

U.S. ARMY GARRISON WIESBADEN HERALD UNION

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Oct. 22, 2020



Laurri Garcia/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs



Anna Morelock/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Leading the way in the fight against flu

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Provost Marshal Lt. Col. Edwin Escobar (left) and Installation Management Command Directorate Europe Command Sgt. Maj. Samara Pitre (above) get their flu shots Oct. 16 on Clay Kaserne. Health officials stress the importance of getting the vaccine this year. See the shot clinic schedule on Page 2.

Barracks renovations

Painting, flooring, day rooms updated

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden has been working to renovate areas of the barracks and give Soldiers more space.

Garrison Commander Col. Mario A. Washington said the move had the support of Army leaders.

"It's in line with the Chief of Staff of the Army, our senior leaders and (Lt.) Gen. (Christopher) Cavoli's first line of effort, which is the barracks and quality of life for Soldiers, so this has provided us an opportunity to work that line of effort, and it's just, I believe, the right thing to do for the Soldiers."

Improvements that can be made now are being done right away, such as painting, laying new flooring, restriping parking lots and revamping day rooms, said Donald Meyer, chief, Housing Division, Directorate of Public Works.

A team of carpenters, painters, roofers and gardeners executed numerous improvements at the Clay Kaserne barracks to improve the quality of life for Soldiers living in this community, according to Rod Oshiro, DPW director.

See 'Barracks' on Page 2

Act against domestic violence

Lisa Bishop

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. The U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Family Advocacy Program and Army Community Service are hosting a series of events throughout the month under the theme of "United to End Domestic Abuse."

The military respects, supports and

defends victims of domestic abuse and views domestic abuse prevention as a shared community responsibility. FAP's prevention initiatives are designed to strengthen families through programs, classes and resources.

"Family violence is not an Army value," said Patrice Jessie, FAP manager, "We want people to know there are resources available to help strengthen their Army family."

Jessie said she sees the development of strong well-functioning families as the best preventive measure against domestic violence. "We want to help connect families to their community and be educated about what their concerns are — it could be parenting, communication or adjusting to a military lifestyle."

See 'DVAM' on Page 3

Garrison invites retirees for services, appreciation

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

This year's Army in Europe Retiree Appreciation Day, hosted by U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, is planned for Oct. 26-31.

In order to keep physically distanced and ensure the health and safety of all personnel, the event will consist of the following services for retirees, survivors and family members: The ID Cards, Passports Office and

Installation Access Control System will dedicate services for retirees from 8 a.m. to noon Oct. 26-30. The Post Office will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 31.

The optometry clinic will see retirees on a space

available basis Oct. 26-30. Retirees should call the appointment line at 06371 9464 1315 in advance to schedule an appointment time.

See 'Retirees' on Page 4



Welcome to "Our Home in Germany"

Learn about the little cultural differences, find out how to save money, make sure you're ready to drive in winter and begin exploring your new hometown, in the special insert inside of this issue.



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**U.S. Army Garrison
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Christopher Truchon

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e-Newsletter

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Flu shots important as ever

Emily Jennings

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden

The Wiesbaden Army Health Clinic and CDC remind community members that receiving the flu vaccine is the most important step they can take this year to protect against the flu virus and reduce the burden on medical resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clinics for the community will be held Nov. 2 to 24.

"Flu vaccination is the easiest and No. 1 way to protect our community and the ones that you love," said Lynnette Murray, public health nurse with the WAHC.

The WAHC encourages all



community members 6 months and older to receive a flu vaccination every year. The vaccine is especially important for those at high risk, including pregnant women, the elderly and small children, to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

Public health officials at the clinic caution that flu vaccines

will not prevent COVID-19, but they will reduce the burden of flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths on the health care system and conserve scarce medical resources for the care of people with COVID-19. Most flu vaccines protect against the four flu viruses that research suggests will be most common.

Community members are asked to print a screening form for each person receiving the vaccine, fill it out and bring it to the flu clinic. The form can be found on the garrison website at https://home.army.mil/wiesbaden/application/files/4016/0094/4293/DHA_116_Influenza_Screening.pdf.

Shot clinics are as follows

on lower Hainerberg between Bamboo Asian Restaurant and the Wiesbaden Community Spouses' Club Thrift Shop.

Nov. 2: 1 to 7 p.m.

*Nov. 6: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 10: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 12: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 14: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*Nov. 16: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 18: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 23: 1 to 7 p.m.

Nov. 24: 1 to 7 p.m.

Last check-in is 30 minutes before the session closes. For the most up-to-date information, please call the Flu Line at 06371-9464-1508 (DSN 590-1508).

*Denotes "no school" days for DoDEA.

BARRACKS

Continued from page 1

Gardeners have been clearing weeds and refreshed the sand volleyball court. They are set to begin targeted tree trimming this fall.

Roofers began replacing shingles and installing metal flashing on gazebos. Staff coordinated with units to clean up trash and dilapidated grills. The next phase will consist of sanding and staining the rest of the structures with the help of the Soldiers who live in the barracks.

Carpenters and painters removed the carpet and installed new flooring and window blinds and repainted the day room in Bldg. 1206. The renovation was capped off with replacement furnishings and a game table for the Soldiers.

In addition, the garrison is giving Soldiers more room in the barracks by offering staff sergeants the option to move to shared two-bedroom apartments in Crestview.

"From a quality of life standpoint for our service members, we can't meet the Army standard of one plus

one barracks (one Soldier per room, connected by a shared bathroom) unless we do a major renovation," Meyer said. "However, with utilization of excess Army housing (in Crestview), we can provide better quality of life for our Soldiers."

The Crestview apartments have a full kitchen, living room, dining area and basement storage. Washington said the extra space provides Soldiers the opportunity to unwind, which in turn improves readiness.

"People look at readiness sometimes as going to the range or doing physical activity, but readiness is also your mental health and being able to decompress from work, and this provides them that opportunity," he said.

The commander said his goal is to take care of Soldiers, and improving their quality of life with more living space is one way of doing that.

"Taking care of service members and family members is my number one priority, and this is in line with that," Washington said. "So any opportunity I get to take care of service members and their families, I take it."



Emily Jennings/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Truchon, along with Garrison Commander Col. Mario Washington, describes the new barracks dayroom renovations in Bldg. 1206 to a group of Soldiers and civilians.



Emily Jennings/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Truchon presents the newly-renovated day room in Bldg. 1206, complete with foosball and pool tables, couches and TV and dining areas.

Keep up with the latest local COVID-19 guidelines at home.army.mil/wiesbaden

All-hands meeting leverages virtual platform

Lisa Bishop

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden held its quarterly all-hands meeting using an online virtual platform Sept. 25.

The majority of the participants watched online. Approximately 150 logged into the meeting, muting their video and microphones. Some offices watched together in conference rooms.

Thomas Watson, civil engineer with the Directorate of Public Works, said, "I was pleasantly surprised with how smooth it went." He continued, "Audio was good; video sometimes a little pixelated but no big issue."

Those attending virtually could type questions for leadership to address into the

online platform. Watson asked if trainings and developmental opportunities are available to local national employees. While he didn't receive a firm answer he said he appreciated the commander's words.

From Watson's perspective, there were two strategic advantages to the online format: prevent the spread of COVID-19 and being able to continue working during the hour-long meeting. "It was possible for me to continue working in the background," he said.

"Maybe for the future have a mix of personal attendance and video call," Watson said. "Then everybody can choose if they want to attend personal or watch it." He added, "Small talk was missing."

Col. Mario Washington, garrison commander, echoed Watson's sentiment on social interactions. "I do like the inter-

action of people there," he said. "You get their energy and you can see how they are responding to different questions."

As for post-COVID meetings, Washington anticipates in-person gatherings with the virtual option in place for those unable to attend. "I think you have to leverage the technology as much as possible," he said, "but you still need the social interaction for certain things."

Less than 50 attended the meeting in the Tony Bass Auditorium. Those in physical attendance of the meeting were required to sit in every other row with two empty seats to their left and right. In addition, audience members wore their face masks.

At the meeting, Washington reviewed key upcoming events, including Halloween, flu shots and remaining vigilant against COVID-19.

Garrison leadership and employees signed two pledges, leadership and customer service.

The following awards were given to employees and employee teams:

- Customer service award: Chris Curtis, sponsorship and benefits coordinator
- Fourth quarter professionals of the quarter: Emily Jennings, public affairs specialist, and Michael Schuller, Directorate of Public Works housing division
- Second quarter IM-COME-E professional of the quarter: Chris Curtis, sponsorship and benefits coordinator
- Third quarter IM-COME-E professional of the quarter: Johnny Herring, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation marketing manager
- Fourth quarter Team Excellence Award: Task Force

Wellness Team (Johnny Herring, FMWR marketing manager; and Travis Thurston, FMWR graphic arts designer; Jane Porto-Turner, FMWR advertising and sponsorship manager; Karl Weisel, FMWR marketing assistant)

- Fourth quarter cross-organizational award: Stop Movement Customer Assistance Point (Barbara Barnett, acting Military Personnel Division chief; Crystal Bennett, human resource specialist; Christopher Curtis, sponsorship and benefits coordinator; Victor DiMarzo, housing management specialist; Ricardo Iglesias, civilian misconduct actions officer; Dr. John Kaiser, Employee Assistance Program coordinator; Anthony King, operations officer; Anna Morelock, public affairs deputy and James Weber, hotel manager)
- Peer-to-peer awards.

DVAM

Continued from page 1

In an effort to actively engage families, ACS is hosting Howl-o-ween, a dog costume contest. While families enjoy the event on Oct. 27 and 28, information regarding ACS programs for families will be available. "We want to be a resource for people," Jessie said.

Moriah Mendez, FAP specialist, said, "I'm encouraging everyone on the installation to wear purple in solidarity against domestic violence each Thursday in October."

FAP is also asking families to participate in a month-long candlelight vigil by posting coloring-page candles in their home windows. According to Mendez, candle coloring sheets have been distributed in schools and are available online at https://home.army.mil/wiesbaden/application/files/7616/0138/3433/DVAM_candle_coloring_page.pdf. Families are asked to post the candle in their window as a visible stand against domestic violence.



Courtesy photos

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. Garrison employees are encouraged to wear purple each Thursday in October to bring awareness to ending domestic violence.

For more information on Domestic Violence Prevention month and the programs available to help build stronger families, visit the ACS website or Facebook page.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, a 24-hour/7-day-a-week domestic violence hotline is available to provide safety support at (0162) 297-5625.

ACS victim advocates are also available during duty hours for information and referral from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (0611) 143-548-9201/9202.



Community members are encouraged to wear purple in solidarity against domestic violence each Thursday in October.

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News flash

Upcoming holidays

Community members should be aware of the following U.S. federal and training holidays, which may affect some garrison services.

Nov. 1 — Training holiday

Nov. 11 — Veterans Day

Nov. 28 — Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 29 — Training holiday

On holidays, call before you go. Find the garrison phonebook at home.army.mil/wiesbaden. For holidays, go to www.eur.army.mil/Community/Employee-Resources.

Soldiers should confirm with their local chain of command whether they have a federal or training holiday off.

Newsletter

Be the first to get the Herald Union news straight to your inbox by signing up for the garrison e-newsletter at www.herald-union.com.

24-hour EO hotline

The U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden anonymous military Equal Opportunity hotline is available 24 hours a day at (0162)278-7598.

Mental health resources

- 24/7 On-Call Duty Chaplain — (0611)143-548-7777 or 7778

- Behavioral Health Clinic — 06371-94641320 or DSN 590-1320

- 24/7 Military Crisis Line www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line, DSN 118, or Civ. 001-800-273-8255

- Employee Assistance Program (0611)143-548-1402 or john.w.kaiser.civ@mail.mil

- Military Family Life Counselors — Hainerberg Elementary: 0152-2390-2413/2498; Wiesbaden Middle School: 0152-0269-8526; Wiesbaden High School: 0151-4558-3637

Drivers test appointments

The Drivers Testing and Training Service is by appointment only.

Sponsors, family, friends, etc. are asked to remain outside the building so that physical distancing can be maintained.

Appointments can be made by contacting the DTTS at (0611)143-546-6074/6075/6076/6077. The DTTS is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Gold Star families honored

Lena Stange

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden observed Gold Star Family Remembrance Week Sept. 21-27. Community members took part in a virtual 5K Run, Walk and Stroll – a Run to Honor – organized by USAG Wiesbaden's Army Community Service.

"I took part in the run because as a military brat, military spouse and DA civilian, I think it's always important to take time to recognize those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and show appreciation to the family members left behind," said Laura Johnson, a USAG Wiesbaden community member and the Wiesbaden Exceptional Family Member Program manager, who participated in the run together with her husband Maj. Jeremiah Johnson, 485th Intelligence Squadron, and her two children Asher and Abel.

The Senate of the United States designated the week of Sept. 21 through 27 as Gold Star Family Remembrance Week and the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mother's Day to honor and recognize the sacrifices made by families who



Courtesy photo

The Johnson family takes part in a virtual 5K Run, Walk and Stroll to honor fallen service members and those left behind during Gold Star Families Remembrance Week Sept. 21-27.

lost a service member in the line of duty. Their loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice for their country so that others could continue to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The Army continues its commitment to survivors by offering long-term support through the Survivor Outreach Services coordinator.

"It's important that families know it may be years after the death of a family member that issues might arise and that we are here to help," said Federica LeMauk, interim Survivor Outreach Services coordinator.

Community members can call the ACS SOS coordinator at (0611)143-548-9201.

Garrison, units exercise readiness

Anna Morelock

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden recently hosted a tabletop exercise with its tenant units and partners to discuss scenarios, contingencies and readiness to respond to a second heavy wave of COVID-19 or issues related to seasonal flu.

Instead of gathering around conference tables, almost 100 participants from the garrison, U.S. Army Europe, 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, the Army Corps of Engineers, Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Commissary, Red Cross, USO, Department of Defense Education Activities and other units and partners joined the exercise virtually as necessitated by the initial pandemic.

While the garrison has been using online platforms for smaller meetings,

this was its first large-scale use of the platform, said Casey Ross, director of S3/5/7, which oversees garrison operations and planning and facilitated the event.

Prior to the garrison's COVID response, its partners had limited day-to-day interaction for operational planning.

"The whole COVID pandemic response has brought us all closer together," Ross said. "Because of COVID, and as demonstrated during the tabletop exercise, we've really brought the installation and the community together to talk about things of importance and to work through issues."

During the initial response to COVID, the garrison called on its tenant partners to head up task forces targeted to specific response missions such as tracing positive contacts, providing added screening and protection, and promoting community wellness.

While many of those missions have scaled back as COVID infection rates have dropped, the task force commands stand ready to support the community if a second wave emerges.

"We'll be able to keep the community and our employees safe," said garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Truchon. "To think about where we were just seven or eight months ago, and to see where we're at today, I'm confident in the leaders we have in the garrison and what our response would be in the face of a second wave."

While leaders discussed the operational aspects of community safety and disease containment, prevention remains at the heart of efforts to stem the spread of the disease. Community members should continue to wear their masks, wash their hands and watch their distance.

RETIREES

Continued from page 1

The Wiesbaden Army Health Clinic will not be able to accommodate services during the event,

primarily because their shipment of flu vaccinations is expected to arrive late.

While the Retiree Appreciation Day can't be held as usual due to COVID-19, organizers still want to make sure to show appreciation and

ensure retirees can access available services, said Lisa Hicks, Casualty Assistance and Retirement Services program manager.

Public shot clinics are available at the dates and times in the story on Page 2 of this issue.

U.S. ARMY GARRISON WIESBADEN

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Living in Germany

October 2020-March 2021



INSIDE:

- Winter driving
- Cultural tips
- Save money
- Travel with pets

PLUS: Play outside in the fresh air in any weather

Learn cultural differences in Germany

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Deutsche Post

When having packages delivered to a German address, if you're not home the delivery service may leave a slip in your mailbox indicating a place nearby where you can pick up your package within a certain timeframe. In some cases it is possible to indicate where you would like the package to be left, such as with a neighbor or at a packstation.

Speed cameras

Speed cameras are set in various places — on the Autobahn as well as on city streets. If caught speeding, the person who the car is registered to will receive a letter in the mail with the picture of the driver and details such as how fast the car was going and the fine. You can usually pay the ticket directly using the IBAN number provided. Be sure to include the reference number, so the money transfer will be credited to the appropriate account.

Recycling

All types of paper, plastics and packaging, cans, foil, food waste, glass and more are recycled in Germany. This requires residents to separate waste into bins for paper and cardboard, plastics and cans, and biodegradable. Glass should be taken to glass recycling bins and deposited in the corresponding color bin between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Visit home.army.mil/wiesbaden and search "recycle" to learn more about recycling.

Dining out

Be sure to bring cash when dining out in Germany. Many places accept credit cards, but not all. If you are using a credit card, be sure to tell the

server how much you'd like to tip before you hand over your card, as the amount needs to be entered before running your card. If leaving a tip in cash, let your server know the new total you'd like to pay, so they'll only give you the change back you want, or give them the tip directly rather than leaving it on the table.

Also of note at restaurants in Europe, there are no free refills unless specified, even at many fast food restaurants. Ice does not come standard in soft drinks, and when ordering water, you'll be buying a glass bottle and should indicate whether you would like sparkling or still.

Get to know the area

Wiesbaden Army Community Service invites newcomers to get an in-depth look at their home away from home in Germany during virtual Host Nation Orientation on Tuesdays and Thursdays on MS Teams. Call (0611) 143-548-9201 to sign up.

Deposits on bottles

Most plastic and glass bottles and drink cans require a deposit, or Pfand, which is charged to the customer automatically when purchasing a beverage. When they are empty, the bottles or cans go back to the store where they were purchased or to a supermarket that has an electronic kiosk that accepts bottles and dispenses store credit. Cans that will be taken back for the deposit should not be crushed. Most bottles and cans bought on post do not have a Pfand.

Grocery shopping

Be sure to bring a reusable bag when grocery shopping on the economy. Merchants sell plastic, fabric and paper



USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Cyclists pass by the Marktkirche in downtown Wiesbaden. For the latest coronavirus guidance, go to home.army.mil/wiesbaden and click the "COVID-19 UPDATES" graphic. Find translations of German press releases from the city, state and federal republic; General Order No. 1; travel guidance and more.

bags for a small fee. Keep in mind, tax is already included in the listed price on all taxed items in Germany. Keep a one-euro or 50 cent coin handy — you'll need it to get a shopping cart, and you'll get it back when you return the cart. The customer is expected to bag their own groceries and to do so quickly. People in line behind you will appreciate it if you begin bagging your items as soon as the cashier passes them over the scanner.

Finding a restroom

Public restrooms in Germany are labeled "WC" or "Toiletten," and you'll often have to pay about 50 euro cents to use them. At some locations a restroom attendant will be present with a tip plate available. It's customary to leave approximately 50 cents on the plate. At some roadside gas stations, after paying 70 cents to use the restroom you'll receive a coupon for 50 cents off to be used in the store. Restrooms in

restaurants are usually free for paying customers and may be upstairs or downstairs from the main dining area.

Dates

When filling out forms or checking expiration dates on food, keep in mind that dates in German are written with the day first, followed by the month, with periods in between. So for example, Sept. 7, 2020, which may be printed on a U.S. food package as an expiration date of 9/7/20, would be written as 07.09.20 in Germany.

Building floors

The numbering of floors in a building is different in Germany. What Americans call the first floor is called Erdgeschoss, or ground floor in Germany. What Americans call the second floor is called the 1. Stock, or first floor, and so on. In an elevator, Erdgeschoss is sometimes abbreviated as EG.

Parking

A Parkscheibe is a plastic device that lets the driver indicate the time of arrival, and has to be placed on the dashboard. This device is necessary in some residency zones where parking is limited to a certain time frame — usually two hours — in certain streets and on some supermarket parking lots. The need to use the Parkscheibe will always be indicated. It can get expensive if the Parkscheibe is required and the driver forgets to put it on the dashboard.

When parking in a parking garage, drivers will receive a ticket upon entry. To exit, the driver will need to pay before going back to their car at an automatic kiosk, usually called a "Kasse," and then leave promptly. Paying at the garage exit from your car is not possible.

Special edition - Living in Germany

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Save money by using VAT forms correctly

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Many Americans are used to doing a little mental math in the grocery or retail store and adding a percentage onto the advertised price because of sales tax. In Germany, a 19% "value-added tax" is already built in to products and services, with a 7% tax for medical, groceries, bus and train tickets, lodging and books, so the price you see is the price you pay. But through the Value Added Tax Relief Program, personnel stationed in Germany can get a tax refund with some purchases made on the economy.

As of press time, the VAT is 16% and 5%, in an effort to jumpstart the economy as a result of COVID-19. The normal rates are expected to resume in the coming months.

In order to enjoy the benefits of this program, it's important to understand the process for using VAT forms.

Sponsors must attend a briefing at the VAT office. During this initial visit, the sponsor can add family member names and buy VAT forms.

The NF-1 VAT form costs \$5 and can be used for purchases up to €2,499.99. Only 10 of these forms can be checked out at a time, but once one is returned, that household is eligible to buy a new one. The NF-1 form is commonly used for purchases like train tickets, short hotel stays, groceries and clothing.

Customers can buy VAT forms at any VAT offices (Ramstein, Stuttgart, etc., and turn them in at any office).

Therefore it is recommend-

ed, especially when traveling, for a customer to leave two or three forms in the system (not purchasing all 10 at once), so they can pick up one at the nearest VAT office.

Stacking receipts

Multiple purchases from the same vendor can be put onto a single form, as long as the purchases were made during the same calendar month and the refund is collected before the end of that month. The VAT form must also have been purchased before the date of the first transaction and be valid through the last. Shoppers should beware: some vendors may not fully understand these rules and offer to violate them; however, the customer is ultimately responsible for using the forms properly. If a VAT form is used improperly, the customer must correct it by paying the tax, said Marlene Balzer, program manager for the VAT/UTAP office.

Purchases over €2,500

The NF-2 VAT form costs \$65 and is for purchases of €2,500 or more — like a car, for instance. Before an NF-2 can be issued, certain requirements must be met. "We need a quote showing what's being purchased and how much it would cost without the tax," Balzer said.

The buyer also needs to show they are capable of making the payment in full, she added. "That can be done one of two ways. One is with a cashier's check, if they're basically buying it straight out. They can also get a loan letter, showing that

they're approved to finance the full amount without tax.

The VAT office should look at the cost estimate prior to getting a cashier's check or loan letter.

"You cannot pay or negotiate before you have the VAT form and still receive tax relief," Balzer said. "You must get a cost estimate from the vendor, but if you put down any money at the time — if you pay one penny down — then we can't issue that VAT form."

Another thing to be aware of when making big purchases, is that a customer cannot split up items from the same vendor made on the same day in order to use NF-1 forms instead of an NF-2. For example, if someone purchases a bed for €1,500 and a couch for €2,000 from the same store on the same day, they cannot use one NF-1 form for the bed and another for the couch, regardless of what the vendor says.

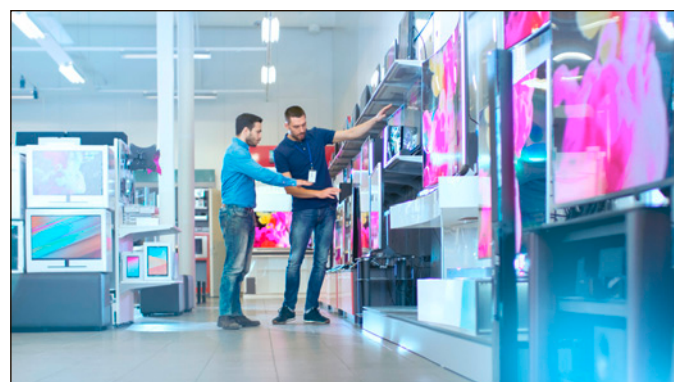
Only one NF-2 form can be issued at a time, and it does not count against the 10 outstanding NF-1 forms.

Keep in mind

There are several considerations shoppers should keep in mind before using their VAT forms. The agreement between the German and American governments doesn't force all stores to offer tax relief.

"There's no law requiring shops to accept VAT forms. It's voluntary based on the vendor," Balzer said.

Each VAT form has three sheets of carbon copies. The vendor keeps the yellow copy, the



Herald Union file

Learning how to use VAT forms can help shoppers save money on purchases.

pink one is for the shopper's personal records and the white one should be turned in at the drop box located just outside the ramp entrance of Bldg. 1023 East.

Forms are good for two years from the date issued, but they don't work retroactively. "If you bought something yesterday and didn't have the VAT form, you couldn't get a VAT form today and get the tax off for the day before," Balzer explained.

Tax relief is a benefit to military living overseas; however, violating the VAT rules can result in a loss of money, and in more extreme cases revocation of VAT privileges. The VAT office aims to prevent the latter. "When in doubt about when you can or cannot use a VAT form, contact the VAT office,"

Balzer said. "We encourage you to call. We're here to serve the public."

Customers living on the economy should also make an appointment with the Utility Tax Avoidance Program to avoid paying taxes on their utility bills.

The U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden VAT/UTAP office sees customers Monday to Friday, 8:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only (unless outprocessing) and is located in Bldg. 1023 East, Room 151, and can be reached at (0611) 143-548-9107 or DSN 548-9107.

For more information, visit: <https://wiesbaden.armymwr.com/programs/value-added-tax-vat>.

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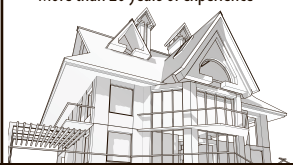


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Lisa Bishop
USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

FRESH

[even when it is cold and wet]

To stay healthy and enjoy the upcoming colder and wetter months, families at U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden can follow the German traditions of enjoying fresh air, both indoors and out.

Outdoors

Susanna Baumann, mom of three, takes her children outside every day, regardless of weather. "If you wait for the rain to stop, you're never going to get outside," she said. "We do what the Germans do: we put on our warm gear and get out."

Baumann's round trip routine begins at home, circles through Kurpark and includes the Wiesbaden farmer's market on Wednesdays and Saturdays. As added benefits, her daughter can identify most birds they encounter, and they've befriended others who frequent the parks.

Jordyn Landis takes her girls, ages 1 and 2, outside every day, even when it is wet and cold. "I believe they need the fresh air; it is good for their lungs, for their

growth," she said. Landis started outdoor trekking with her girls as soon as she got postpartum clearance for hiking. "We love being outside," she said. "We get stir crazy when we stay inside."

Landis and her children love the zoo in moderate weather, but she stays in the Hainerberg neighborhood and lets her children explore the playgrounds on most mornings when the weather is cool or wet. "I want them to walk and get their energy out," she said.

Jasmine Gardner, mother of three, purposely moved into a house with a backyard when she arrived to Wiesbaden earlier this year. While she and her children venture into their neighborhood and area parks, she knew her children, ages 4, 5 and 7, would spend significant time outside after living in Sweden.

"When we lived in Sweden, we didn't have a car, so we went everywhere by bike," Gardner said. Her daughter even rode her bike to school. "I have pictures of my daughter riding her bike in the dark, in the snow, in the rain," she said.

"It is a fact of life there," Gardner said. "You take them to school and drop them off and they stay outside for an hour no matter how cold, how rainy, how windy. It was an interesting experience for us coming from the U.S. where we spend a lot of time indoors, especially in the rain."

"If you wait for the rain to stop, you're never going to get outside."

Gardner said of her daughter's transition into an American school system, "They have their outdoor recess time, but it is not as nearly as much as she used to get in the Swedish school. She said to me the other day, 'Mom, my brain is so tired, but my body has so much energy.'"

"Right when they come from school we go outside," Gardner said. "They tell me now that I need to

get my exercise too." O she said, "It is much easier and even now in the rain

Being prepared

"Germany has the best suits, every possible continued. "We be freezing and it's 2 Gar squer bod con said hate hated back." "In

"There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing."

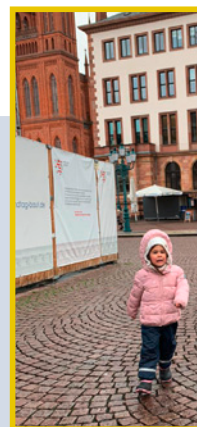
rain jackets and rain pants the rain and cold. They she said. "When you are the rain, you learn very rain pants are your friend enemy." Rain pants are and protect against bad rain. For her children they feel like regular clothes

Baumann said, "Rain pants too because they are and I can throw them away not raining and the great rain pants."

Karla Sweeney, mother said, "I love the saying that as bad weather, just bad



Left: Addison Baumann, 4, and her brother Alex, 2, play at the Wiesbaden marktplatz. Above: In Sweden, the Gardner family bicycled everywhere, including to school with children, even in the winter months.



Left: Ella Gardner, 7, enjoys cotton candy. Above: The Baumann family walks the cobblestone streets in Wiesbaden.

AIR

[wet outside]

ompared to weather is Sweden, easier to be outside in Germany in, it's not that bad. It's doable."

t weather gear," Baumann said. s; rain suits, rain boots, snow le thing you need to get out." mportant to layer," Baumann hen I leave the house it could and an hour later, the sun is out 0 degrees warmer."

rdner has painful memories of eezing her children into full- y snowsuits in the U.S. When sidering special rain gear, she l, "I was worried at first. They d putting it (snowsuits) on; I dealing with it when we came

Sweden, we bought them pants and they go out in even have rain gloves," re actually outside in y quickly that the riends, not your re light weight both wind and , Gardner said, clothes.

I love the rain y are super thin, n over their pants. Even if it is ound is still wet I will bring the

nom to two boys ages 4 and 6, y here of 'there is no such thing d clothing.' My kids have be-

come accustomed to putting on rain boots, rain jackets and grabbing their umbrellas when we go for a day trip." Her boys find the umbrellas to be a fun addition to their regular outings. "I don't think we have ever owned so many umbrellas before," Sweeney said.

In addition to the right clothing, Baumann has quite a few "must-haves" on her list of preparedness. "I have strollers for every occasion," she said. "I have a double-bob, an all-terrain thing. I bring that if I know the weather is not going to be good. I can shelter them in there and put everything under." She regularly packs snacks, bubbles and balls when she's out with her children because of their stops in area parks.

"Remember to carry some extra clothes in the car — change of clothes, hats, gloves, extra jacket," Sweeney said. "If we do get a couple snowfalls in the area, we definitely head out right away and do some hill sledding, snowball fight or build a snowman. The snow doesn't last long around here so don't miss the chance."

Benefits

"For my mental and physical health, I have to get out and get fresh air every day," Baumann said. "So if that is good for me, I would imagine it is just as good for my kids."

Landis and Baumann believe their outdoor lifestyles ward off overall illness. Baughman said, "Since Corona has happened, none of us have been sick; we get out every day with fresh air, and I think that is really good for our overall physical health."

Landis said, "Especially during the flu season it is important to have that fresh air." She also views outdoor play as beneficial to mental growth and stimulation.

"We get stir crazy when we stay inside"

"I love them using their imagination outside and getting dirty," she said. "I don't mind cleaning up the dirt and wet mess afterwards."

Gardner also said outdoor pursuits have many benefits. "We all feel better when we get outside and we have fresh air; we all feel better when we get up and exercise; your body feels better; your mind feels clearer; getting out of the house makes such a big difference on your outlook of the day," she said.

Indoors

For Germans "Frisches Luft" is a way of life. Year round, Germans open household windows and doors to exchange stale trapped air with the fresh outdoors. The circulating air reduces mold, eliminates smells and now, according to Germany's environmental agency, can potentially reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Martina Schulz, customer service representative with the Directorate of Public Works and a local German national, loves opening her windows and doors to circulate fresh air. For her personally, she said, "I just love that; it's just healthy, especially in the morning."

Baumann said, "I open up their windows for a little bit because we shut their doors all night long and crack open the windows in the morning to let fresh air in." She added, "I would never think about that at home. Here, you do as the Germans do. You need the fresh air in your apartment. I think it is good to have the nice air flow instead of stale air."

"Here, you do as the Germans do."



enjoys cotton candy in Sweden. children on Wiesbaden's cobblestone street in the rain.



Left: Baumann's daughter watches the ducks at Kurpark. Above: Addison Landis, 2, and her sister Ezmae, 1, wade in the water along the river. Right: Michael Sweeney, 6, and his brother Ryan, 4, look out onto the Rhein River in the rain.



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Sunday November 1:

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Friday November 6:

7.30 pm. Singer Songwriter Concert

Sunday November 8:

10 am. Remembrance Sunday

Saturday November 21:

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Schloss Biebrich is a Baroque-style palace that sits at the banks of the Rhein River, south of downtown Wiesbaden.

Visit Wiesbaden

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Downtown Wiesbaden is a walkable city, and strolling the streets or parks during less busy times can be a great way to get fresh air and see the sights while maintaining social distance.

Neroberg

You can get a nice view of the city from right outside the Commissary, but an even better way to see it is at the top of the Neroberg, a 245-meter high mountain on the north side of town. Once at the top—accessible by car, hiking path, or using the Neroberg Mountain Railway—visitors can enjoy a ropes course, outdoor pool in summer, hiking paths, a restaurant and stunning views of the city and the nearby Russian Orthodox Church, with its towering gold domes.

Kurhaus

The Wiesbaden Kurhaus is



Branko Srot/Shutterstock



Herald Union file

The Kurhaus surrounding park area is home to ducks, Egyptian geese and green parrots year round.

a convention, conference and social event center surrounded by green space, fountains and historical buildings. The Kurhaus is home to a restaurant and casino, known for its high roulette stakes and ties to famous visitor Fyodor Dostoyevsky. The surrounding park area is home to ducks, Egyptian geese and green parrots year round.

Schloss Biebrich

Biebrich Palace, situated south of downtown, overlooking the Rhein River, was built in the Baroque style in 1702. The courtyard boasts walking paths, expansive green space, a playground, a pond and a small castle, Mosburg, at the opposite end. In winter, the pond sometimes attracts ice skaters, but beware — the ice is usually thin, as the local



MBL1/Shutterstock

weather is not typically cold enough to ensure a solid freeze.

Rhein River

The Rhein is the second-longest river in Central and Western Europe at 760 miles. The Rhein was vital to the Holy Roman Empire and is still famous to this day, connecting dozens of cities including Mainz; Koblenz; Bonn; Cologne; Dusseldorf; Rotterdam, Netherlands; Strasbourg, France; Basel, Switzerland; and of course Wiesbaden.

Planning a PCS with pets

Lena Stange

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Community members who permanently change their duty station and want to take their pet to the new home should plan ahead.

"During COVID, we've seen an increase in flight changes and cancellations, and that's had an effect on pets traveling as well," said Capt. Kathleen Stewart, Wiesbaden Veterinary Treatment Facility officer in charge. "Unfortunately, we've seen cases where the owner was rebooked, but there was no space for the pet on the same flight. Because of these instances, we recommend owners always have a backup plan such as a friend who can watch the pet if it's not allowed to travel for any reason."

Apart from the logistics, countries have import requirements for animals that have to be met. Most countries require a microchip and current rabies vaccination for cats and dogs, Stewart said. They also need a physical exam and a health certificate signed by a veterinarian within 10 days of departure. Some countries require additional vaccines or tests.

Community members with any other animal should reach out to the VTF for further guidance, Stewart said.

Being on a plane is stress-



Herald Union file

Community members who permanently change their duty station and want to take their pet to the new home should plan ahead.

ful for cats and dogs, she said. Stewart recommends starting to get the pet accustomed to the kennel a couple of months beforehand.

"The VTF can provide recommendations and handouts with directions to help make the kennel a safe place for pets," she said. "We want the pet to be comfortable in the kennel."

Every airline has different requirements for kennel sizes, and whether pets can travel in the cabin or in cargo. There might even be breed restrictions, she said. Community members should reach out directly to the airline to know what requirements they have to meet.

"Depending on where in

the plane the pet will be traveling, airlines may not allow pets to travel with sedation medication," Stewart said. "So if people are concerned about the stress levels of their pet, they should consult with the VTF and the airline."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that pets travel in temperatures between 45 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit at departure and arrival airports. If the temperature is above or below this range, the airlines have the right to refuse to transport the pet, Stewart said. It is a good idea to have a backup plan not only during COVID times, but always when traveling with pets.



Herald Union file

Bad weather doesn't cause accidents. Weather conditions create driving hazards. It is up to the driver to know how to deal with them.

Control wheels in any weather

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden
Safety Office release

Many people have experience driving in icy conditions, but if we can learn anything from our past, it is that winter always has surprises in store for us when we let our guard down. Accidents involving skidding or bad weather conditions are preventable. Bad weather doesn't cause accidents. Weather conditions create driving hazards. It is up to the driver to know how to deal with them. Drivers are responsible for keeping their vehicle under control no matter what the road or weather.

Here are some reminders of how to drive safely in winter conditions:

Before starting out

Clear the entire windshield and all windows and mirrors and keep brake and signal lights clear of ice and snow.

Carry a winter survival kit, especially on long trips or in isolated areas. Include matches and a candle, a parka and sleeping bag or emergency blanket, food, first aid kit, jumper cables with safety goggles, gasoline, antifreeze, fuel conditioner for

diesel fuel, wrenches for minor repairs, a spare fan belt and radiator hose, spare spark plugs and spark plug wire.

Stay alert

Keep your eyes moving. Scan the distance and glance frequently at your mirrors. If you receive information too late, you will have to make a sudden move.

Double the following distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you. Maintain as much free space around your vehicle as possible.

Maintain communication with other drivers to make sure they see you and you understand one another's intentions. Use your lights, horn and even eye contact to communicate.

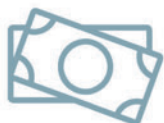
Adjust your speed to road conditions and allow more travel time.

React to conditions

On icy roads, any driving maneuver can set off a skid. Braking, steering, accelerating and taking your foot off the accelerator can all result in a loss of control. Carry out these moves with a light touch, being continually aware of the vehicle's response.

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Garrison honors Hispanic Heritage Month

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Community members gathered at the Clay Chapel at U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Sept. 30 in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Government agencies pay tribute to the cultures and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans and celebrate the heritage rooted in all Latin American countries from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

Guest speakers for the event were Col. Samuel Ybarra, U.S. Army Europe chief of G-3 Strategic Programs Division and Sgt. Maj. Francisco J. Acosta, U.S. Army Europe G-8.

It was hosted by Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion U.S. Army Europe and the 60th Geospatial Planning Cell.

Ybarra has served nearly 30 years in the Army and is from South Texas. He said his heritage taught him values such as the importance of family, hard work and honor, and that focusing on those values got him where he is today. He encouraged others to do the same.

"To my fellow Hispanics out there: As you go through your career, draw from the heritage and draw from those Hispanics who have come before you," he said. "Work hard. Try to contribute no matter what your assignment, conduct yourself

accordingly and of course serve the best country with honor, and remain true to your oath."

Acosta has served for 30 years in the Army and is also from South Texas. He said his upbringing taught him pride, humility and gratitude.

"Family plays a big part in who I am," he said.

Acosta recalled the importance of homemade Mexican foods and music during his upbringing. He ended his speech with a yell, or grito, a joyous vocalization often heard in mariachi music.

Join the conversation and learn more about Hispanic art, culture music and history at hispanicheritagemonth.gov.



Emily Jennings/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Sgt. Maj. Francisco Acosta speaks at the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Hispanic Heritage Month observance Sept. 30 at the Clay Kaserne Chapel.

Students adjust to new normal at WHS

Lila Nicholson

Special to the Herald Union

Life for students at Wiesbaden High School has changed drastically since this time last year.

Multiple changes have been made to protect faculty and students, with mask mandates, social distancing and more.

Those who ride the bus must wear a mask, beginning at the bus stop. On school property, masks are mandatory whenever individuals cannot socially distance, or as the school policy says, "if your feet are moving, your mask should be on."

Students entering the school have their hands sanitized, and sanitizer stations are set up in common areas. Desks are wiped down after each class.

Desks are six feet apart, in

order for students to be able to take their masks off in class. The main staircase is now up only, with the staircases on the left and right halls now being used for students who need to go downstairs. During lunch, people must face forward, though socializing is still allowed.

"Social distancing has made it possible for schools to open again, and I'm enjoying every second of it," said Isabella Pizarro, WHS senior. "Getting to be at school physically feels great."

Books are quarantined for a week after they are returned to the school library before being put back on the shelves.

"My job has changed only in that students are not allowed to come into the library and browse for books, said David



Lila Nicholson/Special to the Herald Union

David E. Brown, Wiesbaden High School librarian, works at his desk Sept. 29 at the school. Students are no longer allowed to walk into the library and browse for books, Brown said. Students now choose books from an online catalogue and pick them up when ready.

Brown, school librarian. Students can browse the online catalog and request books to

be picked up. "This new system seems to be working out pretty well," Brown said. "Our book

circulation is at about the same level as previous years." Online books are also available.

Even with health restrictions, clubs are still open, such as cross country, tennis, golf, cheerleading and marksmanship. While school has changed in order to facilitate the safety of students and staff, students are still being given the ability to have fun with friends and stay active with clubs.

Although there are many changes to the school, students are still attending classes in the same building, with most of the same people, and now with a heightened level of appreciation for the ability to attend school with friends.

Nicholson is a junior at Wiesbaden High School.

2020 CFC campaign offers chance to give back

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden community members can channel their generosity to the charity of their choice through the 2020 Combined Federal Campaign, taking place

through Jan. 15.

The annual campaign offers Soldiers, family members, federal employees and other community members the opportunity to donate to any approved charitable organization.

"The great thing about the CFC is the number of charities

you have access to, but you're not bombarded year round with contribution requests," said Capt. Justin Brooks, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, USAG Wiesbaden, and Garrison CFC coordinator.

Those interested in donating

can go to the CFC website, select a category they are enthusiastic about and select from prescreened charities in their area of interest, he said.

To find inspiration, go to cfcverseas.org. Contributors can donate online or through electronic payroll allotments.

Donors can get their 6-digit CFC office code from their unit's key worker, or by contacting Brooks at (0611) 143-548-0401. Including the code will ensure donations are counted toward the organizational goal.

"Get out and donate," Brooks urged.

48-year employee recognized for service

Emily Jennings

USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Leonard Sharp was the type of colleague who could always be counted on to lend a hand whenever needed and brighten spirits wherever he went.

Sharp, who served for 48 years as a U.S. Soldier and government employee and worked with Wiesbaden Child and Youth Services since 2008, was recognized for his dedication and service Oct. 9 at the Community Activity Center at U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden.

"We just wanted to say thank you for everything you did, not just for CYS, but for the Army as a whole," said Rashunda Clement, CYS coordinator, who presented Sharp with a humorous commemorative plaque referencing his love of the Cleveland Browns football team.

Although Sharp has served in a number of positions, including in Darmstadt and

Hanau, he said Wiesbaden holds a special place in his heart.

"I have to say, I have worked with some of the most awesome people in CYS — thank you for the run," he told colleagues.

Greg Holzinger, director of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation, thanked CYS employees for their professionalism throughout the pandemic and encouraged them to take care of themselves and keep up the good work.

He commended Sharp on his diverse skill set, years of service and "willingness to take anything on."

"There are not enough thank yous to thank you for what you have done," he told Sharp, before presenting him an MWR Wiesbaden coin.

Deputy Garrison Commander Scott Mowry thanked Sharp for his commitment to public service, calling Sharp "inspiring."

"We sincerely appreciate you and everything you've done, and



Emily Jennings/USAG Wiesbaden Public Affairs

Rashunda Clement (right) presents Leonard Sharp with a humorous commemorative plaque referencing his love of the Cleveland Browns football team Oct. 9 at the Community Activity Center.

we wish you happiness and good health in your retirement," he said, before presenting him a commander's coin of excellence as "a small token of our appreciation."

Sharp started his military service in 1973, retired in May 2008 but continued working in a full-time capacity until September of this year.

Sharp was responsible for facility maintenance, upkeep of property and the organization of various warehouses to repair and replace furniture. But colleagues said he was always willing to lend a hand for whatever needed to be done.

"His title was maintenance worker, but he was really just

everywhere helping out making sure the CYS facilities were always top notch," said Kevin Whitfield, administrative support assistant for CYS. "He always helped out the NAF property book office; he was always willing to help outside of CYS duties, making mail runs, helping at the golf course, setting up for festivals and bazaars; he was always there helping out the crew and representing CYS."

Whitfield said Sharp was knowledgeable about his job and always knew things off the top of his head.

"He gives 110% no matter what," Whitfield said. "He is a role model. I respect him a lot."

Sharp said he plans to spend time with his wife and grandchildren and visit his friends in Wiesbaden.

"It's been awesome," he said of his career in government service. "I would do it all over again. The people, the activities, everything is awesome. I've had fun."



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