

# Welcome to Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Germany!



We hope you enjoy your new assignment to the Tri-Border Area. This document is intended to provide you with the information most needed before and during your PCS. Your assignment to Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base is a unique experience different from any military assignment you've ever experienced. This is a remote location where you live completely immersed among the local villages and culture. You have the opportunity to work alongside many other internationals, Please don't hesitate to ask your sponsor for any additional information you need, or contact the Geilenkirchen Airman & Family Readiness Center at Comm: 02451-9151-2372, DSN: 314-458-4015, or [470abs.dpf@us.afmil](mailto:470abs.dpf@us.afmil).



Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GKAFRC>

We look forward to meeting you soon!

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## Sponsorship

### Has your sponsor contacted you yet?

Your sponsor can be your best connection to Geilenkirchen, both before and after your arrival, and during your transition into our unique community. We suggest sharing your personal email with your sponsor, so they can contact you after you leave your current base.

Please complete the Newcomer Needs Assessment at the end of this document and send it to your sponsor as soon as you can. This will allow the sponsor to tailor things to your needs.

If you have not heard from your sponsor or have not been assigned a sponsor, please contact the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) so we can assist you. We can be reached at [470abs.dpf@us.af.mil](mailto:470abs.dpf@us.af.mil).

### Are you a spouse who would like your own sponsor?

The Spouses Sponsoring Spouses program will connect you with a spouse at Geilenkirchen who can help answer the questions you have about moving here. Please email the Airman & Family Readiness Center at [470abs.dpf@us.af.mil](mailto:470abs.dpf@us.af.mil) to request a spouse sponsor. We need your name, phone, email, # children/ages (if applicable), and your expected date of arrival at GK.

## Temporary Lodging

### Making Reservations

There is no on-base housing or on-base lodging at Geilenkirchen. Your sponsor will help you make reservations with a local guest house or hotel accommodation. A listing

### Length of Stay

You are authorized TLA for a period of 30 days; extensions must be requested in writing with sufficient justification to the 470th Air Base Squadron Commander.

Please check with the US Housing Referral Office within two workdays after arrival for a TLA briefing according to USAFE Instruction 65-104, para 4.d.

### Paying

Double check to see if your accommodation accepts credit cards, as not all of them do. Also be sure to ask if they accept the VAT form, which will save you 19% tax. Your sponsor can assist you with contacting the US VAT office on Geilenkirchen, Building 87, DSN: 314-458-4114 Comm: 02451-63-7219. Monday, Wednesday, Friday 0830-1530. Please call for an appointment.

## Getting to Geilenkirchen NATO AB

### Local Airports

The most common point of entry for Geilenkirchen incoming personnel is the Düsseldorf International Airport, one hour from the base. The alternate airport is in Brussels, Belgium, about 1.5 hours and 139 kilometers away from Geilenkirchen. You can discuss other options with your travel office.

### Transportation to Geilenkirchen

Both Düsseldorf and Brussels have taxi service to the Geilenkirchen area. Please send a copy of your travel itinerary to your sponsor so they can arrange transportation for you. Some guest houses will arrange taxi travel and include it in your bill—please have your sponsor discuss this ahead of time with the guest house owner.

Not all taxi services accept credit cards. If you will be paying for the taxi to be reimbursed on your travel voucher, make sure that they either accept cards or that you have ample cash on hand for the trip. Be sure to get a receipt, especially if you have to use cash.

In addition, you could catch a train from the Dusseldorf Airport to the Geilenkirchen train station. You will not be reimbursed for a rental car.

### Exchange contact information with your sponsor

You and your sponsor should exchange emergency contact information, so you can stay in touch during your travel. Remember that although you may not have phone service, your smartphone can use wi-fi where it is available. Many people in this area use a variety of apps including WhatsApp for instant messaging via their phones using data or wi-fi.

\*\*\*\* You CANNOT skip portions of your itinerary. DFAS requires justification and will only reimburse the used portion of the trip (or will limit the taxi reimbursement to the cost of the last leg, which is rarely equal).

## Shipping Your Vehicle

### Shipping Your POV

Your primary vehicle (one vehicle per PCS orders) will be shipped to USAG Benelux-Brunssum, NL. If you have two vehicles, you can ship the second vehicle at your own expense. If you ship a vehicle privately, the most common port for Geilenkirchen is Bremerhaven, Germany. <https://www.pcsmypov.com/>

### What vehicles should you bring?

European roads and parking spaces tend to be much narrower than those in the states. Fuel can also be more expensive. Most Europeans in this area drive smaller cars. Larger cars (SUVs, trucks) are less common in this area. Although larger vehicles like SUVs and trucks are less common, you can still bring a larger car; just realize that parking and driving may be a little more difficult. If you have questions, you can ask your sponsor or contact us here at the A&FRC.

Please note that vehicles with after-market tint on the drivers and passengers front windows will not be allowed to pass inspection. Other windows may be tinted. For more information, see the "Army in Europe Regulation 190-1, Chapter 22, C-22, WINDOW TINTING.

### **Picking Up Your POV**

You must pass the USAREUR drivers test before you can pick up your vehicle at Brunssum.

When you pick-up your vehicle, you can receive a one-time authorization to fill-up your vehicle at the Brunssum gas station. The Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) and Provost Marshal Office provide the authorization.

Once your vehicle is registered at Geilenkirchen, you will receive monthly gas rations and a pre-paid gas card for use at German Esso gas stations. Tell the clerk if you have a diesel vehicle, as the Esso cards for diesel and gas are different.

### **Registration**

When your vehicle arrives you will need your title, proof of European insurance and vehicle inspection (done at the Geilenkirchen NATEX Garage). Hand carry these documents to Building 297, and they will assist you with registration.

## **Driving in Germany**

**US military, civilians, and dependents assigned to Germany must possess a US Certificate of License to drive in Germany. This rule applies to rental cars, guest house cars, and USAREUR registered vehicles.**

To obtain the USAREUR DL the newcomer must pass either the JKO Driver Training Program Tests or the Written Test\*\*, have a valid stateside DL or POV license by another US Forces command in Europe, and pay a \$20 per DL fee (payable with Credit/Debit card, check, or money order).

\*\*Due to Covid precautions there is no in person testing

Motorcycle endorsement requirements: in addition to the above USAREUR DL requirements the member must have the motorcycle endorsement on their stateside license, a MSF BRC card valid for 1 year, or a MSF ERC/MSRC card valid for 5 years.

#### Eligibility:

- US Forces personnel assigned in Germany.
- Spouses of US Forces personnel assigned in Germany.
- Dependent children ages 17-23 (restrictions may apply).
- DoD employees, contractors, and their dependents on SOFA status.
- NATO Military and Civilian personnel and their dependents from entitled countries.

#### **Completion of the JKO US Certificate of License Test (CAC Holders):**

Go to the following link: <https://jkodirect.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/login/Login.jsf> and login or create an account with or without CAC.

Click on the Course Catalog and Search for “U.S. Forces Driver’s Training Program.

2 options will appear (USA-007, USA-007B) , complete U.S. Forces Driver’s Training Program for Europe first followed by U.S. Forces Driver’s Training Program for Europe – Final Course Exam. In order to receive credit and obtain a DL you must complete both CBTs and tests prior to applying for a DL at the POV office on GK.

The tests must be completed a minimum of 2 days and a maximum of 60 days prior to your arrival at GK for the test scores to show up in our systems and to be valid.

#### **JKO non-government personnel/sponsored account registration for U.S. Certificate of License testing (non-CAC Holders):**

- Go to the following link: <https://jkodirect.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/login/Login.jsf>
- Click on Non-Government Personnel/Sponsored Account Registration.
- Complete the application with the non-governmental/sponsored personnel and Sponsor Information.
- Once completed click on the “Submit” button. An email will be sent to the sponsor for them to verify and validate that you are their sponsor.
- After sponsor verification JKO will create the new account and will email the account login information to the applicant.

#### **International Driver’s License**

Before coming to Germany, it is a great idea to obtain an international driver’s license. When stationed in Germany, the USAREUR license is required to drive your car in Germany. The International Driver’s License is required when driving outside of Germany and obtaining rental cars in various countries within Europe. You can achieve this by going to your local AAA office or mail in your information (to AAA) if you have enough time.

<https://www.aaa.com/vacation/idp.html> . To obtain the International Driver’s License in Germany you will need these items:

- NATO ID card
- Passport
- Valid USAREUR license
- Passport photo (you can get pictures done there, 6€ for 6 pictures, bring coins)
- 13.80€

Go to:

District administration Heinsberg  
 Valkenburger Straße 45  
 D-52525 Heinsberg

See their website for hours of operation

<https://www.kreis-heinsberg.de/buergerservice/schlagwortindex/?ID=102>

### **Contact Information**

For any questions or concerns, please contact the 470<sup>th</sup> ABS Security Forces office at DSN 314-458-4024.

## Bringing Pets to Germany

### **Shipping/Flying Your Pets**

Bringing pets to Europe can be complicated. The military does not pay to ship pets, and airlines limit the number of animals on airplanes. Furthermore, most airlines will not take pets in cargo during hot months.

### **Preparation**

You must also have a health certificate, no more than 10 days old, for each animal to travel outside the country. Rabies vaccinations must be older than 30 days, but no more than 1 year and must be given after your pet is micro-chipped with a European-spec chip. Your local veterinarian should be able to provide additional information.

Pets are generally allowed to be shipped to Ramstein Air Base, Frankfurt Airport, Dusseldorf, Brussels, or Amsterdam. Dogs shipped into Ramstein or Frankfurt may be subject to a veterinary inspection fee. You must call the airline to book your pet on your flight.

### **More Information**

- Army Vets:  
<http://ervc.amedd.army.mil/AnimalMedicine/PCSEU.html>
- Ramstein Fact Sheet for Pets:  
<https://www.ramstein.af.mil/About/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/303601/pets/>

- SPCA Operation Military Pets- grants to ship pets:  
<http://www.spcai.org/get-involved/military-support/operation-military-pets/>

There is no quarantine for pets that meet regulation requirements. However, there are new requirements for all dogs living in and coming to Germany. Contact your sponsor or the Geilenkirchen legal office for more information (DSN 314-458-4060. Please refer to the link below for guidance on dangerous dog breeds.

### **Restrictions on dogs considered to be “dangerous breeds”**

Certain breeds—including Pit Bull Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, and other dogs descended from one of these breeds—are restricted in Germany.

Please see the following links for more information:

Ramstein Guidelines for Dangerous Dogs

<https://www.ramstein.af.mil/About/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/303686/dangerous-dog-guidelines/>

- German Customs page on dangerous dog regulations:  
<http://www.zoll.de/EN/Private-individuals/Travel/Entering-Germany/Restrictions/Dangerous-dogs/dangerous-dogs.html>

## **Schools**

### **Schools**

All school-aged children attend AFNorth International School in Brunssum, NL, about fifteen minutes from the base. More information about the school can be found at <http://www.afnorth-is.com/>. Click on the “National Sections” link on the left side of the page. Choose the American Offices, then the Elementary or Middle/High School links, where you will find information and registration forms.

### **School Liaison**

The School Liaison Officer (SLO) at your current base should be able to help you manage this transition. A comprehensive list of School Liaisons can be found at <http://www.dodea.edu/Partnership/schoolLiaisonOfficers.cfm>.

The Geilenkirchen SLO can be reached at Comm: 02451-9151-2372 or DSN: 314-458-4015 or via email at [470abs.slo@us.af.mil](mailto:470abs.slo@us.af.mil).

## Childcare

### Child Care

Both Geilenkirchen NATO AB and JFC Brunssum have a Child Development Center and School Age Program. JFC Brunssum also offers a Youth Center for grades 6-12. There is no Family Child Care program at Geilenkirchen, as there is no base housing. Register for child care at [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com)

You can contact either CDC to discuss pre-registration prior to your PCS.

- **Geilenkirchen CDC/SAP:** Comm 011-49-2451-9151-4017 or DSN 314-458-4017.
- **JFC Brunssum Child, Youth, and School Services (CYSS):** Comm 011-31-45-526-3121 or DSN 314-364-3121.

### International Youth Activities (IYA)

Geilenkirchen also has an International Youth Activities (IYA) program which offers after-school care for children ages 5 and up. GK NATO AB, Bldg 95. 0049-2451-63-6033.

### Childcare for PCS Vouchers

Air Force members are eligible for the Air Force Aid Society's "Childcare for PCS" program at both their current base and their gaining base. Contact your Airman & Family Readiness Center to get your voucher, which will pay for up to 20 hours of free childcare per child.

## Getting to Know the Area





### Where is GK?

NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen is situated four kilometers west of the city of Geilenkirchen, population 28,000 approximately. This is in the most western part of the Federal Republic of Germany, adjacent to the Netherlands border. NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen is home to NATO’s E-3A Component and is often referred to as “the Component”. Brunssum, the Netherlands, lies 8 km west of the base and is the location of Joint Force Command (JFC) Headquarters Brunssum.

### Nearby Locations

Geilenkirchen is only 25 km north of Aachen and 70 km west of Köln. The E-3A Component is located only a 10-minute drive from the Dutch border, a 30-minute drive from Belgium and another two hours from the French border. Some of the major cities within a couple of hours drive include Brussels, Luxembourg, Paris, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Bonn. Also the world-famous wine-growing Rhein and Mosel Valleys are only a two-hour drive from Geilenkirchen. Our central location allows easy and quick access to many favorable destinations in Europe.



## Housing

### Where to live

USAF personnel assigned to Geilenkirchen NATO AB may choose to live in either Germany or the Netherlands. Personnel assigned to JFC Brunssum must live in the Netherlands. Since there is no on-base housing, personnel and families live in nearby cities or villages, providing a great opportunity for immersion in the German lifestyle.

\*Protip: Go to your local military library before PCSing and sign up for the FREE Mango language app! Then you can confidently say Guten Tag! to your neighbors.

## **Housing Referral Office**

When you arrive at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, you must visit the Housing Referral Office in Bldg 87. This visit is necessary to obtain housing, verify your eligibility for Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA), and receive counseling and guidance before entering into any written lease or rental/sales contract for housing. It is advised to wait until you arrive to secure housing in order to tour available units.

The Geilenkirchen housing office can be reached at Comm: 011-49-2451-9151-4663 or DSN 314-458-4033.

If you choose to live in the Netherlands, you will also need to coordinate with the USAG Benelux-Brunssum housing office after your arrival.

## **Finding Housing**

- Geilenkirchen: The 470 ABS Housing Referral Office lists houses as they come available on [www.homes.mil](http://www.homes.mil). Search Air Force Geilenkirchen AB. They also have a Sharepoint site with great information, including an updated listing of local houses available (CAC-only): <https://ice.usafe.af.mil/sites/52MSG/470ABS/470MSF/HRO/SitePages/Home.aspx>. 90
- Some houses can be found listed on Facebook groups, posted on flyers, or on other websites. Keep in mind that if you rent from a house you don't get through the housing office, you need to make sure the landlord is not "blacklisted" and the housing office must still review the contract.

## **Furniture/Appliances**

Housing in the Tri-Border area tends to have fewer (if any) closets and can also feature narrower staircases. Think about the size of your furniture—a very king-sized sleigh bed may not fit up the stairs to the bedroom, for instance. The USAG Benelux-Brunssum Furnishings office will provide you with wardrobes ("schrank"), refrigerator, and washer/dryer for the duration of your stay, in addition to loaner furniture while you're waiting for your household goods.

If you need loaner furniture, contact USAG Brunssum Furnishings directly at DSN 597-4154 or Comm: 00 31 45 534 0154

Electricity is 220v in Europe. Most 110v lamps will work here—you just have to use an adaptor plug and German light bulbs. Some travel appliances and most computer electronics will work with just an adaptor. Other items may be "dual voltage"—you can check the label on the item to find out—which can be used here in Europe.

For other items, such as vacuum cleaners, microwaves, or sewing machines, you will either need to buy new or used 220v items once you get here, or you can run them using a transformer. This can cause extra wear and tear on some items, and also costs more for electricity, so it's a very individual choice.

## Medical and Special Needs Information

### **On-Base Services**

The U.S. medical services at Geilenkirchen are limited in their facilities and manpower. The US medical facility has two family practice physicians and a flight surgeon, four general practice dentists, two social workers and a psychologist. Services include: family health, mental health, dental, lab, Pharmacy and x-ray. Patients are seen by appointment only; there is no 'sick call,' urgent or Emergency care at the US clinic. However, access to care is great and most patients can be seen same or next day.

### **Off-Base Services**

The clinic refers patients off-base to Dutch and German medical facilities for emergency care as well as specialized medical and dental care. While the off-base care is very good, it differs from the care received in the United States. There is a 24/7 tri-lingual Patient Liaison available to accompany patients during medical appointments and assist in easing the cultural differences during an emergency. They can be reached by contacting the TRICARE number listed below.

### **Mental Health Services**

The clinic provides basic mental health counseling services for adults but is not able to provide services to children 17 years of age and younger. Adult psychiatric evaluations, for medications, are available at Spangdahlem (approximately two hours away); however, that facility is also prohibited from providing psychological care to minors.

### **Dentistry**

Dental services are provided at the US Dental Clinic. Service members and dependents are entitled to one dental cleaning per year at the clinic. There is no sedation dentistry available at Geilenkirchen Air Base for children, so if your child has dental anxiety or other special needs they will be seen on the economy or referred to another military treatment facility.

### **Optometry**

An optometrist from Spangdahlem Air Base visits the clinic on a quarterly basis to see active duty members. Dependents will utilize off-base optometry services. Tricare reimburses dependents for their annual eye exam appointment. For more questions about Tricare, Geilenkirchen Air Base patients can call +011-49-2451-99-3373.

### **Special Needs**

Please make the time to thoroughly complete your AF Form 1466 and ensure you document all family medical or educational needs. Turn this form in as soon as possible! This

will allow our clinic staff to determine if your medical needs can be met at this location. If the active duty member or any family member has specialized medical needs, please work closely with your PCM and ask them to verify that the Geilenkirchen clinic has the capability to appropriately support those medical needs.

## Banking

### Choosing a Bank

You will need a bank that can pay European bills. This generally means that you either choose a local German or Dutch bank (depending on where you choose to live) or you choose Andrews Federal Credit Union or Community Bank, both located on USAG Benelux-Brunssum or Commerzbank on Geilenkirchen NATO AB. Some people also choose online banks like Service Credit Union; we recommend you do your own research if this is the route you decide to take.

### Debit and Credit Cards

Many vendors in this area do not accept American credit cards—cards that require you to swipe and sign. If they accept cards at all, their equipment is set up for “chip and pin” cards, which your US bank may be able to provide you with. Any European bank you use will issue you a chip and pin card.

### Cash

The European Union (except Great Britain) uses the Euro for currency. You will carry and use cash far more often than you may be used to. You should bring some Euros with you from the states, or change it at the airport. Most airports will also offer ATMs that will use your US debit card and give you Euros. There is an ATM on GK NATO AB which will also do this.

## Spouse Employment

### Employment Opportunities

Paid opportunities in the Tri-Border area are limited. As a spouse, you may not be able to find a job in your career field. In addition to seeking employment, many spouses choose to work on their education or volunteer on career-related projects for their resume.

### Job Listings

There is a job listing board in the A&FRC. We also post vacancies on our Facebook page. Most jobs in our area can be found on:

- [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com)
- <https://natex.de/employment/>
- <https://awacs.nato.int/contract/civillian-personnel-branch/job-vacancies>

- <https://jfcbs.nato.int/jfrcbrunssum/vacancies>
- <https://www.jfcbrunssum.com/jobs/>
- [https://www.dodcommunitybank.com/home/careers/application\\_process](https://www.dodcommunitybank.com/home/careers/application_process)
- <https://www.andrewsfcu.org/Learn/Inside-Andrews/About-Us/Careers>

## Resources

The Airman & Family Readiness Center and Army Community Service office offer classes monthly, as well as one-on-one resume assistance. Contact us when you get here!

# Online Resources

## Official Websites

- 470th ABS:  
<http://www.spangdahlem.af.mil/units/470thairbasesquadronindex.asp>
- 470th ABS Housing Referral Office  
<https://ice.usafe.af.mil/sites/52MSG/470ABS/470CC/HRO/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- Military Installations Website:  
<https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/> (search for Geilenkirchen or United States Army Garrison Benelux-Brunssum)
- Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base:  
<http://www.nato-e3a.de>
- US Army Garrison Benelux:  
<http://www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil/>
- NATO Newcomers Booklet:  
<http://www.e3a.nato.int/eng/html/newcomers.htm>
- Plan my Move:  
<https://planmymove.militaryonesource.mil/>

## Other Helpful Sites

- A&FRC Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/gkafrc>
- USAG Benelux Facebook (Tri-Border Community):  
<https://www.facebook.com/TriBorderCommunity>

## Newcomer Responsibilities

As an incoming Geilenkirchen NATO AB or 470<sup>th</sup> ABS member, you are responsible for assisting us to ensure you have a smooth transition to your new duty station. Keeping your sponsor informed about your exact itinerary and relocation needs will make it easier for them to help you.

Your sponsor will be contacting you shortly, if they have not already, to request the information on the “Newcomer Needs Assessment” from you. Your sponsor is responsible for assisting you during your relocation. Please help them out by providing the information to your sponsor as soon as possible (via FAX, telephone, mail, e-mail—whichever best meets your needs).

Keep your sponsor informed with your departure plans. Any subsequent changes must be coordinated with your gaining unit/sponsor immediately. If you have delays or problems en-route, contact your gaining base and/or your sponsor.

The sponsorship program is designed to efficiently provide your gaining unit with mission ready personnel. Your active and timely involvement is critical. Please document your sponsor’s effort, both good and bad, as you will be asked to provide feedback upon your arrival.

**Welcome to Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base!**

## Other Considerations

- Do you have **pets**? How many? Type/Breed? How big? Do you need kennel arrangements? Be sure to read the letter about German Dog Laws on Sponsor CD.
- **Temporary lodging reservations** will be made by sponsor.
- **Transportation arrangements** will be made by sponsor.
- You will be **living off base**. **Your sponsor should take you to base housing office within two duty days of arrival**. You cannot make any arrangements in advance. Your sponsor can pick up a housing list a day before you arrive to show you what is currently available.
- Have you contacted the **Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC)** to get information about Geilenkirchen?
- Have you attended or plan to attend a **“Smooth Move”** Seminar to help ensure a pleasant transition from your current location?
- Have you checked out the **Child Care for PCS** Program at the A&FRC (20 hours of free child care per child for all ranks who are within 60 days of PCSing)? It is available for both your current location and at Geilenkirchen.
- Will you be requesting **Child Development Center (CDC)** services (ages 6 weeks - 5 years)? If so, please provide your sponsor with a copy of your orders, and a create an account on [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) in advance of your arrival so that the CDC may place you on the waiting list. Please provide any additional information concerning your child(ren) such as special needs, etc.
- Any **special needs or concerns**? If so, what are they? (e.g., Special Needs Identification and Assignment Coordination Process (formerly EFMP), first-termer, overseas, humanitarian, colleges, family member employment, sports sign-up dates, foreign-born family member, etc.)  
**NOTE: Special needs issues must be coordinated through the Medical Clinic prior to departure.**

### NOTES FOR SPONSOR: