

What your family needs to plan for and know in case of a casualty.



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Service member Death Notification Procedures/Contact Information	Page 2
Casualty Assistance Checklist	Page 3-5
Important Addresses and Phone Numbers	Page 5-6
Things you need to do with other benefits you may have	Page 7
Agencies/Offices that can help you file for benefits not related to active service	Page 7
Actions to take if civilian spouse precedes the service member in death	Page 7
Death notification questionnaire for Frankfurt Consulate	Page 8-9

NOTE: Spouse/Next of Kin should have a copy of this document or know where to locate it. Let a third party (family member) know where it is in case something should happen to both the Retiree and Spouse/Next of Kin at the same time.

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SERVICE MEMBER DEATH NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES/CONTACT INFORMATION

To receive Casualty Assistance guidance regarding survivor assistance benefits and to discuss arrangements for burial with honors for a retiree, you must contact your local

Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) immediately—**THIS IS THE FIRST STEP**. Contacts in the KMC are:

Air Force Ramstein: Ramstein AB, Building 2106, Room. 101B, Telephone: 067371-47-5759 or you can e-mail the Casualty Assistance Representative at christine.fenton@us.af.mil . There is also a Casualty Office Organization Mail Box which is: 786fss.casualty@us.af.mil . If no one is available and as a last resort you can call the Ramstein Air Base Command Post at 06371-47-2121

US Army Garrison Rhineland-Pfalz: Kleber Kaserne, Building. 3245, Room 217, Kleber Kaserne
Tel: 0611-143-541-1021 or 24-hr cell: 0162 1085 359.

Army Europe and Africa Casualty Assistance Center: 06111-43-544-1340 or DSN 544-1340

Navy and Marine Corps Europe/Asia Region Casualty Office: 0039-335-621-1063

For local area assistance contact the 86 AW Retiree Activities Office, 06371-46-5486;
e-mail: 86aw.rao@us.af.mil

- **The Service Components are responsible only to assist with the benefits related to the member's active duty entitlements. For other federal or civilian benefits see page 7.**

In addition you need to report the death of an American citizen abroad (retiree) by calling the American Consulate in Frankfurt at 069-7535-2515 or via email to GermanyACS@state.gov. They are the only ones who can provide copies of the official death certificate. When reporting a death, use the consulate questionnaire provided as pages 8/9 in a separate handout to this checklist. At this time, request 20 certified copies of a "Foreign Service Report of Death Certificates". They are actually all originals with the raised seal. The Consulate will provide up to 20 copies free the first time requested, but become expensive if you have to go back for more — you may need them for other purposes in the U.S. For example, most insurance companies in the U.S. won't accept foreign death certificates. **For reporting the death to both the Casualty Office and the Frankfurt American Consulate you will need the initial document issued by medical authorities substantiating the death plus a medical statement reflecting the cause of death.**

You should also contact the Federal Benefits Unit (FBU) Office at the Consulate 069-905-551-100 (English) or 069-905-551-203 (German) (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 0900-1100) or via e-mail to fbufrankfurt@ssa.gov. There is a one-time lump sum payment that the "Next of Kin" may be entitled to, as well as answering any questions about Social Security you may have. This office may also furnish the Next of Kin, the flag for the casket if one is requested.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CHECKLIST

DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO CLAIM DEATH BENEFITS

(Check them off and note the location of each item)

- Copies of report(s) of separation from active duty (DD-214, etc.). Mandatory.
Location of document _____

- Copies of retirement orders.
Location of document _____

- Copies of birth and death certificates.
Location of documents _____

- Beneficiary's birth certificate(s) and marriage and/or divorce data (for all former spouses)
Location of documents _____

- Social Security Data

- VA Notification of Disability Letter, if applicable.
Location of Documents _____

- Deceased member's Passport.
Location of Documents _____

- If Civil Service Retiree, OPM Retirement Claim Number and location of booklet

- If participated in the Thrift Savings Program (TSP), TSP documents and location of the documents _____

Retain original documents when possible and provide copies/certified copies to agencies.

Plus, you should always have the following documents on hand (*attach a separate list*

with the location of each and indicate account numbers, amount in accounts, mailing address, e-mail address, phone numbers, passwords –if applicable and desired)

- Updated Will (if married to a German, or own property in Germany, you should also have a German Will, the laws and entitlements under the German system differ significantly from US) and letter of instructions
- Copy of Retirement Leave and Earning Statement (LES)
- Names of banks (US and international), credit unions, with account numbers, etc. On banks, or credit unions; spouse should be a primary owner on an account if there are two, if not, you should open a separate account with spouse as primary owner. Also, for IRAs, CDs, 401Ks, you need to have a signed beneficiary statement on file.
- If you have other saving benefits, such as IRA, 401K, TSP, Savings Bonds, or anything else
- Updated list of all assets (to include vehicles and property) and liabilities – title of ownership
- Insurance policies (Civilian and other Government-not related to active duty entitlements),
- Other survivor benefits such as SBP from the Civil service, if applicable
- Other Health Insurance you may have
- Medical statements for incapacitation (if any)
- Adoption or naturalization papers and custodian or guardianship documents (*if applicable*)

NOTE: Not all agencies will need original Death Certificate to take actions, ask if copies are accepted. Use copies when possible.

Things to know and plan for:

- Disposition instructions for the body (burial, cremation, memorial service, etc.)
- Information required for Death Certification (date/place of birth, father's name, mother's maiden name; it is important that is stated the cause of death)
- Information required for obituary notice (names, relation and locations of appropriate relatives, etc.)
- Widows/widowers will need a new ID card (military, medical, commissary, base exchange, etc.)
- Necessary changes in your DEERS program will have to be made (Tricare, etc.)
- It may take several months to clear estates (you may require a maximum of 10 copies of death certificate)
- Contents of your safety deposit box should be known (make sure box number and its location and the location of the key are known)
- How to and where to file US and German Taxes
- If Civil Service, where all OPM documentation is and who to contact
- If spouse has foreign retirement benefits who and where to file for
- Direct deposit of Social Security benefits and military retirement payments (entitlements) must be immediately changed

- Named beneficiaries on insurance policies become very important (keep current)
- There may be some entitlement to burial benefits (headstone, payments, etc.) (Check with the VA)
- Check VA for Presidential Memorial Certificate
- American Flag can be obtained (in Germany, check with the Federal Benefits Unit)
- The survivor should update appropriate will
- Extra credit cards should be destroyed or cancelled
- Appropriate changes should be made to all joint ownerships
- Be prepared to turn in Retiree's ID Card
- Contacts for Civilian Insurance companies as appropriate
- What to do if one or both of you are Incapacitated (physically or mentally)

IMPORTANT ADDRESS INFORMATION

DFAS (*Defense Finance and Accounting Services, Cleveland, OH*): Retiree or Annuitant Pay: 1-800-321-1080 (or the toll free number 0800 5891634 can be dialed from any commercial telephone in Germany): www.dod.mil/dfas

Address for Retiree Pay:

Defense Finance and Accounting Services
 US Military Retiree Pay
 8899 E 56th Street
 Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200

Address for Annuitants:

Defense Finance and Accounting Services
 US Military Annuitant Pay
 8899 E 56th Street
 Indianapolis, IN 46249-1300

National Personnel Records Center: Veterans and next of kin can contact NPRC to obtain copies of a veteran's records. Mail request: 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138-1002.

www.archives.gov/stlouis/military-personnel/index.html **Electronic request:**
<https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html>

Department of Veterans Affairs, 1000 Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

U. S. Office of Personnel Management – Retirement Operations Center, Post Office Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017-0045

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) – P.O. Box 385021, Birmingham, L 35238

Important Agencies and Contact Info (check periodically)

Airman and Family Readiness Center, Building 2120, RAB (Air Force Aid Society), 06371-47-5100

Army Community Services (ACS), Building 3210, Kleber Kaserne, 0611-143-541-9000

Army Emergency Relief (AER) Office Building 3210, Kleber Kaserne, Room 208A/212, 0611-143-541-9010/9012

DFAS Hotline 0800-589-1634

Legal Office Ramstein Air Base, Building 2137, 06371-47-5912

Legal Office Kleber Kaserne, Building 3210, 0631-411-8848

Mortuary Affairs Air Force, Building 2106, Ramstein AB, 06371-47-5968

Mortuary Affairs Office Army, Landstuhl, 06371-9464-6953

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Retirement Information Office 1-888-767-6738

Red Cross Ramstein, Building 2118, 06371-47-2171

Retiree Activities Office (RAO), Ramstein AB, Building 2120, Room 1248, 06371-47-5486

Social Security Hotline 1-800-772-1213

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Hotline 1-877-968-3778

VA Hotline 1-800-827-1000

VA at Landstuhl, LRMC, Bldg. 3724, Rooms 110 & 112, Phone #: 06371 478028, e-mail: GermanyBDD.vbapit@va.gov

VA Office Kleber Kaserne, Building 3245, 0631-411-6007

VA Office Ramstein AB, building 2120, 06371-47-2052

THINGS YOU NEED TO DO WITH OTHER BENEFITS NOT RELATED TO ACTIVE SERVICE

Need to Change:

Name on Bank Accounts/Savings Initiatives that were joint

Health insurances (US and German) if applicable, from family plan to single.

Name on property ownership and vehicle ownership documents.

File a tax return for the deceased (allowed to file MFJ) for two years following death of spouse.

AGENCIES THAT WILL HELP YOU FILE FOR BENEFITS NOT RELATED TO ACTIVE SERVICE

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) at Army Community Services (ACS), Kleber Kaserne, Building 3210, Room 226, phone number 0631-143-541-9000

The 86th Air Wing Retiree Activities Office (RAO), Ramstein Air Base, Building 2120, Room 124, phone number 06371-47-5486, e-mail: 86aw.rao@us.af.mil.

The KMC Retiree Council which can be reached at the 86th Air Wing Retiree Activities Office (RAO). Please see the information above.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IF CIVILIAN SPOUSE PRECEDES SERVICE MEMBER IN DEATH

Key issue here is if you are paying for Survivor Benefits Program entitlements from your active duty service is to advise DFAS CONTACT INFO immediately of the death of spouse to stop those payments.

If you are paying for Survivor Benefits Program entitlements from Civil Service is to advise OPM CONTACT INFO immediately of death of spouse to stop those payments.

If you have any other type of civilian program with such payments, you need to notify them immediately to stop those payments.

If your spouse was receiving Social Security Payments you need to notify the Social Security Administration to stop those payments.

If spouse was receiving any other type of retirement or social income notify those agencies to stop those payments. You need to also check to see if you are entitled to any financial payments as the widow/widower from these agencies.

Those things **in Retiree Checklist above also apply.**