

Soldiers for Life – Tri-City Military Retirees

Heidelberg-Mannheim-Karlsruhe Newsletter

May 2025

Thank you for your service to the United States of America!

Welcome

I want to begin this newsletter with a bit of history many of us learned in grade school. This year is very special for three of our six military services. It marks 250 years since the establishment of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

Army's Birthday

The year was 1775. The Declaration of Independence had not yet been written, signed and sent to the King of England. The first skirmishes between the American colonists and the British Army took place on 19 April at Lexington and Concord in my home state of Massachusetts.

One if by land and two if by sea was the signal lanterns in Boston's north church tower. It was the beginning of the ride by the Boston silversmith, Paul Revere, and others to warn the colonists that the British were coming. There was no Army in April. Those who responded and engaged the British were the militia and the Minutemen. They were poorly trained and lacked the required military discipline to fight well against the British regulars. But fight they did.

This first engagement was the impetus to establish an Army. On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress, meeting in present-day Independence Hall in Philadelphia, voted to establish the Continental Army to provide for the common defense of the colonies, and incorporated patriot forces already in place outside Boston (22,000 troops) and New York (5,000).

Army's Birthday (cont.)

The new Army's first battle took place three days later on 17 June at Bunker Hill (really Breed's Hill in Charlestown (near Boston), Massachusetts.

On 3 June 1784, by an act of the Congress of the Confederation, the United States Army was created.

Flag Day

The 14 of June is also Flag Day. On this day in 1777, the Second Continental Congress adopted the resolution that the flag should have thirteen stripes, alternating red and white, and a union of thirteen stars on a blue field.

While celebrations of the flag's birthday had been occurring for years, in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson officially declared June 14 as Flag Day. In 1949, President Harry Truman signed an Act of Congress officially designating 14 June as National Flag Day.

Navy and Marine Corps Birthdays

Two of the Army's sister services were also established in 1775 and they will celebrate their respective 250th birthday later this year.

The Continental Navy was established on 13 October 1775. It was designated as the United States Navy on 17 March 1794.

The Continental Marines was established on 10 November 1775 and was later re-designated as the United States Marine Corps on 11 July 1798.

National Military Appreciation Month

The month of May is important for all members of the military, active and retired, because it is National Military Appreciation Month. There are three days of special importance for us.

Military Spouse Appreciation Day is the Friday before Mother's Day. This year it falls on 9 May.

The military spouse is a very special type of person. In general, they are, mentally, very strong and resilient. When their Soldier is deployed to an area where the risks and dangers are prevalent and high, their level of fear and anxiety remains high until their Soldier returns home.

Armed Forces Day is the third Saturday in May. This year it will fall on 17 May.

First observed on 20 May 1950, the day was created on 31 August 1949 as President Harry S. Truman led the effort to establish a single holiday for citizens to come together and thank military members for their patriotic service in support of the Republic and national interests and as an undeniable fact of American life.

Memorial Day is traditionally the 30th of May; however, under the Monday holiday law this holiday is the final Monday in May. This year it falls on 26 May.

Many Americans associate Veterans Day and Memorial Day with service, the two are not the same. Veterans Day is a celebration of those who serve and have served. Memorial Day is a solemn day to reflect on veterans and military personnel who are deceased.

We should never wish Veterans and active duty Service Members a Happy Memorial Day. Remember, that in our community, Memorial Day means something much, much bigger than the start of summer. The day feels fraught with memories of those we've lost, mixed with gratitude for the times we've had.

Most of us here in Germany live far away from a military community and Memorial Day seems to be just another Monday in May and easily forgotten.

Memorial Day (cont.)

We should make an entry in our calendar on 26 May to remind us of this very important day. We should take time on this day to reflect on our service to our great Republic and remember those we knew and with whom we served that have been placed in their final resting place.

Healthy Eating

As we age, the quality of our lives takes on increased importance. We do what we can to stay healthy, because good health is a significant contributor to our individual quality of life.

We are fortunate to live in a world where medical advances and access to medical care have not only prolonged our lives, but more importantly enhanced our quality of life.

Being able to have access to outside sources that contribute to our well-being is a big plus; however, there are personal actions that we must take to promote and further our well-being. One of these actions is healthy eating. Here are some nutrition tips to follow.

Enjoy a variety of foods from each food group.

Choose foods with little to no added sugar, saturated fats, and sodium.

Get enough protein during your day to maintain muscle mass.

Focus on the nutrients you need.

With age, we may lose some of our sense of thirst. Drink water often.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Learn how much to eat from all five food groups.

Try to prevent foodborne illness (food poisoning) by keeping food safe.

Go to this web site for an in-depth look at healthy eating.

https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/older-adults?utm_campaign=20250423_pvh_prv_gal_v2&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Happiness

Happiness is a subjective emotional state that is characterized by joy, contentment, and well-being. It encompasses a range of positive emotions and a feeling of satisfaction with one's life, often involving a sense of meaning and purpose. While fleeting moments of happiness can be triggered by external events, happiness is also a more sustained state of mind influenced by factors like relationships, achievements and personal values.

We all want to be happy, but how do we achieve happiness. Many people look to the past, but whatever the situation was at that time is gone. We cannot find true happiness in the past. Some people look to the future; however, at best, the future is a true unknown. We have no idea what the future holds for us. Therefore, we must look at the now. We need to take control of today and do things that will bring us joy, contentment and a feeling of well-being.

Scientists have found that the three things that make people most happy are pleasure (doing things you enjoy), engagement (feeling interested in your activities and connected to others), and meaning (feeling like what you do matters).

Each day we need to focus on those things that make us happy. Even in the face of adversity, we need to take control and do something that will make us happy.

We all know what brings happiness and when we feel down we do our best to beat the downer and be happy.

Next Tri-City Retiree Luncheon

A Tri-City Retiree luncheon is planned for 1200 hours, Saturday, 14 June 2025 at the Restaurant Makedonia, Pleikartsförster Straße 130, Heidelberg-Kirchheim. All Retirees, widowed spouses of Retirees, family members and their guests are invited to attend.

To help us better plan the luncheon, please call or email your reservations to LTC (R) Lawrence Applebaum, 06224-52741 (Email: **L-M.Applebaum@t-online.de**) by Wednesday, 11 June 2025.

The Trusted Agent

This individual does not wear tights with a big "S" on the chest, have a cape and fly through the air faster than a speeding bullet to the next trouble point to solve the problem. Our trusted agent has both feet on the ground, doesn't fly and is armed with a solid and durable power of attorney.

As we age, for many of us, our ability to take care of business has a tendency to decrease over time. Older couples who depend on each other to take care of business is definitely not a good plan. When one of the partners dies, the survivor is often unable to take care of business. I know this from personal experience helping others.

Appointing a trusted agent is a logical solution to an age-old problem with which many older and single survivors are confronted.

I was the casualty assistance officer for a widow who currently resides in a senior care facility. This widow was not able to find a person to act as her trusted agent. She is unable to take care of business and she has a professional guardian, who was appointed by the German court. This guardian does not work for free and the widow pays an annual fee to the guardian.

The guardian obviously knows the German system and is able to take care of business. However, when official US correspondence arrives the guardian turns to me to answer the mail. I take care of the business on a "pro bono" basis.

As you can see, here in Germany there is a solution when an older couple or a survivor is without a trusted agent. There are court directed limitations on what the guardian can do. With a general power of attorney that includes the Patientenverfügung and the Betreuungsverfügung (advance directive and guardianship), the trusted agent can take all actions required on behalf of the older couple or survivor.

Closing out an Estate

In the United States closing out an estate varies from state to state. Generally, a lawyer must submit the last will and testament to the responsible probate court. In Germany, this action is done by the executor of the estate.

The probate actions in each country will achieve a similar goal – approval of the will and the close out of the estate. The close out of an estate can present some significant challenges for the executor, who in most instances is the trusted agent.

When there is a survivor, usually the wife, she can provide answers to many questions that relate to her husband's estate. However, when the survivor dies, the challenge is completely different, because now the entire financial system, which includes the banking, the home, and everything connected to it, and myriad estate aspects need to be closed out.

The executor must know every aspect of the estate before the survivor dies. I offer a few examples.

In Germany, most people pay their recurring bills with a mandate given to their creditors (water, electricity, telephone, etc.) or when the monthly amount is stable such as rent, it is paid with a recurring payment from the bank account.

Visibility over all financial aspects of the estate is an absolute necessity. This includes bank accounts, investment accounts, etc. While the executor may not have immediate access to these accounts, once the will is probated and the executor accepts the office of executor, the probate court can provide various documentation giving the executor power to close out the estate.

A great benefit is when the executor and the trusted agent are one in the same person. With the power of attorney and the probate court document confirming the executor's acceptance of the office of executor, this individual has all of the authorizations required to close out the estate.

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Update

Specialty Care

Specialty care is advanced care you get from a medical professional who is a specialist. This type of care is for diagnosis and treatment of diseases or other medical conditions. If your primary care provider or manager isn't qualified to provide this care, he or she may refer you to a specialist who can.

Monthly Healthcare Availability Report

The availability of specialty care varies from month-to-month.

Use this link to view the scope of specialty care that is offered.

<https://landstuhl.tricare.mil/Health-Services/Specialty-Care>

At this link, click on Monthly Availability Report to see what is currently available. The link is set up to download an Excel spreadsheet file to your Downloads folder. The current posting is for February 2025.

Disposal of Old Medicine

Often, we have various medications that are either expired or no longer needed. It can be a mix of pills, creams, etc. Medications should never be flushed down the toilet or the wash sink. In Germany, medications can be put in the general trash container. It is advisable to read the instructions that are provided with the medication to determine if there are any special disposal instructions.

Medications in protective packs need not be removed from the protective packing before disposal.

Medications issued by a military pharmacy can be taken back to that pharmacy or the next convenient military pharmacy.

One last point, never use medication, prescription or non-prescription, that is past its expiration date.