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Visiting the Island of KOS Page 24 & 25

**Weekend wonders
in Germany**
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SPECIAL

**TRAVEL
EDITION**

**SHS senior finds
her passion in fashion**
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**UNITED STATES ARMY
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FROM THE COMMANDER:

I am Col. Kirk Alexander, the new commander serving you at U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart. My family and I are very happy to be here and are thankful for the warm welcome we have received since our arrival.

Stuttgart was my first choice when offered the opportunity to lead a garrison. The community enjoys a wonderful reputation in Europe. We receive excellent support from our host-nation neighbors. There is tremendous diversity in the missions of our tenant units, from strategic planning at a theater level down to the training of small teams at the tactical level. No other place in the Department of Defense offers such a combination of unique opportunities and challenges.

The team that provides the services and facilities necessary to accomplish the mission has impressed me greatly in my first few weeks. Their knowledge of the garrison and the challenges we face, along with their commitment to service, are unmatched. As life has returned to normal following COVID, the garrison team has transitioned its services to ensure we continue to meet and exceed your expectations.

As the new commander for U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart, one of my first actions was to sign the Pledge to Those We Serve and the Leadership Pledge that all leaders in the Army's Installation Management Command are expected to uphold. As your garrison commander, I will ensure the team continues to deliver quality products and services, that we encourage feedback and listen to it, and that we build an organization that embraces the concepts of team, teamwork, and empowerment.

I am both grateful and hopeful as I start this journey. I am grateful for this opportunity and for the support I have already received from the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart team and the greater military community in the region. I am hopeful for all of the amazing things we will accomplish in the coming years.

COL. KIRK ALEXANDER

Commander, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart



Photo by Balmina Sehra



Eight Americans and 18 Germans were "knighted" as hunters during an event known as the Jägerschlag, held at the Panzer Local Training Area on June 24. The Jägerschlag is an initiation rite during which new hunters take an oath to act as responsible sportsmen and pledge to support the commandments of nature protection. For the eight Americans, the event marks the culmination of a three-month hunting course where they demonstrated proficiency with shotguns and rifles. The ceremony was recognized as the first time that a joint German-American Jägerschlag was conducted in the Stuttgart area.

Photo by John Campbell

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Cover image:

A cable car of the 'Schauinslandbahn' descends along the slope of the Schauinsland, a mountain in the Black Forest near Freiburg am Breisgau. Freiburg is an easy 2-3 hour trip from Stuttgart by train or car. Photo by Bardia Khajenoori

At the Patch Library: Travel-Inspired and Inspiring Travel

Graphic by Iisima, Alexander Baidin/Shutterstock.com



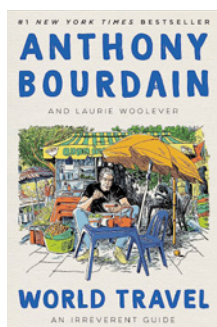
Descriptions by Liz Goodwin
Compiled by Bardia Khajenoori
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Looking for some books to guide or inspire your summer travels? Whether you just want to sit back and relax, be a romantic, go on an adventure throughout Europe, or travel the world from the comfort of your couch, the Patch Library has plenty of options for you!

World Travel: An Irreverent Guide

By Anthony Bourdain
and Laurie Woolvers

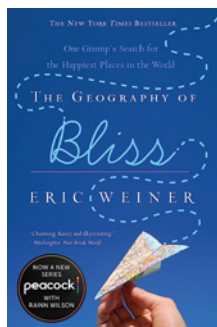
Want to travel but don't know where to start? This travel guide can provide the perfect information to jump start your travels. Bourdain put his personal experiences into this book – places he favored, food and hotel recommendations, as well as transportation and what to avoid. Whether you want to take a quick trip to New York or go and see the Eiffel Tower in Paris, *World Travel: An Irreverent Guide* offers insights to prepare you for all your trips!



The Geography of Bliss

by Eric Weiner

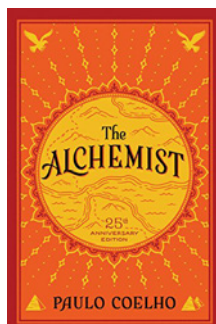
This book will give you the motivation and passion to travel, with each chapter opening your mind to new ideas. Weiner writes of his visits to the Netherlands, Switzerland, Bhutan, Qatar, Iceland, Thailand, India, Great Britain, and Moldova. His main goal as he travels through these places is to find out what makes the people in each place happy. "Our happiness is completely intertwined with other people," he writes. Will Weiner be successful in his pursuit to find happiness?



The Alchemist

By Paulo Coelho

In this tale of self discovery, a young shepherd boy is on a trip in search of extraordinary treasures. The story of Santiago's treasures will leave you thinking about the importance of having courage, following your curiosity and trusting your heart. This widely translated international bestseller was first published in 1988 but continues to captivate and inspire readers to this day.



Eat, Pray, Love

By Elizabeth Gilbert

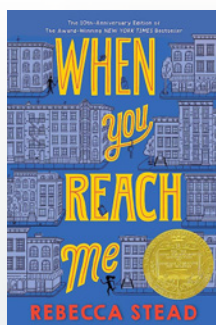
Looking for fresh starts, Elizabeth Gilbert shares her experience of leaving everything she knows and traveling to find peace within herself. She explores ideas through the art of pleasure, the art of devotion, and a balance of both as she travels throughout Italy, India, and Bali. Its 2010 film adaptation of the same name starred Julia Roberts playing the role of the author.



When You Reach Me

By Rebecca Stead

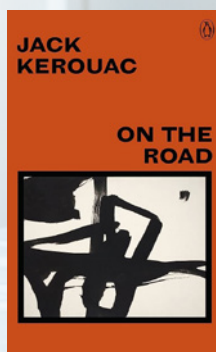
This Newbery Medal-winning science fiction and mystery novel follows the life of sixth grader Miranda as she tries to solve the mystery of an anonymous messenger sending notes to her on the streets of New York. Will Miranda solve the mystery before it's too late? The pressure is on.



On the Road

by Jack Kerouac

This 1957 classic, widely regarded as the defining novel of the Beat Generation, is based on the travels of Kerouac and his friends as they traversed the country to take on the American dream. As they go through life in the post-

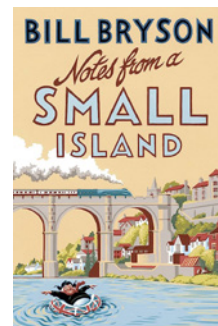


WWII era, they share new experiences with money, friendships, arts and adventure.

Notes from a Small Island

By Bill Bryson

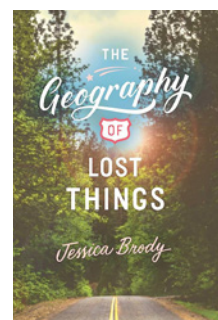
This humorous book will transport you from the comfort of your own home to the busy streets of the United Kingdom, all while being able to experience the passive aggressiveness, diversity, and – of course – tea for which Britain is known.



The Geography of Lost Things

By Jessica Brody

On this unique and romantic road trip adventure across the Pacific Coast, Ali tries to raise enough money by trading objects to save her childhood home after the passing of her father, but she can't do it alone. With the help of her ex-boyfriend, Nico, Ali goes through an emotional roller coaster as she learns different perspectives on forgiveness and love.



Cover images courtesy of publishers

Chaplain's Corner: A Travel Story

Photo by Prostock-studio/Shutterstock.com



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Wyne Hutchings

USAG Stuttgart Deputy Garrison Chaplain

Several years ago, my wife's family started a group text thread, and someone came up with the idea to label it "Travel Stories." Generally, the thread is just as you'd imagine: brief texted descriptions of trips different family members take, usually accompanied by photos. Catherine and I have had a starring role in the thread since we've been stationed in Stuttgart. I mean, "I'm glad I live here," but I'm also glad to have a good jumping-off point for day trips around Germany, France, Austria, and other nearby countries. Now that we are moving back to the States, I'm afraid we'll have to cede the spotlight to other family members.

There's a travel story in the Bible concerning a young Jesus that has always fascinated me. It's recorded in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 41-52. Here's the story from the New International Version:

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked.

"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Wow! And you thought the movie Home Alone was just an out-there concept for a comedy film. Granted, Kevin was only eight years old when his parents forgot him and flew to Paris in the movie, but this story about Jesus at twelve still surely seems far-fetched to our modern ears. It makes one wonder what would have happened to Mary and Joseph had something akin to our social services gotten wind of what happened.

The focus of this travel story, however, is not on where Jesus wasn't—with his parents and extended family as they returned home from Jerusalem. No, the focus is on where Jesus was—"in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." Like any good travel story, the interesting part is the description of the destination of the journey. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to a religious festival. Jesus arrived at and shared a deeper understanding of his calling in life.

None of you reading this magazine article share Jesus's specific life mission. His travel story is unique. All of us do have a travel story, though. All of us have a place in life we ought to be, a calling on our lives of some kind. Our lives are not without purpose.

Until we discover and live into that purpose, our travel story is not complete, and often, frustration and sadness—even depression—can be the result. One of the things chaplains do is help people along life's journey, helping them think about their travel stories as they develop. If you are struggling to make sense of your story, I encourage you to reach out to a chaplain in your unit or in the Garrison Religious Support Office. May the Lord bless and keep you as you travel through life.

More information about the garrison Religious Support Office, including service times/locations and the phone number of the on-call chaplain, are available on the USAG Stuttgart mobile app.



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Temporary assignment, permanent passion

Community members find a home away from home with VfB Stuttgart



A large banner is unfurled over the Cannstatter Curve, the standing room area home to the most passionate fans. It portrays a jug, which is the historic symbol of Bad Cannstatt.

Photo courtesy Robert and Amberly Martin

Story and photos by Bardia Khajenoori

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Everyone has their own ways of easing their transition into a new duty station after a move. Some find a church group, while others might join a club.

Robert Martin and his wife, Amberly, also joined a club after arriving in Germany last October – the city's top-division soccer team, VfB Stuttgart.

"We've been involved in different aspects of soccer culture over the years and have learned it makes a great community when we travel, so it's something we typically seek out whenever we need to move," Amberly Martin said. "We've found that's a great way to get a foot into the area."

So, just days after arriving, with their suitcases still sitting in the Panzer Hotel, they secured tickets to a weekend home game and hopped on the S-Bahn to Bad Cannstatt.

The experience was unlike anything the Colorado sports fans had ever encountered: rousing songs and chants from supporters jumping up and down in unison; fan-organized visual displays (known as tifo) across an entire stadium stand, coordinated with music; and overall, "a deeper passion" than other sports and leagues.

"We were so impressed," said Robert Martin, an Air Force Reserve officer, who promptly signed up for club membership and season tickets. "We were like, 'we've got to go to every game.'"

Just as the Martins were settling into their new surroundings with the help of soccer, so was one of Robert's officemates – completely separately.

"He sits about ten feet from me," said Alexander Gogol, laughing. "We didn't know each other prior to the assignment but ended up in the same office, and then we realized we were both big soccer fans and both going to the games."

The California Air National Guard officer's path to supporting the team was nearly identical. He also decided to attend a match early on, not yet knowing many people in the area or things to do. Though he had some degree of preexisting interest in the 1. Bundesliga (Germany's top league), attending in person made him "immersed" and a bona fide Stuttgart fan.

"They had me from the first game," he admitted. "The atmosphere is second to none."

Both the Martins and Gogol are official members of VfB, a status that offers more than just early access to tickets.

Unlike in American sports, where top-division professional teams are franchises within closed leagues that can be bought, sold, and moved by individual owners, German soccer teams are run by local clubs that fans can join, gaining voting rights over major management decisions. A unique set of rules requires that Bundesliga teams be majority-owned by supporters.

With 80,000 members as of this summer, VfB Stuttgart – founded in 1893 – is the largest sports club in Baden-Württemberg and one of the best-supported teams in the country.

Prices for tickets and concessions are more affordable than at other sporting events, which is often attributed to the fan ownership structure. And while the worst sporting outcome for most North American teams is not making the playoffs, 1. Bundesliga teams must perform well enough each season to avoid demotion to the second division.

Asked to share advice for first-time visitors, the suggestions were unanimous: become a member to gain early access to tickets, which are often hard to get in general sale. Arrive at games early to soak in the atmosphere and take part in spirited pre-match rituals. And above all, quite simply, go.

"From the outside, it might seem very intimidating, but everyone's super welcoming and very friendly," Robert Martin said. "It's a really, really good way to meet people with a common interest."

Both he and Gogol explained that the VfB fan community in general, whether DoD-affiliated or not, is always helpful in answering questions and describing what to expect.

Feel free to bring along children, too.

"There have been families and large groups of kids in almost every section we've been in, but there's also a specific family section," Amberly Martin said. "We actually sat there once and they had little chant cards, flags, and everything for the kids, so they also get them involved."

No worries about a language barrier, either.

"Soccer is its own kind of language... you can just cheer along and clap, and the fans will accept you just the same," Gogol said. "Don't be dissuaded – come out and try it once, and I swear, you'll get hooked."

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Gogol (center) is now a season ticket holder. Photo courtesy Alexander Gogol

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'Willkommen' Col. Alexander

Left: Col. Alexander greets the family of Col. Ziglar.

Center: Col. Alexander receives the garrison colors from Installation Management Command-Europe Director Tommy Mize.

USAG Stuttgart welcomes its new commander

Story & photos by **Balmina Sehra**

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart gave a 'Herzlich Willkommen' (hearty welcome) to its new commander, Col. G. Kirk Alexander, who took charge of the garrison's colors in a June 21 ceremony at Washington Square, Patch Barracks.

Garrison employees, division chiefs, distinguished guests, and host nation VIPs witnessed the passing of the colors, a tradition dating back to the 18th century that symbolizes a continuation of official leadership and trust.

"I can only hope to partially fill the void that will be gone," Alexander said, referring to the outgoing commander, Col. Matt Ziglar.

Ziglar took command in the summer of 2021, leading the transition into a post-pandemic way of life while deepening ties with nearby communities and their leaders.

"I look forward to continuing the tremendous relationship he has built with the Stuttgart community partners," Alexander said. "These relationships are essential to maintaining a positive environment

in which the Stuttgart garrison provides functions, services, and facilities for its constituents."

Alexander, as head of USAG Stuttgart's community of 28,000 personnel, will now be the person looked up to for guidance and leadership during times of crisis. He made clear in his remarks that he does not take this responsibility lightly.

"I will always remember that command is the greatest privilege and responsibility bestowed amongst our military leaders," he said.

Alexander enlisted as an Infantryman in the Georgia Army National Guard in 1995 and pursued a degree at North Georgia College, from which he graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1999. He commissioned in the Field Artillery and has since held various positions at locations ranging from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Eustis, Virginia. He has deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Qatar, and most recently served as the Division Chief, CCJ33 (Current Operations) at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Florida.


Accompanied by his wife and children, he expressed how excited they were about the opportunity to call Europe their home for the next couple of years.

"This was my number one choice, and to say I'm very excited is an understatement," he said.

Ziglar, having handed over the reins, thanked the Stuttgart community and local dignitaries in a heartfelt speech for making his assignment in Germany so comfortable.



From left, outgoing commander Col. Matt Ziglar, Installation Management Command-Europe Director Tommy Mize, and Garrison Commander Col. Kirk Alexander.



"Stuttgart, Sindelfingen, Böblingen, Leinfelden-Echterdingen; it's hard to believe that these places were unknown to my family three years ago," he said. "Today, these places feel like home."

But it was more than just the places that made the tour so special, he added: "It has certainly been the people."

The Ziglar family is now looking toward their new adventure in Kentucky.

"You are why I say I am glad I live here," Ziglar concluded.



Col. Alexander takes charge of his command.



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Story and photos by
Liz Goodwin

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs
Summer Hire

When thinking of places to travel, one of my best suggestions is Spain. It's the perfect place to get away from sometimes cold and rainy German weather.

Specifically, I can recommend the Canary Islands, an archipelago located off the coast of Northwest Africa which has been part of Spain since 1479. The islands themselves are millions of years old and home to a diverse range of plant and animal life.

I stayed on Gran Canaria, the third largest of the islands, which is known as the 'miniature continent' due to its variety of contrasting climates and landscapes.

Our hotel had a pool, gift shop and many events nearby. And like many other hotels, it had walkways from the hotel down to the beach, where you can watch beautiful sunrises as the waves hit the rocks.

When to visit

April through August are the best months to travel to the Canary Islands because that's their peak season and when the weather is at its warmest.

Nain the camel poses for a photo.



A Mediterranean Red Sea Star in the Poema del Mar Aquarium.

Have a 'Gran' time in the Can



A beautiful sunrise seen from the Punta de Tarajalillo.

How to get around

You can rent a car or hike on foot, but I will suggest taking public transportation to avoid having to look for parking. Buses are usually pretty full, especially in peak season, so be prepared to have to stand.

What to bring

It's very hot and sunny on the islands, so bring some sun screen and be extra careful if you burn easily. You should bring sandals if you go to the beach, but I also suggest bringing hiking shoes because there are many opportunities to hike and rock climb.

Camel Rides

One of the most surprising things you can do in Gran Canaria is a camel ride, but it's a must.

For only around €15, you can enjoy a 30 minute camel ride through the Maspalomas Dunes, a protected nature reserve on the south coast of the island. Riding the camels through the dunes and

being able to see all the nature and wildlife is a fun experience for people of all ages. Each camel even has its own name.

A small tent near the meeting point sells refreshments and ice cream, as well as little scarves and coverings to avoid getting sand in your face. There's always a small chance you may get sand in your eyes regardless, but it's worth the whole experience of getting to ride camels.

Aquarium

Another fascinating place to go to while in Gran Canaria is the Poema del Mar Aquarium.

Located in Las Palmas, the Canaries' largest city, Poema del Mar is one of the biggest aquariums in the area. It has about 350 different species including sharks, stingrays, turtles, crocodiles, and all sorts of fish I've never seen before. It has multiple ecosystems that include the jungle and deep sea life. Some tanks are up to 37 meters long.

The aquarium has great customer service. Signs are in several different languages, which helps people know what animals they are looking at and know where to go, in case they do not speak Spanish. They also have accessible wheelchair entrances.

There is also a small restaurant in the middle of the Aquarium where you can order meals and relax while watching the fish swim beside you.

Overall, whether you're going on a camel ride with your significant other, taking your kids to the aquarium, or just enjoying a self-care day at the beach, the Canary Islands will provide a fun experience for people of all ages and will make you never want to leave.

Liz Goodwin is a rising junior at Stuttgart High School and a USAG Stuttgart summer hire assigned to the Public Affairs Office.

ary Islands

Standing behind the jaw of the Megalodon, an extinct relative of the great white shark whose name means 'big tooth.'

Aquarium guests can enjoy the restaurant with a spectacular view of the wildlife in front of them.

The camel safari rides into the Maspalomas Dunes.

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One of Webber's designs on paper, then brought to life.

Graphic by WhyWork/Shutterstock.com

SHS senior finds her passion in fashion

Commentary by Peter Faber
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Madeline Webber is not your typical Stuttgart High School senior. She is a talented writer and a passionate aspiring fashion designer with a unique focus on creating eco-friendly designs that are both stunning and sustainable. Her journey into the world of fashion design is not only inspiring, but also reflective of the dynamic and creative nature of the field.

As a former professional in fashion and shoe design, I can attest to the creativity and beauty of Webber's designs while appreciating the significance of her commitment to sustainability and responsible practices in the industry.

Her journey started when she wanted to create a unique Christmas gift for her sister. This seemingly simple project ignited a spark, leading her to conceptualize a theme entitled, "Can You Hear Me?" The design repurposed her father's old military uniforms into a dress representing her family's lifestyle, which was often disrupted due to her father's deployment, and incorporated headphones to symbolize the importance of communication and connection in their family. This emotionally-charged design speaks volumes about the power of fashion to convey personal narratives and evoke powerful emotions.

Later, during a trip to France, fate intervened to take Webber's interest to new heights. A photographer, captivated by the uniqueness and upcycled nature of

the dress – then being worn by her sister – asked for an impromptu photoshoot. The experience left her in "utter disbelief," propelling her to more seriously consider fashion design as a career path.

She has since applied to several renowned fashion schools, with an acceptance to ESMOD in Paris (recognized as one of the world's best) already under her belt. Though she said the excitement has made it "hard to concentrate" on upcoming finals, she remains "confident in [her] ability to excel."

Webber's love for creating and her fascination with the design process have been evident from the start, and the prospect of attending a prestigious fashion school only serves to strengthen her determination to hone her craft further.

Looking ahead, she envisions incorporating elements from other service uniforms and embraces the opportunity to bring diverse influences and stories to life through her creations. Her designs not only embody creativity and style, but also serve as a platform for meaningful connections and reflections on important societal themes.

Her unique perspective and commitment to sustainability are bound to leave a positive impact on the industry. May her story inspire others to embrace their passions and contribute to a more sustainable and vibrant fashion world.



Webber models the upcycled dress she designed on the theme, "Can You Hear Me?" Photos courtesy Madeline Webber

Proudly holding the German flag for a decade

By Balmina Sehra

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

For the past ten years, the responsibility of carrying the host nation's flag during U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart's change of command ceremonies has been consistently held by German Army Oberstabsfeldwebel (Sergeant Major) Thomas Franck.

"I am very proud that I am asked to do this honorable job ten years ago," said Franck, who explained that having the opportunity to hold the flag is highly respected in the Bundeswehr (German military). "The person carrying the flag cannot defend themselves, which is why they are



Obstf. (Sgt. Maj.) Franck, at right, takes part in the 2021 Change of Command. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

considered the bravest person on the battlefield."

Carrying the 'black, red, and gold' in the ceremony of another country's military is a particular distinction, he added.

His most recent calling to this duty was on June 21 at Patch Barracks, where he formed part of the joint color guard as Col. Matt Ziglar transferred the garrison command to Col. Kirk Alexander.

Franck said he finds the role especially meaningful due to long-standing personal ties with the U.S. military.

His relationship with the Americans dates back to when he was growing up in Kaiserslautern, close to the American bases. This exposure even inspired him to later join the Bundeswehr.

"When I was a child, I used to go for walks with my grandmother, and we would see those little dots in the sky," said Franck, referring to paratroopers on training missions. "I would point at them and tell my grandmother that I want to do that too."

Young Franck would even spend Christmas every year with single soldiers invited by his father.



The state/military flag of Germany flies during the garrison's 2017 Change of Command ceremony, carried by Obstf. (Sgt. Maj.) Franck. Photo by Jason Johnston

"The Americans are our friends, even if I cannot understand them," he recalled being told. "My father did not speak much English, but it was important to him to show them our hospitality."

Though Franck is now retired from active duty service, he is still often called for training purposes in the Bundeswehr or for German-American events. The ability to do so means a lot to him, as he believes that "only when we work together can we guarantee our safety."

Franck plans to continue his strong bond with America even after he retires from his current job at Mercedes.

"When I finally retire, I will fly over to America and visit all my American friends I have made during my career," he said.



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Photo by Marcus Fichtl



Rolling out red, white, blue carpet

Locals welcomed to Independence Day celebration
for first 'open post' event in two decades

Photo by Marcus Fichtl



Photos by Balmina Sehra



the and

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Photo by Balmina Sehra



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Photo by Marcus Fichtl



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Photo by Marcus Fichtl

Story & photos by Balmina Sehra

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

At precisely 4 p.m., July 4th, 2023 the Panzer Kaserne gates in Böblingen opened to the local German community after being shut firm for 20 years.

Thousands of members of the local community poured onto the base filled with excitement, curiosity, and nostalgia about how Independence Day was celebrated before 9/11 security measures padlocked the gates.

"Welcome, everyone, to our Independence Day...for the first time in twenty years, we have reopened our post to our German neighbors," exclaimed Col. Kirk Alexander, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart commander, during the day's opening remarks.

A generation ago, celebrating July 4 with their American neighbors was a tradition for many Germans living around the bases – a tradition they had dearly missed for the last 20 years.

Schimi, from Böblingen, reminisced about the past days celebrating America with Americans.

"Being here today wakes up old memories in me," she said. "We used to celebrate every Independence Day together, and I made a lot of friends on base."

She and her husband had almost lost hope in the prospects of joining their American friends for holidays again, and they were over the moon when they saw the event advertised in the newspaper. They had been looking forward to some "proper American food and sweets."

Panzer was exactly the spot to partake in these American goodies, with food trucks lined across the parking lot and an MWR kiosk selling star-spangled sweets.

Eddie, who lives and works on base, couldn't contain his excitement. "There is so much to do here, especially for children," he said. "I like the little interactive booths they have around here."

A range of activities kept visitors entertained, from a temporary tattoo booth to a harrowing ride with the mechanical bull. Rock climbing, bungee jumping, and a series of water events drew lines of Germans and Americans alike. Many attendees even commemorated the historic day with a family picture at the photo booth.

"Being able to celebrate Independence Day in another country is amazing, but the fact that the Germans are willing to celebrate this day with us is just awesome," said Eddie, who was touched by the large turnout.

Though the food and attractions may be a big factor as to why many Germans gravitated toward the gates, friendship and fireworks – played to the adopted German national anthem of "Country Roads" by John Denver – kept them to the end.



1 Frankfurt
Frankfurt's city center is home to a starkly contrasting set of architectural styles.

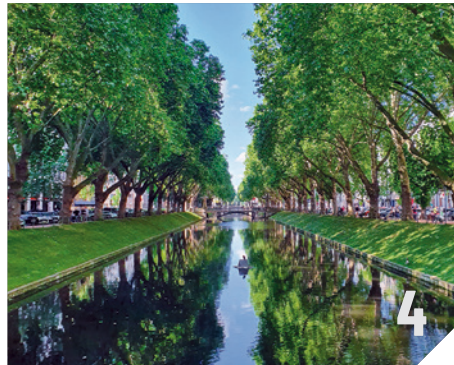
2 Frankfurt
Frankfurt's skyline is unusually imposing compared to most German cities.



Unveiling weekend wonders in Germany

3 Düsseldorf
The popular riverside promenade has only existed since the mid-1990s.

4 Düsseldorf
Königsallee, apart from being one of Germany's busiest and most luxurious shopping streets, is probably its most beautiful.



Story and photos by Bardia Khajenoori
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Living in Stuttgart has its perks, and one of them is the abundance of captivating cities just a stone's throw away, waiting to be explored. While exotic European destinations always have their draw, it's worth pointing out that there's plenty to appreciate closer to home, even in cities not traditionally regarded as major tourist hotspots. The following options are easy to get to and perfect for a 2-3 day weekend.

Frankfurt

- Frankfurt's towering skyline – home to Germany's 13 tallest buildings, and 19 of the tallest 21 – has given it the nickname "Mainhattan," with reference to the river that flows through it. The best view comes from the observation decks of the Main Tower.
- Despite its primary reputation as a corporate and financial center, Frankfurt also has a strong cultural scene, with world-class museums, an acclaimed opera company, and continental Europe's largest English-speaking theatre.
- The Museumsufer (Museum Embankment) includes 39 different museums, many of which offer free admission on the last Saturday of each month. At its heart is the renowned Städel, with 700 years of fine art under one roof. The Senckenberg Natural History Museum, Film Museum, and Communications Museum are also among the top-rated by visitors.
- In the old town, timber-framed houses stand in stark contrast to the steel-and-glass skyscrapers only a few minutes' walk away. Its main square, Römerberg, sits in front of a medieval building that has served as Frankfurt's city hall since the start of the 15th century.

- When the weather's nice, a visit to the meticulously maintained 54-acre Palmengarten botanical garden provides a break from the bustle. And for aviation enthusiasts, Frankfurt's sprawling international airport offers up-close bus tours lasting from 45 minutes to two hours.
- Frankfurter Grüne Soße (Green Sauce), a cold sauce traditionally made with seven herbs and eaten with hard-boiled eggs and boiled potatoes (or with meat or fish), is a particular culinary specialty. Its signature drink is a cider known in the local dialect as Ebbelwei (from Apfelwein).
- On Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, a whimsically-themed tram known as the Ebbelwei-Express runs a hop-on/hop-off-style tour of about an hour, traveling past many of the city's most important sites. It operates on a continuous basis, and the ticket price includes a bottle of Ebbelwei (alternatively, apple juice or mineral water) and a bag of pretzels.

Erfurt/Weimar

- These two cities in the central German state of Thuringia are easily reached by train, with Erfurt less than four hours away from Stuttgart by direct ICE, and Weimar only a 10-15 minute local train ride further. Together, they offer a wealth of compelling sites for anyone with interest in history or architecture.
- Erfurt's old town is one of the country's best preserved, and its medieval arch bridge, the Krämerbrücke (Merchants' Bridge), is a highlight. Dating from the 12th century and lined with 32 buildings housing shops and private residences, it's the longest inhabited bridge in the world.

- The city's Old Synagogue, constructed in the Middle Ages on a major trading route, remains remarkably well-preserved and is thought to be the oldest intact synagogue building in Europe.
- Weimar, meanwhile, is perhaps most widely known by English speakers as the namesake of Germany's first constitutional federal republic (commonly known as the 'Weimar Republic'). Its greatest historical relevance, however, dates back to its period as one of Europe's most important centers of culture. Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, luminaries of German literature, lived there as friends and collaborators in the 19th century, preceded by Martin Luther and followed by Franz Liszt, Richard Strauss, and Friedrich Nietzsche.
- The picturesque Schloss Belvedere, along with Goethe's House, the stunning Duchess Anna Amalia Library, and several other locations, together make up the 'Classical Weimar' UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Weimar, as the founding location of the Bauhaus art and design school (1919-1933) established by architect Walter Gropius, is also recognized as part of a second World Heritage Site comprising 'Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar, Dessau and Bernau.' The Bauhaus movement "revolutionized architectural and aesthetic thinking and practice in the 20th century," according to UNESCO, and Weimar's Bauhaus Museum – housed since 2019 in a minimalist five-story building – provides an overview of its history and design principles.
- While there, try a Thüringer rostbratwurst, a legally protected regional sausage variation that's popular nationwide. It's spiced with marjoram, caraway, and garlic; normally cooked over a charcoal fire; and authentically served with mustard in a disproportionately small bun.

Düsseldorf

- London and Paris are the only European cities with larger Japanese populations than Düsseldorf, and this influence is felt just steps away from the main train station. "Little Tokyo," around Immermannstrasse, is dotted with numerous Japanese ramen shops, sushi bars, and supermarkets. Even the streetlamps are origami-influenced "crane lights." This high density and standard of Japanese eateries, combined with a number of quality Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese ones, makes the city one of the best places to enjoy authentic and diverse Asian cuisine on the continent.
- Described by a writer in 1921 as "Düsseldorf's highest elegance," Königsallee (King's Avenue) continues to maintain its charm and grandeur more than a century later, befitting the city's status as Germany's fashion capital. Plentiful

cafes, restaurants, and high-end retail stores make it one of Europe's busiest and most famous luxury shopping streets, but there's no purchase necessary to enjoy a stroll down either side of its landscaped, tree-lined canal.

- Düsseldorf's old town, home to nearly 300 bars, pubs, and breweries, is locally referred to as "the longest bar in the world," with the nickname introduced by a popular song from the 1970s and embraced heartily ever since. You'll find plenty of options to try the local style of beer, known as Altbier, which will often be brought to you continuously in small glasses until you indicate you're finished by putting your coaster on top of your last one.
- Two of Düsseldorf's main attractions are the result of redevelopment since the 1990s, and both reflect its changing relationship with the Rhine. One is the riverside promenade, with its lovely views and constant buzz of activity, which was previously occupied by a multilane highway later moved underground. The other is the MedienHafen, where an increasingly idle dock with warehouses was reimagined into a media and cultural hub. Striking post-modern buildings home to hotels, offices, studios, and nightlife sit alongside disused rail tracks and crane remnants that are classified as historical monuments. The three impressive and artistic towers of the Neuer Zollhof, designed by Frank Gehry, are among its most visible landmarks.



5 Erfurt/Weimar
The Duchess Anna Amalia Library, a masterpiece of Weimar Classicism, is frequently regarded as one of the world's most beautiful. It was rebuilt to match its former glory following a devastating fire in 2004.

6 Erfurt/Weimar
The Krämerbrücke stands over a branch of the Gera River, but with buildings on each side, walking through it looks and feels more strolling down a city street than across a bridge.

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From the historian — Through Two World Wars

By Bill Butler

USEUCOM Command Historian

The first half of the 1900s witnessed a succession of wars on a global scale that directly involved the military units, kasernes, and citizens of Stuttgart. When the call came to mobilize elements of the Imperial German Army in the summer of 1914, Württemberg troops were among the first to respond. They soon took part in the opening campaigns against Belgium, Britain, and France along the Western Front and gained early experience in the grim struggle of trench warfare. With Germany also fighting in a second front to the east, Württembergers later served in campaigns against the Russian Empire. Back home in Stuttgart, factories and other industrial sites surged to meet growing demands for military materiel and the citizenry sacrificed daily comforts to support the war effort. At the many area kasernes, replacement troops trained in earnest before being sent forward to replenish the ranks of depleted units at the front. Most military formations of the Imperial German army retained a regional makeup throughout the war, and their losses are reflected in the many local war monuments found across Baden-Württemberg today.

Following Imperial Germany's defeat in late 1918, a period of unrest prevailed. The abdication of the Kaiser and the dissolution of monarchical rule also brought an end to the Kingdom of Württemberg. In its place, a series of revolutionary governments struggled to maintain stability throughout 1919-1920. War-weary troops that had just returned home from the front were frequently called on to uphold



Altes Rathaus
(Old City Hall) in ruins in
downtown Stuttgart (1945).



Opening Day Parade by 7th Panzer Regiment in Vaihingen for Kurmärker Kaserne (now Patch Barracks) on May 7, 1938.

Photos courtesy of the U.S. European Command Historian

law and order. Some normalcy returned in the years that followed, but this was also a time of deep economic uncertainty for most Germans. The Allied nations had placed strict limitations on the German military force, which meant that many of Stuttgart's kasernes were undermanned and often neglected. A world-wide depression that began in 1929 made matters worse and added to the turmoil Germany faced.

The country's political landscape was dramatically altered by the hopelessness of the Great Depression, which directly led to rise of the Nazi party. Their seemingly beneficial policies of cutting wages, taking control of labor unions, and increasing public works projects meant that unemployment fell significantly by 1935. Large-scale military spending also played a major role in spurring Germany's recovery, which had a direct effect on the Stuttgart area. Older posts were refurbished and new kasernes established in local communities such as Vaihingen, Möhringen, and Böblingen. The city's industry surged once again to provide modern equipment to a fast-growing German military. Although this period brought a deceptive sense of prosperity, it foreshadowed another and even more destructive global war.

As the World War II began and local units deployed to combat zones, the kasernes around Stuttgart remained vital contributors to the German war effort as part of the Wehrkreise, or military districts system. This system, which dated back to

the Imperial era, divided Germany and later some occupied territories into administrative districts to facilitate the rapid and efficient mobilization of military personnel. The Wehrkreise were tasked with drafting, training, and mobilizing conscripts for deployment as part of new units or as replacements for existing field units. They also developed and tested new equipment. Stuttgart throughout the war hosted the headquarters for Wehrkreis V, which was located at the facility known today as Olgastrasse 11 in downtown that still serves as an administrative annex for the U.S. Army.

Because of its heavy industrial base that in the pre-war years provided growing prosperity to the citizens of Stuttgart, the city also played a vital manufacturing role in support of Germany's war effort. Of particular note were its factories specializing in the production of ball bearings and machine tools that were needed to fight a modern war. The city also boasted one of Germany's leading engineering communities that worked in research and experimental laboratories. This industrial focus, however, proved to be a double-edged sword, as it also made Stuttgart a target for the Allied strategic bombing campaign. During the course of the war, Stuttgart endured over 50 heavy air raids that cost the lives of 2,750 people and destroyed over half of the downtown buildings and almost a third of the city's private residences. Its population of 458,429 at the start of the war was cut nearly in half by the end of the conflict to 266,067 as residents fled the devastation. In total, the bombings produced 4.9 million cubic meters of rubble, some of which can still be viewed today at the Birkenkopf, known as Monte Scherbelino, or "Rubble Hill."



WWII Sites near Stuttgart

Local Stuttgart Sites

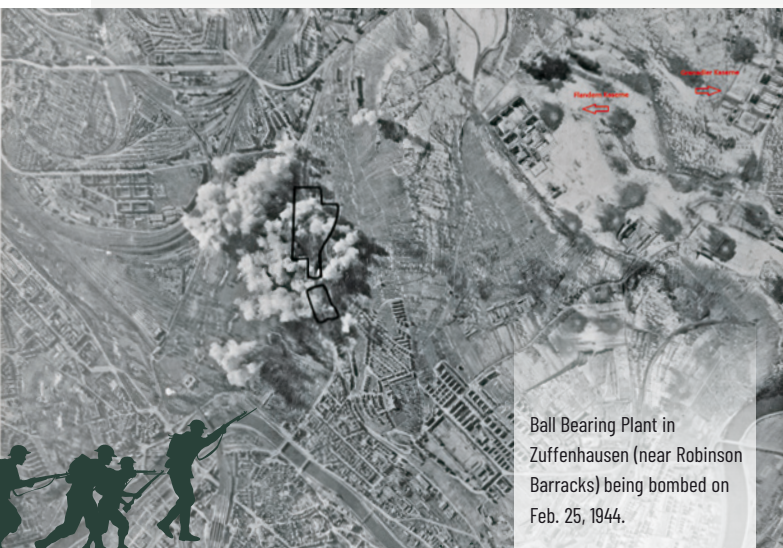
- **Leonberg Concentration and Work Camp Memorial**
Alter Engelbergstunnel
Seestraße, 71229 Leonberg
<https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-leonberg.de/start/>
- **Hochbunker am Pragsattel**
(WWII Air Raid Bunkers near Robinson Barracks)
Heilbronner Str. 239
70469 Stuttgart
<http://schutzbauten-stuttgart.de/>
- **Birkenkopf (Rubble Hill)**

Present and Former military installations

- **Patch Barracks** (formerly Kurmaerker Kaserne)
- **Panzer Kaserne** (formerly Hindenburg-Ludendorff Kaserne)
- **Kelly Barracks** (formerly Hellenen Kaserne)
- **Robinson Barracks** (formerly Flandern Kaserne)
- **and Elementary School** (former SS HQs)
- **Stuttgart Army Airfield** (former Luftwaffe Night Fighter base)
- **Flugfeld in Böblingen** (former Stuttgart airport and Luftwaffe fighter base)

Day Trip Options

- **Speyer Technical Museum or Sinsheim Technical Museum**
(both have WWII aircraft and vehicles)
- **Westwallmuseum in Bad Bergzabern**
Kurfürstenstraße 21
76887 Bad Bergzabern
Phone: 015 25 - 965 906 3 and
E-mail: Westwall-Museum.bza@web.de
<https://www.otterbachabschnitt.de/>
- **Nearby Westwall Walk from Drei Eichen parking area: Farrenberg with Dragon's Teeth (Höckerlinie)**
- **Bunkermuseum Dettenheim: Günther Blödt**
Ruchenstr. 9 a
76706 Dettenheim
Telefon (0721) 552493
E-Mail: guenther.bloedt@googlemail.com
- **Atomkeller (Atomic Cellar) Museum** (German atomic weapons development site)
Pfluggasse 5,
72401 Haigerloch
<https://www.haigerloch.de/Atomkeller>
- **Villa Lindenhof Kultural Museum**
(with an exhibit on Field Marshall Erwin Rommel)
Lindenhof 2, 89134 Blaustein-Herrlingen
<https://villa-lindenhof-blaustein.de/the-museum/>



Ball Bearing Plant in Zuffenhausen (near Robinson Barracks) being bombed on Feb. 25, 1944.

- **Rommel's Gravesite and Memorial**
Friedhof Herrlingen
(next to Saint Andreas Church)
Kaplaneiweg, 89134 Blaustein
- **Roadside Marker/Monument**
Helfensteinweg 26,
89134 Blaustein

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STAY SAFE

by avoiding protests and demonstrations

By Bill Christina

USAG Stuttgart Antiterrorism Officer

Working and living in Germany is an unforgettable and rewarding experience for U.S. Service Members, DoD civilians, contractors and their families. Deutschland is alive with great people, historic cities and many interesting places to visit. But as beautiful and friendly as it may seem, you must keep in mind that you are still living in a foreign country with a diverse population and different rules, regulations and customs that must be adhered to.

Take civil gatherings, for example. If a group of people, or an organization, has a public grievance to air, they may exercise their rights to protest or conduct a demonstration. These activities are registered with local governments beforehand and are overseen by the Polizei (law enforcement). They normally occur at prominent locations within cities such as market squares and large parks, or may take the form of a procession along a street. In Stuttgart, the areas around and between Schlossplatz and the main train station are frequently used for demonstrations and large gatherings. These gatherings can be as small as a few people to as large as several thousand people.

Normally, the protest or demonstration will run its course within a few hours and be a peaceful and orderly affair without incident or violence. In rare instances, however – typically involving highly charged issues and volatile participants – aggressive behavior, injuries, and property damage may result.

The best way to avoid a protest or demonstration is to bypass it altogether by staying away...period. If you accidentally encroach on an ongoing gathering of demonstrators, you should execute an "about face" and quickly move out of the area.

Here are some additional tips regarding protests and demonstrations:

- Practice your situational awareness; learn to "read" the crowd by keeping up to date on current events and happenings in your area.
- Carry a fully charged cell phone with all necessary emergency numbers and contacts.
- Garrison communications platforms will inform the community about any particularly large or potentially violent planned demonstrations, as well as those near our installations or specifically related to DoD activities.
- As with most demonstrations or protests, one never knows the intentions of the participants. Violent groups are known to attend peaceful protests, and the attendance of agitators and counter demonstrators is not always known to the event organizers.
- Never become engaged with protestors and always follow the instructions of first responders (i.e., police, fire, and emergency services)



Photos by Bardia Khajenoori



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Upcoming **Family & MWR** events and exciting opportunities in USAG Stuttgart!

By Joel Wasko
USAG Stuttgart Family & MWR

As summer draws to a close, our community is buzzing with exciting events and opportunities for all. From arts and crafts sales to thrilling golf tournaments, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Let's take a closer look at some of the upcoming events you won't want to miss:

Patch Arts & Crafts Back to School Sale (Aug. 19, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

Get ready for the Annual Back to School Sale at Patch Arts & Crafts! Whether you're a student or a parent, this sale is the perfect opportunity to grab essential supplies and snag amazing deals. Enjoy a fantastic 25% discount on all regular price resale items and take advantage of extra discounts on clearance items. Mark your calendars and make sure to visit Patch Arts & Crafts for unbeatable prices on back-to-school items!



Stuttgart Golf Club Championship (Aug. 26 - 27)

Calling all golf enthusiasts! The highly anticipated Stuttgart Golf Club Championship is back at the picturesque Stuttgart Golf Course in Kornwestheim. This thrilling tournament will determine the Club Champion, so bring your A-game and get ready for some fierce competition! Participants will play in the Championship Flight, competing from the white tees, designed for avid or regular golfers with a handicap of 28 or less. Don't miss this chance to showcase your golfing skills and enjoy a weekend of camaraderie and sportsmanship.

Run to Remember (Sept. 9, 7 a.m.)

Join the annual Run to Remember, a memorial run to honor those who gave their today for our tomorrow. Lace up your running shoes and participate in either the Half Marathon or 5K starting from the Parade Field on Panzer Kaserne. This event is not only a great fitness workout, but also a powerful way to pay tribute to our post-9/11 heroes. Submit the names of fallen heroes by Sept. 6, and they will be recognized at the opening ceremony. Register early at any USAG Stuttgart fitness center and be a part of this meaningful event that brings the community together.



The Great Pumpkin Run.
Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing

C.A.R.E. Fair (Sept. 9, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.)

The Community Activities Registration Education (C.A.R.E.) Fair is the ultimate opportunity to connect with representatives from various organizations at USAG Stuttgart, all in one convenient location inside Bldg. 2915, Panzer Kaserne. From sports clubs to cultural societies, from art workshops to educational programs, you'll find it all at the C.A.R.E. Fair. Register for exciting activities and events on the spot and become a part of the vibrant community that makes USAG Stuttgart so special. Explore, discover, and connect with your community at this informative and exciting event!

ShaWINGz - NOW OPEN

Calling all food enthusiasts! ShaWINGz, the highly anticipated new restaurant at the Galaxy Bowling & Entertainment Center on Panzer Kaserne, is now open. Indulge in the tantalizing fusion of Mexican cuisine and the mouthwatering choice of 40 distinct wing flavors. With its legendary chicken wings and Mexican food options, ShaWINGz is sure to leave your taste buds tingling with delight. Experience an explosion of flavors and embark on a flavor-filled journey at ShaWINGz, inside the Galaxy Bowling & Entertainment Center on Panzer Kaserne!

Career & Volunteer Expo (Oct. 19, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.)

Looking for new employment opportunities or career enhancement? Don't miss the Career & Volunteer Expo inside the Swabian Special Events Center on Patch Barracks, where job seekers can connect with a wide range of employers and gain valuable insights into workforce essentials. Meet expert recruiters, network with professionals, and explore various career options. Whether you're transitioning out of the military, a military spouse, a veteran, or a civilian, this expo is tailored for you!

Heart Global (Oct. 27-29)

Heart Global will offer a three-day intensive musical and performing arts educational workshop for youth, culminating in a two-hour live USAG Stuttgart community musical performance/show. This workshop is organized by Child & Youth Services (CYS) SKIES with Heart Global, a non-profit organization that leads music and performance workshops all over the world. It's a great opportunity for young talents to build self-confidence, resiliency, teamwork, and artistic skills. Even if your child isn't particularly into singing and dancing, the lively and energetic cast members are

known for encouraging participants to step beyond their artistic comfort zones.

The Great Pumpkin Run (Oct. 28, 9 a.m.)

Celebrate Halloween with a spooky 5K fun run in the beautiful woods behind Patch Barracks. Dress up in your best Halloween costume for a chance to win spine-tingling prizes! Don't miss this thrilling opportunity to combine your love for fitness and Halloween into one adrenaline-pumping event. Whether you're a seasoned runner or just starting, The Great Pumpkin Run welcomes participants of all fitness levels. Register early at any Stuttgart fitness center and secure your spot for this hair-raising adventure!



Career & Volunteer Expo. Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing



Patch Arts & Crafts.

Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing



Run to Remember. Photos by Marcus Fichtl



Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing



The Great Pumpkin Run. Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing



Heart Global. Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing

MWR Tours

If you're eager to explore more and embark on exciting trips, keep an eye out for upcoming MWR Tours. From city highlights to scenic adventures, there's something for every travel enthusiast. Mark these dates on your calendar and get ready for unforgettable experiences! Register with MWR Tours in Bldg. 2915, Panzer Kaserne.

- Sept. 2: Berlin City Highlights
- Sept. 2: Queen's Fireworks in Heidelberg
- Sept. 9: Discover SCUBA & BBQ
- Sept. 16: Austrian White Water Rafting & Fuessen City
- Sept. 16: Bastei Bridge & Dresden City Tour
- Sept. 23: Dachau and Munich
- Sept. 30: Oktoberfest
- Oct. 1: Oktoberfest
- Oct. 7: The City of Lights in the Fall – Paris

With so much happening in our garrison, there's no shortage of opportunities for entertainment, personal growth, and community involvement. Be sure to mark your calendars and make the most of these fantastic events and activities.

For more details on the above listed Family and MWR programs and events, go to stuttgart.armymwr.com.

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Visiting the island of KOS

The faint outline of Bodrum, Türkiye, is visible across the sea.



Story and photos by **Balmina Sehra**
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

I was contemplating whether or not I wanted to take the plunge and dive into the water. Up until this point, I had only ever done that in extra chlorinated water at public pools. But this was sea water, and it tasted a lot saltier than I had expected.

I decided to just go for it. I dived under the water trying to reach the rocks poking out of it, feeling a little more adventurous than usual. I pulled myself up onto the rocks and looked straight ahead, where the faint outline of the Turkish city of Bodrum was

visible in the distance. I was staring at the hills, trying to estimate how far the beach I was at right now in Greece was from the beach in Türkiye. I knew that a strong swimmer would probably be able to make the distance, but I wasn't one, so I turned around and swam back to the shore...the Greek one.

A few facts about Kos:

Kos is the third largest of the Dodecanese islands, which also includes Rhodes and Patmos. According to Greek mythology, Kos is the sacred land of Asclepius, the god of healing. It's also the birthplace

of Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine.

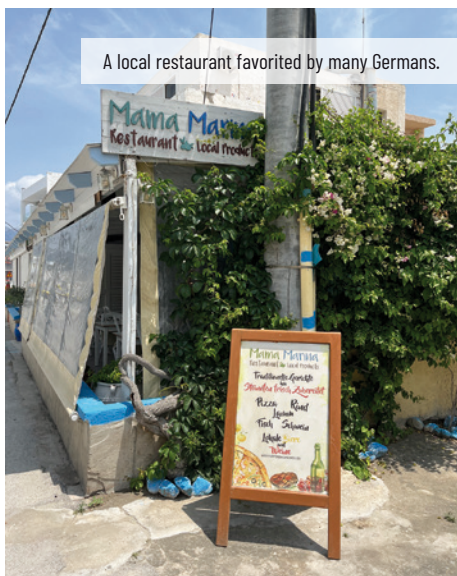
The island offers a great mix of attractions for a diverse vacation. It has a rich history (its historical ruins date back to the third century B.C.), a vibrant party scene, beautiful scenery, and peaceful beaches. This makes it a fantastic option both for people who like to have fun and explore, and those who prefer a more relaxing holiday (I would count myself in the latter category). About one million tourists visit each year, with Kos serving as a popular destination for couples, singles, and families alike.

We were there from late May to early June, which — according to one of the tour guides we talked to — was the perfect time to visit, as the weather tends to be more tolerable during that time. Although it did rain on two of the days we were on the island, we were told that this was rather unusual during this time of year.

My favorite spots on the island Hippocrates Plane Tree

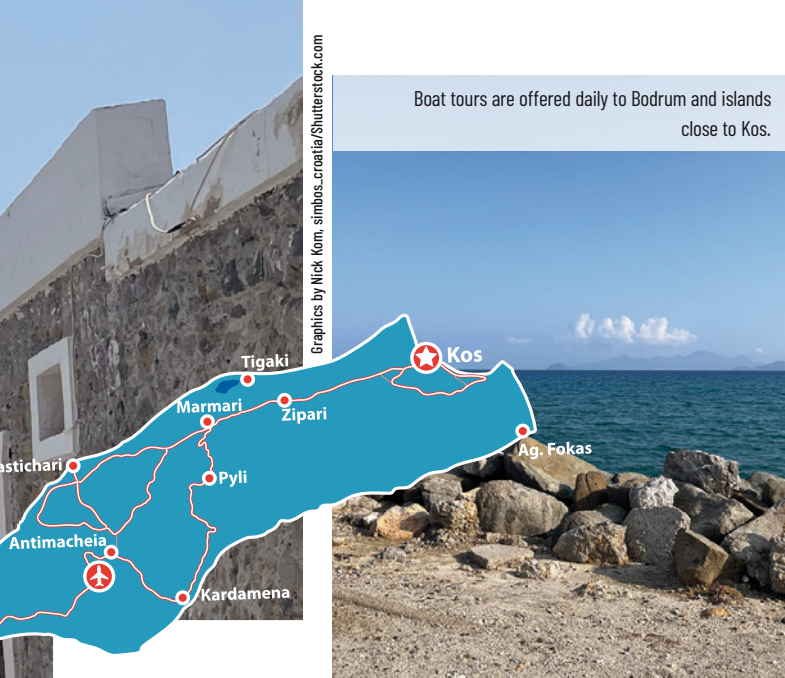
It may seem a little odd and dull to go and visit a tree while on vacation, but just having the mental picture of how this very tree was where the famous ancient Greek physician Hippocrates used to teach his students makes the whole experience feel a little surreal. It is located right in the center of the city of Kos in front of another interesting sight, the castle of knights, so it's easy to cross off your list when walking through the city.

A local restaurant favored by many Germans.



Many bars have sun chairs at the beach and will serve you drinks and food to your seat.





If you need a little more excitement, then try and visit the plane tree in September, as locals and tourists can witness a special tradition focused around the tree. Local housewives will make two wreaths: one with new leaves from the tree, and one with old leaves. The old wreath is offered to the sea and the new one is taken home; this is to ensure good health in the future.

Asklepeion

The Asklepeion is an ancient medical center that dates back to the 3rd century B.C. It was built to honor the god of health and medicine, Asklepios, after the death of Hippocrates. The physicians of this hospital were also priests, and a sanctuary was available for people who wanted to pray.

The hospital worked both on the physical aspect of a person's health as well as on the mental. When a gravely ill person became a patient there, they were assured that they would have a positive outcome whether or not they were cured of their ailments. This was because they were told that, should they not survive, they would be buried at the top of the hospital, where the gods were.

Being laid to rest next to the gods was a considerable honor and meant a lot to patients of the time.

Kardamena

Kardamena is a small village about five minutes away from the airport, and it is one of the most popular tourist towns on Kos. It is located right by the beach and quickly became my favorite place. Walking around in Kardamena has an incredibly relaxing effect as you can hear the faint waves of the sea, and there are many places you can just sit down and relax. What makes it quite unique is the laid-back and joyful nature of the locals who work in the tourism industry, and when nudged slightly, everyone will have an interesting story to tell you. Many restaurants and cafes will serve you directly at the beach, and drinking an espresso martini while letting the ocean water wash over your feet is a completely different experience of relaxation.

Food and shopping

Although I will never forget the sheer look of horror on the face of every waiter whenever I mentioned that I don't eat meat (they feared they might not have anything to accommodate me), it was actually surprisingly easy to find vegetarian meals on menus without having to look too hard. If you do eat meat and fish, however, you will be spoiled for choice, especially with all of the fresh fish that is usually consumed the same day it's caught.

When it comes to shopping, you can expect to find many fun little touristy trinkets you can bring home for yourself or for loved ones. Do not expect to be able to buy much of anything that is original, as it is all geared towards tourists; it's hard to find anything that is particularly authentic.

When it comes to food, however, you can find some delicious local products such as wine, honey, and olive oil. When looking for the best quality olive oil, make sure the acidity levels of the oil are below 0.8%. The lower the better!

What to bring?

Aside from whatever you'll need for your planned activities, make sure to bring sunscreen! I managed to develop a sun allergy (not during the trip), so make sure you pack your sunscreen and stay out of the midday sun!

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Begin a rewarding career as a Child & Youth Program Assistant

Join the In-Person CYS Hiring Fair!

By Joel Wasko

USAG Stuttgart Family and MWR

Are you looking for a career with incredible benefits, the chance to make a positive impact, and a supportive work environment? Look no further than the In-Person Child & Youth Services (CYS) Hiring Fair! This event is your gateway to becoming a Child & Youth Program Assistant (CYPA) and starting a fulfilling career with great pay (starting at \$17.39-\$20.99 per hour) and numerous perks.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming hiring fair dates:

- **Aug. 8, 2023:** Panzer Kaserne Building 2915 Rm. 222
- **Sept. 12, 2023:** Patch Barracks Building 2312, 3rd Floor Conference Area
- **Oct. 10, 2023:** Panzer Kaserne Building 2915 Rm. 222
- **Nov. 14, 2023:** Patch Barracks Building 2312, 3rd Floor Conference Area
- **Dec. 12, 2023:** Panzer Kaserne Building 2915 Rm. 222

Join CYS from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the specified dates at the specified locations. You'll have the opportunity to meet with multiple managers from CYS who are eager to interview qualified candidates for available CYPA positions.

"The in-person hiring at the job fair made me feel like I was truly gaining employment," said Emeline McMann-Chapman, Child & Youth Program Assistant at Kelley CDC II. "I had spent time applying to places online which felt like sending applications off into a void and praying for a response. At the job fair, I got to meet and interact with the person who would be my boss and gain reassurance that the job I was applying for was legitimate."

What Makes CYS Employment Special?

A career as a Child & Youth Program Assistant is not just another job; it's a chance to be part of something greater.

The CYS program offers a host of benefits to its employees, including:

- Comprehensive Health Benefits (medical, dental, vision, and life insurance)
- Paid Time Off (vacation and sick leave)
- Career Progression & Paid Training
- Tuition Reimbursement



CYS Child & Youth Program Assistants can work with children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 18 years. Photo courtesy Stuttgart Family & MWR Marketing

- Priority Childcare Placement
- Access to Tax-Free Shopping on Post
- Worldwide Job Mobility (70 installations in the US and overseas)
- CYS Europe Scholarship Program
- Retirement & 401K

To qualify for a CYPA position, you must be at least 18 years old, a citizen of the U.S. or a NATO country, and hold a high school diploma or GED. You must also be able to communicate effectively in written and spoken English, successfully pass pre-employment and background checks, and complete health assessments and required immunizations, as well as demonstrate an ability to perform routine physical tasks (including lifting up to 40 pounds).

Applying is easy! Visit the USAJOBS website (<https://www.usajobs.gov/>) and search for "Child and Youth Program Assistant" in "Stuttgart, Germany" to submit your application and start the journey to becoming a CYPA.

Don't miss this opportunity to embark on a rewarding career path that allows you to make a positive impact on the lives of children and youth while enjoying exceptional benefits.

"I love working at CYS because of all the support I have from my coworkers and managers...working with children can be incredibly difficult, but I always have support to rely on," McMann-Chapman said. "There is also no better feeling than walking into a room and having a bunch of kids smile and jump up and down simply because they are so excited to see you that day. Watching all of the kids at the center grow and learn is the most rewarding experience I have had in my life thus far."

Join CYS at the In-Person CYS Recruitment Events and take the first step towards an exciting future!

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The Big Question:

What's your #1 travel tip?



Richard:
"Have a departure
checklist of impor-
tant items, and
leave early."

01



Marcel:
"Do your research
and have a plan in
advance!"

02



Carrie:
"Don't forget your
passport!"

03



Isabella:
"Bring world travel
adapters. They
come in handy!"

04

Samantha:
"You can't always prepare for everything,
but making lists helps a lot."

05

Joe:
"Have situational awareness. Read DoD
travel guidelines and the risks of your
destination."

06

Gary:
"Have cash on
hand."

Brittney:
"Be flexible!"

07



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