

Exchange and commissary shopping in Germany after retirement

Retired military personnel, widow(er)s of retired military personnel and their dependents, retired reservists (reservists who are otherwise eligible for retirement, but are under 60 years of age), and 100% disabled veterans are authorized to purchase non-rationed goods at US Forces' sales facilities in Germany in accordance with the Revised Forces Customs Law (*Truppenzollrechtsänderungsgesetz*) and the Forces Customs Ordinance (*Truppenzollverordnung*). The same ruling applies also to children of military personnel. It does not apply to retired civilian employees who reside in Germany or visit Germany.

Before you and your dependents shop in U.S. Forces sales facilities, you must first obtain a U.S. Forces Status Verification (AE Form 550-175K) from a U.S. Forces Customs Europe office in Germany.

Dependents visiting Germany without their retiree sponsors do NOT qualify for AE Form 550-175K. Widow(er)s of military personnel and/or military retirees visiting Germany also do NOT qualify for AE Form 550-175K.

AE Form 550-175K must be presented to the German customs office serving your area of residence for further processing and issuance of the actual authorization *Form 0216* and *Form 0217* "Pink Card". AE Form 550-175K will specify the validity date of the "Pink Card". Your retiree ID

card and the "Pink Card" will allow you access to U.S. Forces sales facilities in Germany. Purchase of rationed items is not authorized. All purchases must be for personal use only, and thus are not transferable or for resale.

No later than the 5th day of the month, the Pink Card must be presented to the issuing German customs office together with all original cash register receipts for all the previous month's purchases. German Customs will levy duties at a rate of 17.5% on items that each cost less than the US dollar equivalent of €50. For items that cost more than the dollar equivalent of €50, German Customs will charge the regular tariff rate, plus 19% VAT (*Mehrwertsteuer*). Web sites are available to help retirees determine their duty rates. A list of the tariff rates used to determine duty rates for specific items (in English) can be found at www.zolltarifnummern.de; www.ezt-online.de also provides information on tariff rates, but is available in German only. The €-rate German Customs will use to calculate the value of items is available at www.zoll.de. Duties will be levied based on the €-rate applicable for the month when the purchases were made.

If the "Pink Card" was not used for its entire validity period, German Customs will request a written statement from the "Pink Card"-holder verifying that purchases have not been made during this time period. German Customs is authorized to forward the "Pink Card-

holder's information to the U.S. Forces for verification purposes. Beware that German Customs also has the authority to withdraw your Pink Card if you fail to meet your obligations!

Using the APO in Germany

Retired military personnel, widow(er)s, retired reservists, 100% disabled veterans, and unaccompanied dependents whose sponsor is serving in a restricted tour area, can apply to use the US Forces postal system. To obtain APO privileges, you must make arrangements with the local APO to receive your mail through "Box R" (General Delivery Mail Section). Your mail must be addressed to "Box R" and must include the word "Retired". You must pick up your mail at the APO. The postal officer will advise you of any restrictions on package sizing. Above mentioned personnel categories in this chapter are authorized to receive parcels through the APO. However, the value of the goods or items cannot exceed €45.00 when received from a private person, or €22.00 if received from a company. All Box-R mail that exceeds the 16-ounce weight limit or the €22/45 monetary limit will be immediately returned to the sender. The intended recipient will be notified in writing of the delivery rejection and return of the parcel. For questions regarding any category of personnel not listed here, please contact your local U.S. Forces Customs Office.

Please bring with you:

Military Retirees

- Military retiree ID Card
- Passport (with valid residence permit, if ordinary resident in Germany)

Dependents and unaccompanied dependents (UD)

- Dependent retiree ID Card
- Personalausweis or passport (with valid residence permit if ordinary resident in Germany)

Widow(er)s

- Widow(er) ID Card
- Personalausweis or passport (with valid residence permit, if ordinary resident in Germany)

Self Registration for Spouses of Military Retirees

- Written request for Self Registration, dated and signed by the retiree
- OR: Certificate proving that the retiree is medically incapacitated and not able to write and sign a request for Self Registration
- Original documents for the military retiree & the dependent as listed.

Shopping Assistant

- Written request for Shopping Assistant authorization, dated and signed by the retiree or widow(er) or UD.
- And certificate proving that the retiree / widow(er) / UD is medically incapacitated or under custodianship.
- Original documents for the military retiree / widow(er) and the dependent as listed above
- The designated Shopping Assistant needs to bring his/her passport (with valid residence permit or other immigration document for Germany) or Personalausweis.



All forms will be issued on a walk-in basis

Customs tips for U.S. Retirees and Widows in Germany

with

AE Form 550-175K

**(U.S. Forces Status Verification/
*Statusnachweis für
versorgungsberechtigte Personen der
US-Streitkräfte*)**



Published by: **US Forces Customs-Europe
Customs Executive Agency**

<http://www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/customs.htm>

July 2011