

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



Christmas Wishes to All Retirees, Spouses, and Surviving Spouses

As the festive season envelops us in its warm embrace, it's a time to pause, reflect, and express our heartfelt gratitude to all retirees, their spouses, and the surviving spouses who have been the backbone of our community.

A Season of Gratitude and Reflection

Christmas is more than just a time of celebration; it's a season of gratitude and reflection. For our retirees, it's an opportunity to look back on years of dedication and hard work. Your invaluable contributions have not only built our community but have also left an enduring legacy for future generations.

Celebrating the Pillars of Strength

To the spouses who have stood by their partners through thick and thin, your unwavering support and sacrifices have been instrumental in every success and achievement. You are the silent heroes whose love and encouragement have been the foundation of countless accomplishments.

Honoring the Legacy of Loved Ones

For surviving spouses, this season is a poignant reminder of the loved ones who are no longer with us. Your resilience and grace in the face of loss are truly inspiring. We honor the memory of your loved ones and cherish the legacies they have left behind. Your strength and courage continue to be a source of inspiration for all.

Honoring Service to Our Country

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the profound service to our country by all those in our community. Your dedication and sacrifices have safeguarded the freedoms and values we hold dear. Retirees who served, and their spouses who supported them through long deployments and challenging times, your commitment is the bedrock of our nation's security.

To the surviving spouses, the sacrifices you and your loved ones made are not forgotten. We honor their bravery and the lasting impact they have made. Their service and your continued strength are deeply appreciated and respected.

A Time for Unity and Joy

As we gather to celebrate this joyous season, let us come together in the spirit of unity, compassion, and joy. May this Christmas bring you an abundance of warmth, laughter, and cherished memories. Let us embrace the season with open hearts, spreading love and kindness to all.

Wishing You a Merry Christmas

To all retirees, spouses, and surviving spouses, we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas. May your holidays be filled with peace, joy, and the company of loved ones. Here's to a season of happiness and a new year filled with promise and prosperity.

Erik "Santa" Thomsen

Dale "Santa's Helper" Vogel



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Erik's Message.....	1
DFAS Information.....	2
Retiree Council President Happenings.....	2-3
New Feature.....	3
Pay dates for Retirees & Annui- tants.....	3
Quick Tools info.....	4
DFAS Online Tools.....	4-9
December dates to save.....	5
Casualty Corner.....	6
What is GACO?.....	7
Frequently Called numbers...8	
Just for Retirees.....	10
Goodbye 2024, Hello 2025...10	
Contact us.....	11



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/Space Force

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



December Greetings

Hard to believe that Christmas is around the corner. Doesn't it seem that 2024 just flew by? Whatever your holiday plans are, I hope they will be memorable, enjoyable, and safe for you and your family. Above all, I hope we experience good health to carry us through the holiday season and beyond. Next year promises to be even better for our retirement community as our Retirement Services Office is busy planning some super events for us.

German Elections

Now to keep you updated on the major events in our adopted country, I'm sure most of you are aware that Germans are going to the polls again. Election Day is scheduled for 23 February 2025. Normally, the election would have been scheduled for September of next year. Germany is a democratic and federal parliamentary republic, where federal legislative power is vested in the Bundestag (the parliament of Germany). Germany, unlike the USA, mostly has a coalition government whereby different political parties have to agree to form a ruling majority. A coalition government is formed and necessary when one party does not have a majority in the Bundestag. (An exception to a coalition government would be when one party wins an absolute majority. This is not often the case.) Until recently, the ruling parties in the Bundestag were the Social Democrats, the Greens, and the Free Democrats. Their party colors are red, green, and yellow, respectively. Collectively, they are referred to as the Ampel or traffic light coalition. Coalition parties often bring divergent opinions and issues from the other coalition partners. Finding common ground and agreement can be arduous and difficult. There has to be a give and take for this type of government to succeed. In early November, the Ampel coalition fell apart. The main issue of contention was the federal budget. The Social Democrats and the Greens wanted to increase federal expenditures which would have resulted in deficit spending. The Free Democrats, whose leader is also the Finance Minister, was vehemently against any increase in federal spending. Despite many attempts to reach a compromise, no agreement was reached. In an act of frustration, the out of patience Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, dismissed the Free Democrat Finance Minister thereby resulting in a broken government and mandating a new election. Indications are and opinion polls suggest that the new government will be led by the Christian Democrats and Germany will tilt towards a center-right direction.

Christmas Greetings (cont.)

Retiree Newsletter Articles

I enjoy writing monthly articles for our Newsletter. I mainly focus on the cultural and governmental goings on and happenings in Germany. I think it's important to keep up with the news where we live plus I think our readers like that content. However, if you want other areas or subjects addressed let Erik know. Similarly, if you would like to contribute an article, let Erik know that as well.

Wishing you all a wonderful and fulfilling Holiday Season.

Until next month.

Benny

IT IS TIME TO INTRODUCE A NEW FEATURE!

Beginning with this edition, I am happy to introduce the feature to keep all retirees, spouses and surviving spouses informed: Agency of the Month!!!

This is designed to highlight the agencies amongst us that are here to help all retirees, spouses and surviving spouses with information needed to stay "in the know". This month's featured agency of the month is the VA Overseas Military Services coordinator (OMSC). This office is located here on Kleber Kaserne, Bldg 3213 (where the USAREUR licenses are obtained) and in Room 311. The office is run by 2 subject matter experts, Jacqueline Afflick and Jacqueline Bolduc (Jackie A and Jackie B).

The Overseas Military Coordinators (OMSCs) are available to assist transitioning service members, US Veterans living or working overseas, their families and dependents with VA benefits. They are VA employees who are detailed overseas to aid and assist the Veteran population. Your Germany OMSCs cover all of Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Poland. They are here to assist you with disability compensation, pension, education benefits, healthcare, survivor benefits, burial benefits and honors, and insurance. You can reach them via email at OMSCGER1.VBAVACO@va.gov and OMSCGER2.VBAVACO@va.gov. You can schedule an appointment with our office at the following link: <https://calendly.com/va-omsc-ktown>.

Stay tuned for the January Agency of the Month.



2024—2025 Pay Dates for Retirees and Annuitants

<u>Retired Pay</u>	<u>Annuitant Pay</u>
10/1/2024	10/1/2024
11/1/2024	11/1/2024
11/29/2024	12/2/2024
12/31/2024	01/2/2025
01/31/2025	02/03/2025
02/28/2025	03/03/2025
04/01/2025	04/01/2025
05/01/2025	05/01/2025
05/30/2025	06/02/2025
07/01/2025	07/01/2025
08/01/2025	08/01/2025
08/29/2025	09/02/2025
10/01/2025	10/01/2025
10/31/2025	11/03/2025
12/01/2025	12/01/2025
12/31/2025	01/02/2026

DFAS R & A PAY email:

www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary

HAVE YOU LOOKED AT DFAS

QUICK TOOLS PAGE???

What is the Quick Tools page? Think of it as a one-stop-shop for our most popular and often-requested tools. It's designed specifically for people who have a clear picture of what they need to accomplish and just need one simple place to find it.

One thing you'll immediately notice about the Quick Tools page is its organization. The webpage is neatly organized by customer group. Whether visitors are looking for the way to report a death, get a 1099-R tax statement reissued, utilize myPay, or use one of our helpful Form Wizards or convenient askDFAS online upload tools—this webpage will get them where they need quickly!

You can find the Quick Tools page at <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools>.



List of askDFAS Online Tools for Retirees, Annuitants and Survivors

We had a very successful MyPay workshop several months ago and I am looking at conducting another workshop in the spring. However, I am including an overview of some of the more useful tools for your knowledge.

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FAQs Submit A Ticket Help Exit

✓ Step 1: Category selected is: Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question
Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This category allows users to Report the Death of a Retiree or SBP Annuitant, and survivors can ask basic questions about the processes that follow the death of a loved one.

Categories	Subcategories
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Final Pay of Deceased Member - Questions
<input type="radio"/> Retired Pay	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Report the Death of an SBP Annuitant
<input type="radio"/> Retiree - Ask a Question	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Starting SBP Annuity Pay - Questions
<input type="radio"/> Retiree - Form Upload Tools	
<input type="radio"/> SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question	
<input type="radio"/> SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools	
<input type="radio"/> Self-Service Account Changes	
<input type="radio"/> Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads	

Category Name: Report a Death/Survivor-Ask a Question

Tool: Retiree Notification of Death *Reminder: At this time, the "Report the Death of a Retiree" online tool is still housed in the "Retired Pay" category. It will be moved to this category soon.*

New Tool: SBP Annuitant Notification of Death

New Tool: Final Pay of a Deceased Retiree – Questions

New Tool: Starting SBP Annuity Pay – Questions

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." - C.S. Lewis

December Dates to save!!!

02 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1700

07 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1000

09 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1700

**12 Dec: Baumholder
0900-1500**

14 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1000

16 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1700

21 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema Landstuhl 1000

**23 Dec: Just for retirees
Radio Show, AFN 105.1
1600-1630**

24 Dec: CHRISTMAS EVE

25 Dec: MERRY CHRISTMAS TO AL!!!

26 Dec: Baumholder (wx permitting) 0900-1500

28 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema, Landstuhl 1000

30 Dec: Roll Call, Café Rhema Landstuhl 1700

31 Dec: NEW YEAR'S EVE

01 JAN: HAPPY NEW YEAR

TOOLS FOR RETIREES **Self-Service Account change tools for Retirees**

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FAQs Submit A Ticket

Help Exit

- ✓ Step 1: Category selected is: **Self-Service Account Changes**
Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This category allows Retirees and SBP Annuitants to request certain account changes by completing information on the ticket.

Categories

- » Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question
- » Retired Pay
- » Retiree - Ask a Question
- » Retiree - Form Upload Tools
- » SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question
- » SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools
- » **Self-Service Account Changes**
- » Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads

Subcategories

- » Mailing Address Update - Retirees
- » Mailing Address Update - SBP Annuitants
- » Request Verification of Pay Letter

Category Name: Self-Service Account Changes

Tool: Mailing Address Update

Retirees New Tool: Request Verification of Pay Letter

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FAQs Submit A Ticket

Help Exit

- ✓ Step 1: Category selected is: **Retiree - Form Upload Tools**
Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This online upload tool is for submitting the Designation of Beneficiary (DD 2894) form and supporting documentation (if applicable).

Categories

- » Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question
- » Retired Pay
- » Retiree - Ask a Question
- » **Retiree - Form Upload Tools**
- » SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question
- » SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools
- » Self-Service Account Changes
- » Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads

Subcategories

- » Active Duty Retirement Ppww - Upload
- » DD 2558 - Allotment Updates - Upload
- » DD 2894 - Desig of Beneficiary - Upload
- » General Retiree Documents - Upload
- » Power of Attorney/3rd Party Doc - Upload
- » Reserve/Guard Retirement Ppww - Upload
- » Retiree DOHA Appeal - Upload
- » SBP DD 2656-1 - Upload
- » SBP DD 2656-2 - Upload
- » SBP DD 2656-6 - Upload
- » SBP DD 2656-8 - Upload
- » SBP Open Season Discontinuation
- » SBP Open Season Enrollments
- » Tax Withholding Changes - Upload

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CASUALTY CORNER

The old adage of “there are only two things certain in this life: Death and taxes.”

This still rings true and our office is here to help you be better prepared. Our office introduced a Next Chapter Preparation and Counseling Service a year or two ago and has been met with resounding success.

Several families have, unfortunately, had to deal with a passing and the comments have been, “It saved me time and stress. Everything was done ahead of time which allowed me to grieve.”, “It is well worth the time” and more.

When we are complete, you will receive a personalized binder with all completed paperwork for DFAS, VA, Social Security and the Consulate. We also include a list of all Mortuaries that serve your Postal Code so you’re not having to spend time searching for numbers. Our office also notifies VA, DFAS, Consulate and the Social security offices immediately after notification to avoid having an overpayment.

With many years of experience in Pre-planning and as a funeral director and Active Duty US Army Mortuary Affairs Specialist we can help relieve some of the stress.

Give me a call at 06111-43541-1021 or email erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil to set up an appointment. Show your spouse you really care!

DFAS FORM UPLOAD FOR RETIREES (CON’T)

Category Name: Retiree-Form Upload Tools

Tool: General Retiree Documents – Upload (Use this tool if the document does not fit one of the specific tools below)

Tool: Active Duty Retirement Paperwork – Upload

Tool: DD 2558 – Allotment Updates – Upload

Tool: DD 2894 – Designation of Beneficiary – Upload

Tool: Power of Attorney/3rd Party Document – Upload

Tool: Reserve/Guard Retirement Paperwork – Upload

Tool: Retiree DOHA Appeal – Upload

Tool: SBP DD 2656-1 – Upload

Tool: SBP DD 2656-2 – Upload

Tool: SBP DD 2656-6 – Upload

Tool: SBP DD 2656-8 – Upload

Tool: SBP Open Season Discontinuation

Tool: SBP Open Season Enrollments

Tool: Tax Withholding Changes – Upload

All new: Ask a Question Options for retirees

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

[FAQs](#) [Submit A Ticket](#)

[Help](#) [Exit](#)

✓ Step 1: Category selected is: **Retiree - Ask a Question**

Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This category is for questions related to Retiree transactions. A member of the DFAS Cleveland Customer Care Center will answer your question electronically on the ticket.

Categories	Subcategories
» Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question	» Disability Entitlements – Questions
» Retired Pay	» General / Form / Document - Questions
» Retiree - Ask a Question	» General Disability Pay - Questions
» Retiree - Form Upload Tools	» International Direct Deposit - Questions
» SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question	» Payment Inquiry - Questions
» SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools	» Survivor Benefit Plan - Questions
» Self-Service Account Changes	» Verifications for Pay Partners-Questions
» Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads	

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Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it."
Charles R. Swindoll

What is GACO?

GACO stands for German-American Community Office and they are a wealth of information for all Retiree Families. Their free service includes Assistance with any and all questions, both in person, phone or email and, is available to all US Air Force, Army and is operated by the Kaiserslautern City.

Their location is on Lauterstr 2; 67657 Kaiserslautern, telephone: +49(0) 631-363-3010 and email: info@gaco-kl.de or www.gaco-kl.de.

Their office hours are Mon-WED 0900-1300 and Thurs 1400– 1800.

Their motto is, “You go to the store to buy your groceries. You go to the gas station to fill up your car. You go to the hairdresser to get a hair cut...SO, where do you go if you have a question or problem related to living in Germany? Give them a call at +49 631-3633010 or email at: info@gaco-kl.de for more information.

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Category Name: Retiree – Ask a Question

Tool: Disability Entitlements – Questions

Tool: General / Form / Document – Questions

Tool: General Disability Pay – Questions

Tool: International Direct Deposit – Questions

Tool: Payment Inquiry – Questions

Tool: Survivor Benefit Plan – Questions

TOOLS FOR SBP ANNUITANTS

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FAQs Submit A Ticket

Help Exit

✓ Step 1: Category selected is: Self-Service Account Changes

Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This category allows Retirees and SBP Annuitants to request certain account changes by completing information on the ticket.

Categories	Subcategories
<input type="radio"/> Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question	<input type="radio"/> Mailing Address Update - Retirees
<input type="radio"/> Retired Pay	<input type="radio"/> Mailing Address Update - SBP Annuitants
<input type="radio"/> Retiree - Ask a Question	<input type="radio"/> Request Verification of Pay Letter
<input type="radio"/> Retiree - Form Upload Tools	
<input type="radio"/> SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question	
<input type="radio"/> SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools	
<input type="radio"/> Self-Service Account Changes	
<input type="radio"/> Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads	

Category Name: Self-Service Account Changes

New Tool: Mailing Address Update

SBP Annuitants New Tool: Request Verification of Pay Letter

Online Form Upload Tools for SBP Annuitants

There are new Online forms upload Tools specifically designed for Annuitants to upload needed documents, Arrears of pay and SBP updates.

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

USAG Rheinland-Pfalz Casualty Assistance..06111-43541-1021

24 Hour Emergency Number: 0162-1085-359

Federal Benefits Unit: +49 (0)69-7535-4242

To set an appointment with the Federal Benefits Unit:
<https://www.picktime.com/FederalBenefitsFrankfurt>

VA Overseas Military Services Coordinators: +49(0)611143-5411408

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FAQs Submit A Ticket

Help Exit

✓ Step 1: Category selected is: **SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools**
Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This online upload tool is for submitting the SBP Marital Status Update (SBP-MSU) Letter and any supporting documentation.

Categories	Subcategories
» Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question	» DD 2856-7 - Claim SBP Annuity - Upload
» Retired Pay	» DD 2788 - Child Ann School Cert -Upload
» Retiree - Ask a Question	» DD 2828 - Child Ann Phys Cert - Upload
» Retiree - Form Upload Tools	» DFAS 9415 - Ann Rep Payee Cert - Upload
» SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question	» General SBP Annuitant Documents - Upload
» SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools	» Power of Attorney/3rd Party Doc - Upload
» Self-Service Account Changes	» SBP Annuitant DOHA Appeal - Upload
» Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads	» SBP-Marital Status Update - Upload
	» SF 1174 - Arrears of Pay (AOP) - Upload
	» Tax Withholding Changes - Upload

Category Name: SBP Annuitant/Survivor-Form Upload Tools

Tool: SBP Annuitant Documents – Upload

(Use this tool if the document does not fit one of the specific tools below)

Tool: DD 2656-7 – Claim SBP Annuity – Upload

Tool: DD 2788 – Child Ann School Cert -Upload

Tool: DD 2828 – Child Ann Phys Cert – Upload

Tool: DFAS 9415 – Ann Rep Payee Cert – Upload

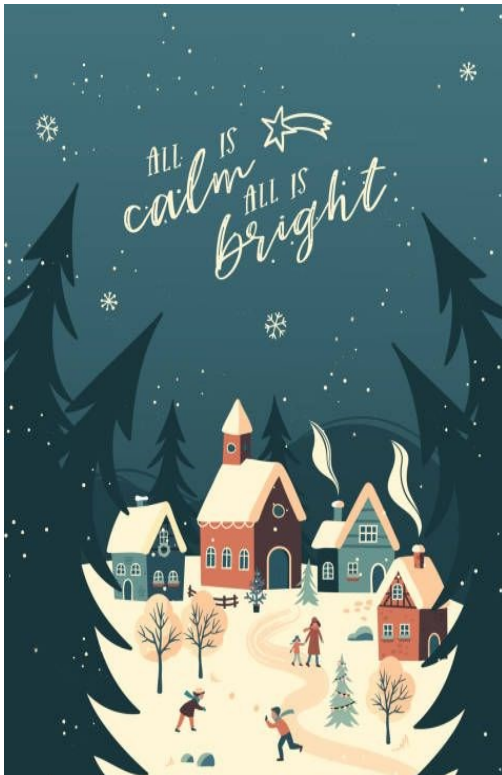
Tool: Power of Attorney/3rd Party Doc – Upload

Tool: SBP Annuitant DOHA Appeal – Upload

Tool: SBP-Marital Status Update – Upload

Tool: SF 1174 – Arrears of Pay (AOP) – Upload

Tool: Tax Withholding Changes – Upload



"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." - Winston Churchill



All New: Ask a Question Options for SBP Annuitants

ASK RETIRED PAY -- ONLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

[FAQs](#) [Submit A Ticket](#)

[Help](#) [Exit](#)

✓ Step 1: Category selected is: **SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question**
Step 2: Select a Subcategory by clicking the >> button next to the subcategory name.

This category is for questions related to SBP Annuitant transactions. A member of the DFAS Cleveland Customer Care Center will answer your question electronically on the ticket.

Categories	Subcategories
» Report a Death / Survivor - Ask a Question	» Annual Eligibility/School Cert-Questions
» Retired Pay	» General / Form / Document - Questions
» Retiree - Ask a Question	» Payment Inquiry - Questions
» Retiree - Form Upload Tools	» Starting SBP Annuity Pay - Questions
» SBP Annuitant - Ask A Question	» Verifications for Pay Partners-Questions
» SBP Annuitant/Survivor - Form Upload Tools	
» Self-Service Account Changes	
» Used ONLY by BoS/Fed Agency Partners-Form Uploads	

Category Name: SBP Annuitant-Ask a Question

Tool: Annual Eligibility/School Cert-Questions

Tool: General / Form / Document – Questions

Tool: Payment Inquiry – Questions

Tool: Starting SBP Annuity Pay – Questions

I hope the above information from DFAS helps you navigate and get answers to your questions. Our office will continue to keep you updated on any changes and tools that DFAS publishes.



"Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going." - Sam Levenson



JUST FOR RETIREES RADIO SHOW

Join me on December 23 at 1600 on AFN 105.1 for another show that is made for you, the Retiree. I will be having another special guest and will announce our January 2025 Featured Agency of the Month. If you have any questions, comments, etc. please email me at erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil or log onto the AFN Kaiserslautern Facebook page and leave your question for "Just for retirees" and they will get back with me. I hope to hear from you and talk with you on 23 December.



GOODBYE 2024, HELLO 2025

As we prepare to close out 2024, please remember all of our troops who are deployed around the world and who cannot be with families and friends during this festive holiday. I, personally, wish to say a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our Retirees and Spouses and our Surviving Spouses. I pray that 2025 will be an outstanding year and, always remember, if you need anything we are here.

**"The best way to predict the future is to create it."
Peter Drucker**



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/about/directorates-support-offices/directorate-human-resources-dhr/post-retirement-services-program>