



86th Airlift Wing  
Retiree Activities Office  
and KMC Retiree Council  
**Autumn 2022**  
**Newsletter**



**SERVING THE RETIREES IN AND AROUND THE KASERSLAUTERN MILITARY COMMUNITY**



*From the Vice Wing Commander, 86 Airlift Wing, Ramstein AB, Germany*

18 September 2022

Open Letter to the Retiree Community, Autumn 2022

As we head into my favorite time of year in Germany, I find myself reflecting on the extremely busy last few years for our wonderful Kaiserslautern Military Community. Your Retiree Activities Office has had many notable milestones during that time. In March 2020, the RAO closed its doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A little more than one year later, in May 2021, the RAO re-opened in a new location within the 86th Force Support Squadron.

In August 2021, retired SMSgt Mike Goff was appointed RAO director; his move back to the United States this past March saw retired MSgt Brett Clark fill the director's void from May through August.

Through the leadership churn, three experienced members continued to execute all needed functions, keeping our KMC retirees informed and supported.

Today, a small number of volunteers continue to answer e-mails and provide one-on-one counseling, despite the lack of a permanent RAO director. As you have seen in recent communiques, we request you consider continued service either as RAO director or RAO volunteer. With a few more volunteers, we may be able to keep RAO doors open 5-days-a-week.

We wish to thank you, the U.S. military retirees and families of the KMC. Every retiree, spouse, and surviving spouse plays a critical role in making the greater KMC the model for

our U.S.-German partnership. Over the summer, many of you participated in cultural activities, both here on the bases and throughout the villages in the KMC. These events nurture our alliance and friendship with our German hosts.

We also realize some retirees are experiencing frustration with German tax law application, while others have difficulty contacting the Frankfurt Federal Benefits Unit concerning Medicare and Social Security issues. Your RAO team continues to keep the chain of command informed of your concerns, experiences, and well-being. I assure you that we take every issue seriously as we solve what we can at the local-level while raising broader issues across Departments, when applicable. Finally, coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to work with local German government leaders to improve quality of life and keep our entire community healthy.

On behalf of Brig Gen Otis C. Jones and all Airmen throughout the Global Gateway, thank you for your partnership and continued support of our men and women in uniform. Today, as we celebrate the 75th birthday of the United States Air Force, we aim higher, seeking innovative solutions to problems while caring for our active-duty force, retirees, and KMC families.

We remain honored to serve alongside our most important KMC ambassadors: the men and women of our military retiree community and their families. I hope to see you at the annual retiree breakfast on 13 October.



DENNY R. DAVIES, Col, USAF  
Vice Commander

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**From Your Recently Assigned Ramstein Casualty Assistance Representative**

My name is Michele Jacobs, the Casualty Assistance Representative at Ramstein AB. My office is located in Bldg. 2120, on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Military & Family Readiness Center. I'm here to provide you all support, information and any assistance to meet your needs as a military retiree. Feel free to contact me at 06371-47-5100 for any questions or additional information. Or via e-mail to:

[michele.jacobs@us.af.mil](mailto:michele.jacobs@us.af.mil)

I look forward to be of service to you.

(Author: 86 FSS, Michele Jacobs)

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## **Veterans Compensation:**

What is a “Presumptive” Service Connection?

VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a Veteran

in one of these groups, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded. What conditions are “PRESUMED” to be caused by military service?



**Get all the details from this VA Fact Sheet at this link:**

<https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>

This is the latest Fact Sheet from VA dated 16 Sep 2022.

(Author: 86AW/RAO – Frances Gerald)

## **Reminder to Cast Your Ballot**

Mid-term elections are right around the corner. Have you registered? Will your vote count?

Registering to Vote and submitting a ballot is fast, easy, and can be done from anywhere in the world! You start by confirming your voter registration with your state. Some states require absentee voters to register annually so you may need to re-register.

Go to [FVAP.gov](https://FVAP.gov) to connect to your state’s voter portal to register to vote, request a ballot, and more. Once you confirm your registration, follow a few simple steps to vote in the 2022 U.S. general election on Tuesday 8 November.

You can also choose to complete a [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#). The

## **ACCESS TO RETIREE PUBLICATIONS OF EACH SERVICE:**

### **Army Echoes:**

<https://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso-migrated/echoes.asp>

### **Navy Shift Colors:**

<https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/publications/shiftcolors/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Air Force Afterburner:**

<https://www.retirees.af.mil/library/afterburner/>

### **Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:**

<https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/MRAHome>

### **Coast Guard Evening Colors:**

<https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/>

completion of the FPCA allows you to request absentee ballots for all **elections for federal offices (U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives)**.



**DO NOT put it off--**

Voting for your candidate is important! And everyone’s VOTE counts!

(Author: 86 AW/RAO Denise Schleyer)

## **Have you been Locked out of DFAS—Forgot Your Password?**



Good news from DFAS if you are locked out of your MyPay Account and want to retrieve a lost

password. Until recently DFAS would not send a temporary Password to a commercial email account overseas. They listened to our complaints. The Army in Europe Retiree Council raised this issue at their latest meeting with the DARSO and DFAS.

Effective immediately DFAS will now transmit a temporary password to an international cell phone via text message; that is if your carrier is accepted by DFAS. I do not have a list of the qualifying carriers, but Deutsche Telekom is one of many. One can contact DFAS to learn what carriers they have registered. I have provided the telephone numbers below.

Here are some tips:

Log into MYPAY

Click on "Forgot Password"

If one has their international cell phone registered with MyPay and it is with one of the accepted carriers you have the option of having the Temp Password sent to it.... And Click!

From personal experience this may take some time for it to arrive. So, patience is required.

If this does not work out then I recommend you call DFAS at 001-317-212-0551. Click the option that requests assistance for logging in to MyPay.

- Aside from US-based numbers, DFAS International toll-free number is: [\*\*08005891634\*\*](tel:08005891634)

- MyPay will accept German CEL phones from only the following: Deutsche Telekom, Telefonica Germany/O-2, and Vodafone (checked it recently and tried unsuccessfully to add a number from another provider).

The Toll-Free number is 001-800-321-1080.

This is not official DFAS Media information. What I have provided was from a successful personal experience.

(Author: David "Dave" Stewart , SGM US Army Retired. President USAG Bavaria Retired Soldier Council)

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## **Obtaining a Tourist Stamp in your Passport upon Retirement**

When you retire from US Military or US Civil Service, your permission to reside in Germany terminates upon retirement. Many individuals assumed when they retire – they automatically entered a Tourist Status for the next 90 days. WRONG!

What technically happens is they have terminated their authorization under SOFA to remain in Germany as an employee of the United States Government. What is required is before they retire – they should leave Schengen area (EU) to a travel to a non-Schengen area (UK) and return to Germany



and get their US passport stamped at the border by German Immigration authorities under the 90-day tourist visa waiver program.



That is the simplest way to satisfy this requirement. Another procedure, especially if you have a spouse from an EU country, is to apply for a German Aufenthaltstitel (German

residence permit) prior to US retirement . The German Auslandsbehörde can issue a border crossing certificate or make an application for German Residence permit. But once you apply and declare your intention as a German Residence – you can NEVER under US law apply for a Civil Service position with the US Government

(Author: 86AW/RAO – Bob Cooper)

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### **Driving In Germany...the latest rules of the road and what to watch out for:**

In April 2020, the German Road Traffic Act otherwise known as Strassenverkehrs-Ordnung or the “StVO” was updated. Three primary areas of change are: 1) Parking offenses, 2) Speeding violations, and 3) Sanctions for not forming a rescue lane during emergencies.

Parking offenses increased from 15 to 110 Euros depending on the violation. Double-

parking, parking on footpaths, in bike lanes, cycle lanes, in electronic car-charging spaces, or non-designated parking spaces are key changes. Most fines increased in all those areas.

The driver needs to park in a “space-saving way” and never impact the natural flow of traffic while parking in a visibly marked parking area. Temporary stops can also result in fines if stopped in any unauthorized area, even for very short time periods (running into a place for something quick).

Speeding offenses increased in most areas as well, so paying closer attention to speed zones is key to avoiding unnecessary fines. Going anywhere from 1-10 Kilometers over can result in a fine of 20 Euro. Driving 21 Kilometers over the limit in an urban area can cost 80 Euro and cause 2 points. If a person gets 8 points, they lose their license permanently.

Also, a driver can be fined if caught using a Mobile phone app designed to identify speed



cameras. If stopped for speeding and the authorities determine the driver was using a speed detection app then they can be fined 75 Euro. The third area regards emergency corridors (Rettungsgasse). If a driver fails to yield to emergency vehicles (ambulances, fire trucks, polizei, etc.) fines could run as high as 200-320 Euros. It is our responsibility to immediately make a path for the emergency vehicle.

Safety for cyclists is also a key change. A driver must leave 1.5 meters on city roads when passing cyclists and 2 meters on country roads.



Fines vary depending on whether it's an urban area or outside an urban area.

A little trivia ... did you know that they are approximately 43 million registered cars in Germany, almost 13,000 miles of Autobahn and over 1000 road signs...so driving in Germany can be challenging. One third of the people fail the German driver's test on their first try, which says something about the difficulty of the test, perhaps! This information was taken from the two links below and there is so much more you can discover about the April 2020 changes to the StVO. For more details on the changes to the 2020 StVO, check out these references:

[www.iamexpat.de](http://www.iamexpat.de)

[www.bussgeldkatalog.org](http://www.bussgeldkatalog.org)

Safe driving, Please!

(Author: 86AW/RAO - Vesta Freyhoefer)

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## **Are you Ready for the Unexpected?**

Have You Prepared Yourself and Your Spouse?

If you and your spouse have not yet discussed what to do with your estate, have not yet prepared a "Last Will and Testament", do not have an important documents book with papers such as a

"Casualty Assistance Checklist", a copy of your DD Form 214, Leave and Earnings Statement, copies of medical directives, power of attorney and Social Security records, etc. and the list goes on and on. If you are not ready...you need to act.

Situation: Create a binder "What to do If" that includes the Casualty Assistance Checklist and all the necessary paperwork mentioned in that document (i.e., birth certificate, marriage certificate, DD214, life insurance policies, health insurance, disability rating, etc.). Make sure your spouse and one other person knows where the binder is located.

You can obtain the Casualty Assistance Checklist from the Retiree Activities Office. This checklist provides all important Points of Contact.

Remember if retired here in Germany that you should establish a primary beneficiary account for both you and your spouse at the Service Credit Union for all bank accounts and products (i.e. CDs, mutual funds, certificate of deposit, etc.).

Without a joint account, your spouse may not be able to access your money. You might also want to establish an account in your wife's name in case all accounts are frozen after death notification and you as a widow/er will not be able to open a new local credit union account. Ensure you take action on the following:

- that your spouse/beneficiary has access/key to any bank and/or safe deposit box.

- that you update your beneficiary for life insurance, IRA's, bank accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks/bonds, TSP, etc. If your status has changed, make sure you update all of these things.

- that your DEERS and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is up to date. If there was a death, marriage divorce, adoption or birth you must update your records and beneficiary.

- that you have joint ownership of all vehicles and property (registrations, deeds, titles, timeshares, etc.)

- that you create an American Last Will and Testament at the Legal Office (free of charge). If you have a European spouse or own property in Germany, meet with a German notary to determine if you also need a German Last Will and Testament.

### **Remember to get your American Last Will and Testament officially translated.**

Matter of fact all required certificates should be translated now from French, Greek, Danish, or whatever to German to ease the burden so it doesn't have to be done later.

Take time to make a one-on-one counseling session with an RAO consultant.

Contact us: Via telephone at DSN 480-5486 or Civilian 06371-47-5486 (Leave a message if no one is in) or write an e-mail to the RAO.

Once you have all your documentation together and have created your own binder, you might want to make a **pre-death planning appointment with the Retiree Services Officer** with (RheinlandPfalz Garrison) Erik Thomsen over at Kleber Kaserne and he will in advance fill out all necessary forms. He will either file them in his "cloud" if retired Army and or send them to the Air Force CAR at Ramstein (if retired AF). Erik can be reached at: 0611-143541-1021 OR via e-mail at:

[erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil](mailto:erik.c.thomsen2.civ@army.mil)

Thomsen, Erik C CIV USARMY IMCOM EUROPE (USA)

(Author: 86 AW/RAO - Jim Barrante)

## **How to obtain a German Driver's License**

When one decides, they are going to



permanent resident in Germany, one of the main stumbling blocks is

obtaining a German Driver's license.

Obviously when one retires his USAREUR Driver's license is no longer valid for driving.

But under the SOFA, in Germany, a person that retires can obtain a German Driver's license without too much effort. Before they retire –

they should contact the HQ USAREUR Driver's license bureau at Sembach Kaserne, Building 216, Phone 0611-143-5422020 or 1 or 2, or DSN 542-2020/1/2.

They will issue you a document which is known as a translation of your USAREUR driver's license ; it is really your driving history and certification that you have attended USAREUR Driving classes.

You MUST have a current Stateside driver's license.

Most states have a reciprocal agreement with Germany that waives the normal German Drivers test or knowledge tests.

Call or email the RAO and we can tell what states have a reciprocal agreement.

You almost must register as living in the German town where you live, you will also need a German First Aid course certification and your US passport.

For older folks (over 65) you probably need an eye exam done by your local optical shop that your vision is OK to drive. The cost previously was 85 Euro, you also need a passport sized photo, and your US passport.

You should do this ahead of your retirement. You will need the German driver's license to reregister your cars under the German system.

You take this documentation to the driver's license office that services the German town where you live.

(Author: 86AW/RAO – Bob Cooper)

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### **Can Veterans obtain VA Care**

**Overseas?** Any US Veteran who is rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs as having a service-connected disability and who resides overseas is eligible to receive care by using the **"Foreign Medical Program (FMP)."** You do not have to be a retiree. Did you know if you have a hearing disability (service connected, even if incurred with a 0% rating) that you could still use the FMP to obtain those expensive hearing aids?

You must submit a certificate of medical necessity (diagnosis, examination results, audiology testing), type of device needed,

and the cost estimate for the device.

Additionally, the FMP may authorize services for service-connected Veterans to order

hearing aid batteries, accessories and repairs. If you have a service-connected

hearing impairment, you may obtain replacement batteries through the VA at no cost from the VA. Veterans must register with the FMP office



First!  
Find out  
more  
about  
the  
Foreign

Medical Program at:

<https://www.va.gov/communitycare/programs/veterans/fmp/index.asp>

(Author: 86AW/RAO – Frances Gerald)

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### **Final Flight—Here in Germany**

Funeral Homes (Bestattungunternehmen) do not normally provide home pages so one can post an Obituary. The Air Force offers a free service when an Air Force retiree passes.

The Obituaries can be viewed at the Air Force Retiree Services web site.

All obituary submissions for Air Force retirees must be accompanied by the full name, correspondence address, and daytime telephone number of an information point of contact. **Submissions will only be accepted by email.**

Please, no acronyms. Obituaries will remain posted until space limitations require removal—You can send your Final Flight

Obituary to: Email: [afpc.retiree@us.af.mil](mailto:afpc.retiree@us.af.mil)

**(Author: 86AW/RAO - Jim Barrante)**

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## What does your Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) Retiree Council do for You?

**The Rheinland-Pfalz Army Garrison has a Retiree Council** appointed by the Garrison Commander that meets regularly and works through the Retiree Services Officer (RSO), a paid position on the Garrison staff.

### **Now – what do we do for you?**

- We support the greater Kaiserslautern footprint under the direction of the Rheinpfalz Garrison commanders by being the focal point for issues that affect retirees and their surviving spouses.



We also assist retired Department of Defense civilians and veterans no matter where they reside. If you bring us a concern, we will try to resolve it locally providing appropriate response and /or if necessary, pass it up the Chain of Command for resolution. We meet regularly with the Commander of LRMC.

We also arrange for and conduct quarterly outreach get togethers to discuss pertinent retiree concerns. Our members are retirees from all the military services and include spouses, widows, and Department of Defense retirees. If you would like to help, we would be delighted to have you join us.

## KMC Retiree Council Members:



Benjamin Strange, USA LTC (R), President

Robert Cooper, USAF MAJ(R)

Glenn King, USAF SMSgt (R)

Jhames Illanez, USAF MAJ(R)

Barbara Nelson, DoD Civilian (R)

Michael Paine, DoD Civilian (R)

Christa Purdy, Widow Representative

Denise Schleyer, DoD Civilian (R)

Diana Starkey USAF LtCol (R)

Steven Swiger, USA SGT (R)

Patrick Ganne USN CAPT (R)

Timothy Carentz USAF CMSgt (R)

**We are currently looking for a new venue that can provide space for up to 50 people for our meeting place.**

**NOTE: Contact either the RSO at the Garrison or the 86AW RAO if you want to touch base with the Retiree Council; we will get your message to them.**

(Author: Jim Barrante- 86 AW/RAO for LtCol (Retired) Benny Strange, KMC Council President)

## Do you have your VHIC?



Effective 1 January 2020, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 came into effect allowing Veterans **with a service-connected disability, Purple Heart recipients**, former POW and primary veteran caregivers to shop at the commissaries, military exchanges and utilize certain Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

Any Veteran who falls into the above mentioned categories will need the following: a Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) and a German Resident Permit to take advantage of this new program.

In order to obtain a VHIC, a member needs to enroll in the VA healthcare system by either calling 1-877-222-VETS (Mon – Fri 0800 – 2000 Eastern Standard Time), going on-line to

[www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll) .Please do not confuse the VHIC with the Veterans ID Card. A Veteran ID card will not substitute for the VHIC.

Once enrollment is verified, the Veteran does not need to go to a VA medical facility but can obtain the VHIC now on-line. He/she might need an IDme account if the Veteran does not have an APO Mailing address. Just go to:

[ID.me Help Center](https://help.id.me) <https://help.id.me> > [en-us](#)

Once you have an IDme account you can continue to the step-by-step process located at:



VHIC Self Service  
Step by Step Guidanc

The VHIC card will be mailed to your German address that you provided when enrolling in the VA health system.

Once you receive your VHIC in the mail, you will need to go to Pulaski Barracks to start the process to obtain an Installation Access Control System installation pass to get access to the base. After you receive your Installation Access Card, you will need to go to US Customs office and obtain an AE Form 550-175K to get the Pink-Card. You will need to bring your passport, German residence permit and VHIC to both the US and German Custom Office.

Please be aware if you do not reside in Germany, you will not be able to shop on base due to host nation agreements and laws. Once US Customs issues the AE Form 550-175K you take the form to your local German Custom Office to receive your Pink-Card.

The Pink Card is used to account for purchased items to access German taxes and import fees. Your local German Custom Office will tell you how often you must bring in the Pink Card to pay your German taxes and import fees on your purchased items.

(Author: [86AW/RAO Frances Gerard](#))

## What does your Ramstein Retiree Activities Office (RAO) do for You?

Our mission is to support you--each and every retiree **regardless of branch served** or how long you served –does not matter and yes, we care for and help DoD retirees and **veterans from all services too!**

- We collect and promptly disseminate, via email from the 86AW /RAO, all the information touching on retiree issues that comes from the Defense Financial Accounting System (DFAS), Social Security Administration, TRICARE, Mortuary Affairs, Casualty Assistance, Veterans Affairs, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and any of our service agencies.



**Retiree Activities Office** - We provided a “Surviving Spouse Workshop” designed to educate retiree spouses of the benefits due them because of the member’s service. This was pre-COVID and now we have a briefing posted at the Homepages. However , we still offer one on one counseling to ensure your desires are meant. We discuss information on what the retiree might have to do if the spouse dies first or vice versa.

- We provided a quarterly “Retiring in Germany” brief for people near retirement to let them know what it means to be a permanent resident here. This is an extra add-on to the Transition Assistance Program.

-Now this briefing is also available via the Homepage or by asking a Consultant about it. We still advise all to make an appointment for a sit-down one-on-one conversation with one of our experienced retirees in the RAO.



-We also help with the annual Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) by advising the project committee of desired activities.

- The RAO tries to stay open three days a week to answer questions and respond to e-mails. We receive phone calls, e-mails, and walk-ins at the rate of about 80 a week.

- The RAO maintains information, as current as we can get, on subjects ranging from transferring your car, obtaining an EU driver’s license, shopping assistance program, installation access and how to submit claims to the Foreign Medical Program.



You can contact us by email, phone or stop by the RAO or talk to one of the KMC Council members listed below.

Or you can visit us on our Facebook page Ramstein RAO at:

<https://www.facebook.com/RamsteinRAO/>

E-mail RAO – [86aw.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:86aw.rao@us.af.mil)

DSN 480-5486, civ 06371-47-5486, Bldg. 2118, Room 138, Ramstein Air Base.

Tues--Weds-Thurs 1000-1200 and 1300-1500

Current RAO staff members are below followed by a few words from each member:

Jim Barrante, AF CMSgt (R)

Jim has been mainstay of the staff since joining the RAO back in 2010. He served 30 years in the AF and then transitioned to the Army over at the 21st Theater Sustainment Command where he served as a Logistics Officer for almost 15 years. Final retirement was in 2008. He lives with his wife Christa. Has a total of some 50-years of living in Germany.

Robert Cooper, AF Major (R)

Bob has been with the RAO for almost 6 years as a weekly volunteer on Thursdays. He has been in Germany for 45 years and is a card-carrying German Resident and German tax payer. He retired from the US Air Force as a Major and has spent those 45 years at Ramstein. He has worked for 3 high tech Computer firms, 10 years with the USO at the Ramstein Terminal, 5 years at the Rod and Gun club. He has been through the ropes of converting from a Retired Major with Logistics Support to a German Resident as well as encountering the German taxation system. Bob is an avid big game hunter and spends most of his vacation time hunting.

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Vesta Freyhoefer, AF MSgt (R)

Our latest volunteer is Vesta Freyhoefer. She spent 20 years in the Air Force and then worked for the Army for 15 years. She is both a retired AF MSgt and retired Army GS 12. A few of her hobbies are: hiking, bicycling, reading, traveling and baking. She is married, hails from Florida, loves sunshine, warm weather and walking her dog. She retired in 2018 and is as busy as ever in retirement.

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Frances Gerald, AF TSgt (R)

Frances, whose husband is a DOD Army civilian, and her children are coming from San Antonio, Texas. She served in the Air Force for 20 years before retiring in 2018, and she has been volunteering at the RAO since February 2022. Frances enjoys reading, traveling, and baking.

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Denise Schleyer, DoD Civilian (R)

Originally, from Jamaica W.I. immigrated as a teenager to the USA. Retired civilian, worked for various agencies in DoD Army and DFAS as an accountant, last position held was as the Budget Officer 21st TSC. Since retiring in 2016, have been a volunteer at the RAO and an IRS VITA volunteer tax preparer. Hobbies include traveling, ballroom dancing (where I met my husband), reading, going to museums, operas and classical concerts. And did I mention traveling 😊.



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## Those German Tax Laws

The two areas of the tax law that require your attention are **income tax** and **inheritance**.



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U.S. citizens who receive the Social Security (SS) benefit are required to report this income on the German Steuererklärung (income tax form). One is also required to report their world-wide income. This includes retired pay and, for those who worked as a civil servant, it would be the civil service pension paid by the Office of Personnel Management. The annuity from SS is directly taxed by Germany. The world-wide income is used in the Progressionsvorbehalt to determine the tax rate to be applied to all income that is directly taxed. Germany also taxes one's survivors' inheritance.

All inheritance has a tax-free portion. For example, the surviving spouse has a 500,000 Euro tax-free portion. In the case of surviving children, each heir enjoys a 400,000 Euro tax-free portion.

When the last will and testament is submitted to the German probate court (Nachlassgericht), the survivors must report the value of the assets of the estate. If one's principal residence is Germany, one cannot avoid paying taxes on the amount of money above the tax-free portion. Furthermore, when reporting the value of the assets of the estate, assets outside of Germany, for example in a U.S. bank, must be reported as

a part of the estate. There are actions that can be taken while the Retiree is still alive to reduce the tax burden. For example, real estate and tangible high value items or money can be given to descendants prior to the Retiree's death. Therefore, if the value of the total estate is significant and the heirs will be facing a high tax bill, it is worth the expense to seek the advice of a German tax advisor (Steuerberater).

(Author: permission for reprint from Darmstadt July Newsletter)

## RAO FACEBOOK PAGE

The RAO Facebook page consists of current and upcoming KMC Retiree events and announcements and the latest news of LRMC services to our retiree community here in the KMC. We would like to invite you, our local FB retirees, to our '**Ramstein RAO**' **page** and join us as we reach out to our KMC retiree community of over 5,000 retirees, spouses and surviving spouses. The FB can be viewed around the globe. "Like" us at

<https://www.facebook.com/RamsteinRAO>.

(Author/Maintainer: Robert Belt, SSG (R))

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Feedback. We need to hear from you about what we can do better. What is missing from our Newsletter? Are you receiving information overkill? That could be since many of our articles and what we disseminate to you via e-mail comes from other agencies such as DFAS, TRICARE, VA, SSA, VFW, Military news sources and the Office of Personnel Management.

So, if you are subscribed to different agencies and receive their e-mails like from MyPay—YES you might see a repeat article sent via e-mail and or again appearing in our Newsletter.

Tell us what we should do to make things better: should we eliminate dissemination of articles thinking you have seen them or do we double you up?

Please let us know by sending an e-mail to

[86aw.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:86aw.rao@us.af.mil)

Subject: Feedback

Additionally, we welcome all suggestions concerning content on what you would like to see in our Newsletters. Thank you.

The RAO Newsletter is published by the RAO staff at Ramstein Air Base for all military Retirees and their families in and around the greater Kaiserslautern Military Community. All information was accurate at the date of publication and is subject to change without notice. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please send your e-mail address to: [86aw.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:86aw.rao@us.af.mil) We in turn will send you a membership form so we can add you to the data base and our group contacts of some 1400 readers.

**Contact:** The RAO is in Building 2118, Room 138. Our business hours are Tuesday – Thursday from 1000 – 1500 hours. Our Phone Number is 06371-47-5486, DSN 480-5486.

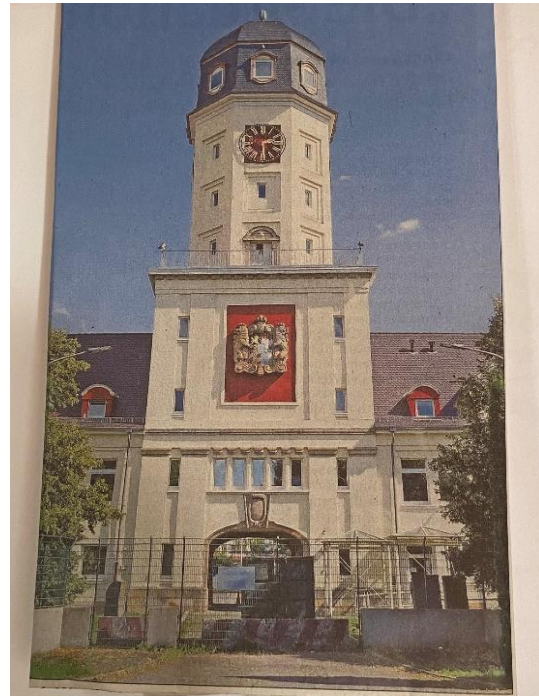
E-Mail Address is:

[86aw.rao@us.af.mil](mailto:86aw.rao@us.af.mil), we are also on

Facebook at [Ramstein RAO](#)

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### *Some Trivia from around the KMC*



Have you seen the “Bell Tower” before? It resides at Kleber Kaserne, one of three major US Army kasernes located on the eastern side of Kaiserslautern.

The Kaserne is named after a Napoleon General Jean Kleber. You see the French occupied Kaiserslautern after World War II until the Spring of 1951 when the Americans arrived and took over most of the kasernes such as Daenner and Panzer Kaserne. Also, on the west side of town, the Vogelweh Housing and other buildings such as a school and a commissary were being constructed. Around the same time the land was cleared between Landstuhl and Ramstein village to make room for Landstuhl (later renamed Ramstein) Air Base. (Author: Jim Barrantes-86 AW/RAO) taken from the Rhein-Pfalz Newspaper 28 Sep 2022

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