Center)

Hours of Operations

All hours

Travel Pay

888-332-7411, option 4, then option 1

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

Retired Military and Annuitant Pay

888-332-7411, option 4, then option 2

Retired Pay Only International

Germany—0800-5891634

Self Services Options

888-332-7411, Option 1

Hours of Operations

All hours

Report the Death of a Military Retiree

888-332-7411, Option 2

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

Garnishments

888-332-7411, option 3

**Pay Inquiries Military/Civilian Debts
(Retiree; Annuitant; Military and Travel
Pay)**

888-332-7411, Option 4

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

MyPay Assistance

888-332-7411, Option 5

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

Affordable care Act Questions

888-332-7411, Option 6

Hours of Operations

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET

Out of Service Dept

866-912-6488

ERIK'S MESSAGE

I hope that you are getting as excited as I am in reference to our upcoming Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD). It has truly been an awesome planning time working with our partners from the 86th AW led by MSgt Justin Fleischman and our other volunteers that have stepped forward. We will also be conducting the Retiree Appreciation Month. Your local DeCA Commissaries have partnered with us to present daily drawings for a \$50.00 gift certificate complements of the DeCA vendors. We will be releasing that schedule next month on where you can go and what dates you can sign up for the drawings.

There will be a couple of new agencies present this year and we are excited to welcome them and a new twist on the oldest and youngest Retirees. Music will be provided by the USAREUR-AF Jazz Quartet during breakfast and, as always, the JROTC teams will be there. Federal Benefits Unit and DFAS will have separate private rooms for you to ask your questions.

I would also like to publicly thank the agencies who have come forward to help defray some of the expenses: Service Credit Union, American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). More details coming out in our Retiree email correspondence and RSVP's will be going out earlier this year. Stay tuned! As always, we are here for you, so if you have any issues, questions, concerns or want to schedule your Next Chapter Preparation and Counseling appointment, give the office a call at +49 (0)6111-4354-11021 or email me at erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil

Talk with you
soon.

Erik



IT'S VOTING TIME:

As a U.S. citizen living outside the country, you can vote absentee while living away from your voting residence.

Here's how:

Fill out the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and send it to your election office.

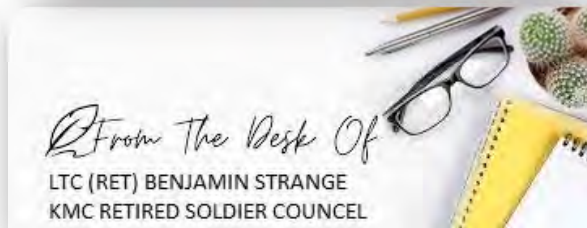
Your voting residence (the U.S. state or territory where you are registering to vote) is likely your legal residence.

Using the FPCA ensures that your state will send your ballot to you at least 45 days before the election — a protection not guaranteed when using other forms.

Fill out and send in your ballot when it arrives.

For the general election, you should receive your ballot by early October.

If you requested your ballot but haven't received it, contact your election office to ask about the status of your ballot request. For more information on voting please visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program at Overseas Citizen Voters (fvap.gov)



European Vacation

Since August is a vacation month in Europe with school being out and many businesses closed for about two weeks of the month, I thought an article on vacation, or Holiday as Europeans refer to it, would be appropriate for this month.

One of my favorite movies is "European Vacation" starring Chevy Chase. Maybe you have seen it. It's about the hilarious and sometimes chaotic adventures of an American family travelling throughout Europe and their interactions with the local populace. For the most part, the Europeans heartily welcomed their American visitors. Shifting to the present, however, that is no longer the case where the local citizens are not so welcoming of tourists.

Here are some examples as reported by Katie Hawkinson, a reporter for The Independent based in Washington D.C.

Barcelona -made international headlines when a group of demonstrators sprayed tourists with water guns. The demonstrators chanted, "Tourists go home" and "Barcelona is not for sale" as they marched through the streets, protesting against the soaring cost of living and housing prices they attribute to over-tourism in their city. Over-tourism can increase housing prices for residents, contribute to gentrification, pollute the local environment and damage historical sites.

*"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."
-Elmer Davis-*



Amsterdam -officials have long advocated against tourists planning wild nights out in their city. Last year, the city launched an advertising campaign targeting young British men looking for a drunken evening, the BBC reports. The “Stay Away” campaign warns against dangerous behavior, emphasizing the lasting consequences of a criminal record. “Coming to Amsterdam for a messy night + getting trashed = €140 fine + criminal record = fewer prospects,” one advertisement reads, the text overlaid on a video of a man being arrested. “So, coming to Amsterdam for a messy night? Stay away.”

Venice - Venice has more beds for tourists than residents, CNBC reports. Now, some locals say they feel like they’re living in a city-turned-amusement-park after the city implemented an entrance fee for visitors. The mayor said the fee is designed “not to close the city, but not let it explode,” according to CNBC. Residents against tourism say the fee is useless against what they say are the bigger problems: the lack of affordable housing driven by over-tourism. “For a start, €5 will do nothing to deter people,” housing activist Federica Toninello told The Guardian. “But day trippers aren’t the issue; things like the shortage of affordable housing are ... What we need are policies to help residents, for example, making rules to limit things like Airbnb.”

FEDERAL ELECTION DEADLINES:

U.S. Vote Foundation’s Federal and State Primary Elections and the FVAP web-pages can help you to find the dates of the next upcoming primary elections in your state. Use the quick links on this page to find out important deadlines and voting requirements for your state. For local elections, see your state’s election dates and deadlines page.

For US Vote Foundation please visit: <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/primary-election-dates>

For FVAP home page please visit: [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov)

Malaga, Spain - residents of Málaga, Spain chanted “Málaga for living, not surviving,” as they marched through the streets last month, protesting the over-tourism they say has destroyed the local housing market. Over-tourism is driving residents out of their homes due to rising prices, The Guardian, reports. “The people who work in the tourism industry can’t afford the rent in their own city. As long as housing is seen as a marketable asset, there won’t be a solution,” Curro Machuca, member of the Málaga tenants’ union, told The Guardian. We believe that basing the economy of Málaga on the monoculture of tourism is unsustainable and has to change.” Activists are now calling on the Spanish government to put a cap on tourist housing to protect residents, Euro news reports.





The above are just a few examples in Europe. Over-tourism seems to be a worldwide problem. Native Hawaiians, for example, complain of the same problems. Even vacation travel in Germany is becoming a hassle. Autobahn repair is an on-going project resulting in the dreaded Status. The Deutsche Bahn is also undertaking major renovation projects resulting in delays and train overcrowding. So, if you are soon planning a vacation you may want to consider spending it closer to home and avoid the aggravation of traffic and train delays. There are plenty of great vacation spots not far from our area. Wherever you decide to travel I wish you a safe and enjoyable time.

Estate Planning Workshop

Just a reminder to take advantage of the Estate Planning Workshop on 19 Sep that Erik has put together. This is a valuable service provided by the Retirement Services Office. We are fortunate to have this Workshop offered, especially in Europe.

Talk with soon

Benny



“On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no Soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind”

-Dan Lipinski-

AUGUST DATES TO REMEMBER

12 Aug: 1700, Roll Call, Cafe Rhema, Landstuhl

15 Aug: Baumholder office 0900-1500

17 Aug: 1000, Roll Call, Cafe Rhema Landstuhl

19 Aug: 1700, Roll Call, Cafe Rheta Landstuhl

22 Aug: Baumholder Office 0900-1500

24 Aug: 1000, Roll Call, Cafe Rhema, Landstuhl

26 Aug: 1600, Just for Retirees AFN 105.1

26 Aug: 1700, Roll Call, Cafe Rhema, Landstuhl

27 Aug: All articles for August newsletter due in my office

TRUSTED AGENTS

Many of you met Ms. Kenya West, DFAS Europe Ombudsman, at the MyPay workshop. She is now a Trusted Agent for MyPay. Basically, what this means, she can add/delete/change mobile numbers and personal email addresses in MyPay. She can also update two-factor authentication preferences, disable and lock accounts. Now, the caveat to all this is that she can only do this for the actual member (Sponsor) even if you have a power of attorney. Her office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 0730-1600. Her office is located on Kleber Kaserne directly across from the Clock Tower Cafe and directly under the Clock.



JUST FOR RETIREES RADIO SHOW

Due to an AFN reprogramming schedule change, our Just for Retirees Radio Show is now been moved to just one day a month: 4th Friday 1600-1630. Over the next few months, I will be bringing guests into the studio to pass along information to all Retirees, spouses and surviving spouses. If you have any questions for me, please email me or give my office a call and we will get that issue answered.



**US ARMY GARRISON RHEINLAND-PFALZ
RETIREMENT SERVICES OFFICE IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE 21ST TSC LEGAL
CENTER PRESENTS**



ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOP

**With the 21st TSC Legal Center Expert presents to help you with the
Wills, Advance Directives, Powers of Attorney and more to assist in
your peace of mind**

**Information will also be available for the USAG Rheinland-Pfalz Next
Chapter Preparation and Counseling Service**

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

**CLOCK TOWER CAFÉ CLASSROOM
KLEBER KASERNE KAISERSLAUTERN
1300—UNITL COMPLETED**

**For reservation, contact Erik Thomsen, USAG RP Post-Retirement Services Officer at
0611-143-541-1021 or erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil**



*"Often when you think you're at the end of something
you're at the beginning of something else"*
-Fred Rogers -



Please feel free to contact our office at any time with questions, issues, or concerns. We are here 24 hours a day/7 day a week for

YOU, THE RETIREE!!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!!!!!

Your Retirement Services Officers for USAG Rheinland- Pfalz:

Erik Thomsen/Dale Vogel Building 3245 Room 217 Kleber Kaserne Kaiserslautern Military Community Cell: +49 (0)6111-4354-11021

To report a casualty 24/7:

+49 (0)162 1085 359

Email: erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil

Webpage: <https://home.army.mil/rheinland-pfalz/index.php/about/directorates-support-offices/directorate-human-resources-dhr/post-retirement-services-program>