

KALKAR – WESEL – CAOC UEDEM



Canada



NEWCOMERS' GUIDE

Spring2019

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GUIDE OVERVIEW

Purpose: This guide represents an unofficial compilation by Canadian families to assist new members and families with information to simplify preparations for and transition to this rural region in Germany.

The guide is structured in three parts and oriented in time to reduce the 'fire hose effect' experienced during OUTCAN posting.

Part 1: Addresses considerations beginning from the Career Manager's request for your interest in screening for a posting, to boarding the aircraft to start your new life.

Part 2: Covers many of the items and actions you will need to address from the time you step off the aircraft in Düsseldorf to a few weeks after your receipt of household effects and vehicle(s). Note: Part 2 will be made available no later than end Apr by your sponsor.

Part 3: Provides a plethora of community information to assist you to better integrate into and get the most out of the area. Note: Part 3 will be provided no later than end Jun by your sponsor.

Guide Improvement: Any feedback or suggestions for improvement based on your own experiences are welcomed. Provide them through/to your respective Canadian leadership at Joint Air Power Competence Centre Kalkar, Combined Air Operations Centre Uedem or 1 NATO Signal Battalion Wesel.

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PART 1: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE POST

Section 1 - Life as a “Remote Person” or RP in rural Germany

The Career Manager has approached you about a posting to Germany; specifically JAPCC Kalkar, CAOC Uedem or 1 NSB Wesel. The purpose of this section is to paint an accurate picture of factors and considerations to assist you in determining whether the Career Manager's offer fits well with your family situation.

Geographic Scenario

The area is contained within a pocket bounded to the north, south and west by the Netherlands. It is very rural with major population centres such as Nijmegen, Arnhem and Düsseldorf approximately 45-60 minutes away by highway or secondary roads. The towns of Kalkar, Uedem and Wesel are in the state (or province) of Nord-Rhein Westfalia (NRW), have populations of 5,000 to 40,000 people, and have most leisure services and resources you would find in similarly sized towns in Canada. Although rural, most towns are served by a municipal or regional bus and train. The area is also served by two international airports in Düsseldorf, Germany (1 hour) and Amsterdam, Netherlands (1 ½ hours); and one discount European destination air carrier (Ryan Air) operating out of a former British airfield in Weeze, Germany (1/2 hour). The Canadian Forces Support Unit (CFSU) or base is located in Geilenkirchen, Germany and is 1 ½ -2 hours driving distance.

Stressors and their Mitigation

If you think a posting to Europe will help smooth over the cracks in your marriage, think again. If you believe a posting to NATO is a European Vacation, like Chevy Chase you are in for a rough ride. The intent here is not to paint a bleak picture, but to make you aware that not all days will be sunny and warm; you must be prepared to cope with these unique stressors accordingly, and more so than back home. A posting as a 'Remote' to Germany is challenging and can be difficult for your family; being aware of and overcoming these stressors is key to a satisfying and enjoyable opportunity.

Social Isolation

Do not overlook the fact that you and in particular your family will feel isolated. You will be isolated by a language barrier; despite the fact English is fairly prevalent in Germany, you are in rural Germany. While the Canadian contingent in the area numbers 16 plus families, and most are posted to Wesel, the reality is most are dispersed across the area and live in various towns. NATO affiliated international spousal clubs based out of Kalkar/Uedem, Wesel and Duisburg/Düsseldorf exists and is critical to easing this social isolation. Schooling serves as a focal point for families too. The Canadian contingent seeks to gather in a social and family setting quarterly.

Lack of Employment Opportunity

Another stressor to spouses and dependants alike is a lack of employment opportunity, meaning lots of time to fill while you are in your comfortable place of work socializing daily in NATO's and Canada's language. Some spouses with specific professional skills have had success; international school teacher, remote employment in support of morale and welfare services delivery, or transferable client-based business opportunities in Canada. Spousal or dependants' employment is possible on the German economy, but restricted by skill recognition, language barrier, etc. This is an excellent opportunity to study, enrol in on-line courses and volunteer, to keep skills current and to learn something new.

Education

Dependant education and spousal educational options are not optimal, and again can be stressors or deepen a family's feeling of isolation. International schools in the area are one hour away from work posts; Arnhem, Netherlands (English) and Düsseldorf, Germany (English and French). Arranging dependant transportation to and from school including contracts is a parental task; the international schools do not extend bus service to the area. Residential or Boarding schools are further afoot in Europe and Canada. While local German schools may be an option, their curriculum and language of instruction pose challenges. There is also a grade 12 boarding school program in Switzerland that has received great reviews for educational intellectual learning. Lastly, you may choose to keep a student back in Canada under a privately arranged Room and Board agreement to complete high school.

Leisure and Sports

You are remote from any support base, whether Canadian, American or NATO facilities. If you are used to intersection sports and your family is used to partaking in recreation or leisure activities organized for them, such opportunities are extremely limited. Importantly, it is worthwhile to note that most leisure and recreational activities you are accustomed to are available in the area; you just have to conduct your own research and network, as well as read Part 3 of this Newcomer's Guide. The Multi-national Family Support Centre (MFSC) located in Kalkar is also a useful information resource.

Medical/Dental Services

Most if not all medical and dental services will be obtained from German public facilities and providers. While basic medical and dental facilities exist at the Canadian support base in Geilenkirchen, you will generally be referred externally to obtain services in an unfamiliar language, likely need to research for doctors, dentists and specialists, and then where dependants are concerned do battle with the insurance company or administration for cost recovery. Refer to Part 3 of this Newcomer's Guide where a list of trusted professionals has been identified by current area Canadian families to mitigate this stressor somewhat. As well, some help is available from: a German national referral clerk and a military Primary Care Nurse employed at the Geilenkirchen Medical Unit; and the local MFSC.

Canadian National Support Unit/Base

With a few exceptions direct support is limited – there is a reason you are referred to as a Remote Person. A number of services are extended from CFSU(E) Geilenkirchen, with mechanisms established by some elements of the support base or through the good will and can-do attitude of providers. Bottom line is, simple and basic services one receives over the counter and takes for granted require greater effort to gain from afar. The CFSU(E) has published a useful reference titled, '**Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) Administration Guidebook for Remote Personnel**'; ask for it when you report for in-clearance. It is crucial for the member to fully understand their own family needs and to take into account the challenges that can be presented from being removed from support services.

Section 2 – You've Decided to Accept the Offer from your Career Manager

Now the reality of your decision starts to set in, and requires significant effort to push through the screening process. The circumstances and unique stressors indicated above should have made it clear why OUTCAN screening plays such a pivotal role in determining suitability for posting to Europe as a 'Remote' Person or Family. This section serves to provide awareness of some of the screening elements you will face and helpful hints to make the effort hopefully a little less painful.

Key Screening Hurdles and Tidbits

Medical/Social Worker

This is by far the slowest component of the screening process; expect multiple layers of review, particularly where dependents are involved. Put simply, the prescribed time to screen is not achievable unless you commence this part early.

Children's Education

Gaining an understanding of whether schooling options are suitable to your children's needs and what educational benefits or entitlements exist is daunting. Refer to Part 1 Section 3 which highlights all international schools in the vicinity of the posts. Entitlements are a bit more complex, however generally include paid private school, school transport, some sundry items, and in some or certain cases residency/room & board; refer to [Foreign Service Directive 34 \(Education Allowances\)](#) and consult the Children's Education Management (CEM) Geilenkirchen office (+49 (0)2451 717 164).

Personal Preparedness

NATO posts are expected to deploy. Ensure that any limitations to deployment are remedied or mitigated. For example, you don't need to have completed the various APRV training or courses to gain screening sign-off; schedule them showing intent and follow through. Most gaining CO's accept this risk tolerance.

Pers/Professional Development

National career professional development course opportunities are limited while at a remote NATO post. If you can find the time, get what you need done before your posting, e.g. 2nd Language trg/testing. No effective language training is available aside from computer-based, and some testing has long queues. Access to National professional development courses is limited to those professional opportunities available on the DWAN and internet. You also have excellent access to a plethora of NATO or international professional development courses and fora.

Screening File Transfer to Gaining Unit/CFSU(E)

Some delays have been known to occur once your screening file has left the Losing Unit and is transferred to the Gaining Unit/CFSU(E). This is in part due to e-copies making their way around the various offices in Europe, which are not necessarily co-located nor necessarily on DWAN. Recommend you stay in contact with your local OR and your sponsor (if known).

Screening Interview

This is conducted over the phone by an appropriate senior Canadian member at NATO post and represents in practical terms the authority to finalize the screening at the Gaining unit. Its purpose is to ascertain first-hand your family's preparedness and understanding of post environment. Your sponsor will also be confirmed. Note: the screening process allows the Gaining CO to address concerns (if applicable) early on in the screening process vice only once all other efforts have been completed – engage as appropriate through CFSU(E) OR Administrator assigned your file (indicated on your screening form as coordinated by your Losing unit OR).

Posting Loan

Once the screening process is complete, it is time to start considering a posting loan. Talk to your local OR and/or refer to [Foreign Service Directive 10 \(FSD 10\)](#). A posting loan is a financial instrument that can be extremely helpful in assisting a person or family posted OUTCAN. The loan is intended to provide the member and their family with the ability to purchase items needed at post or to otherwise facilitate the posting. Items may include clothing and foodstuffs and a private motor vehicle. A posting loan is often used to eliminate any lien on a vehicle before it can be shipped.

Section 3 – On the Hunt for Rental Accommodation

Now that you are in receipt of a posting message, it is time to turn your focus to preparing for your House Hunting Trip (HHT) and engaging your sponsor. You will have been advised of your sponsor's details during the telephone screening interview.

What to Expect of Your Sponsor

Your sponsor is there to support you and your family both before and during your HHT to find suitable accommodations and as applicable dependant schooling. The sponsor will provide all necessary information and coordination to meet your requirements for a successful trip and to ease transition into the area.

Cell/Handy Communications

Communication is important during your HHT, you will have to contact various agencies, schools, banks etc, as well as back to Canada. There are two possible options:

1. A basic cell phone complete with voice-message and SMS text-message capabilities could be purchased and activated with a pay as you go option in advance of the HHT. The concept is simple – you own the cell, paid for up front by your sponsor and reimbursed by you afterward. Such phones range in price from 35-50 Euros (€) with activation another 10-20 €
2. Most Cell phone companies in Canada offer a travel roaming packages that include the ability to call, message and use your own data plan as if you're making them from Canada. Most charge \$12.00/day for the days you use it.

Rogers – Roam like home

Bell – Roam Better

Virgin Mobile – Roam Sweet Roam

Telus – Easy Roam

Videotron – Daily Traveller Pass (L'Option Voyageur 24h)

Let your sponsor know how they can keep in contact with you while on HHT.

A related tip: Most Cell phone users use the application "What's App" instead of SMS Texting to communicate with each other.

Note: If your cell phone from Canada is dual/tri-mode and unlocked by your Canadian service provider, you may be able to get away with the purchase of a **SIM** card on a pay as you go service.

Ensure to verify the CFIRP directives in regards to what is reimbursed during your HHT for Telephone, facsimile and internet.

Towns within Post Geographic Boundaries

The boundaries are published in a local memo by the Commanding Officer. Talk to your sponsor about the Geographic Boundaries within which you are permitted to reside, while retaining benefits or assistance associated with dependant transport and commuting to work.

Note that all German towns mentioned in this section, and in general any German town within 50 km radius (as the crow flies) to your work post is permitted, you may not live in the Netherlands. (see Annex A for more details)

Which Towns are Most Suitable to Live?

It depends on a number of personal factors and family considerations; dependant schooling, your work post, interests and preferences for small town versus bigger town, and mitigating the stressors previously stated. That said, the larger towns in the area in proximity to the three posts are Wesel, Xanten, Goch and Kleve; each is well-served with leisure, shopping, medical and so on. The town of Goch has a strong UK family presence including a social Community Centre, and many multi-national NATO families as well. Smaller more rural towns like Kalkar, Uedem and Alpen have decent basic services, limited leisure (e.g. no indoor pool or fitness facilities), and quite reduced shop opening hours. If dependant education is a key consideration, then proximity to a particular international school will likely steer you towards towns like Kleve or Goch for Arnhem, while Wesel, Krefeld, Duisburg and Düsseldorf may be more suitable for the Düsseldorf schools. If ice skating is a passion for you and family, then you'll want to be near the local arenas at Nijmegen, Wesel, Dinslaken and Düsseldorf; organized ice hockey for children is also possible in Kevelaer, Nijmegen, Dinslaken, Ratingen, Krefeld, Duisburg and Düsseldorf

Sources of Housing Information

The Multi-national Family Support Centre (MFSC) located in Kalkar is the principal entity with which to coordinate your HHT requirements and visits to prospective houses in the local area. The MFSC will set-up appointments as coordinated with you and your sponsor. Note on Saturdays, Sundays and [German holidays](#) appointments cannot be scheduled; so pick your HHT dates and program accordingly. Respective MFSC contact info is:

Kalkar – mfस्कalkar@yahoo.com or +49 (0)2824 90 2690

There are a few other sources of information ref Rental Housing which you may also find useful in identifying the kind and quantity of housing as well as the towns they are located. The below internet sites are available; both are in German, however use of the Google Chrome translation feature makes it possible to navigate and query easily in English (Note: Google Chrome is a free web browser). The two housing websites are:

Scout24 @ www.immobilienscout24.de/de/finden/wohnen ; and

Ebay @ <http://kleinanzeigen.ebay.de/anzeigen/> .

If for schooling reasons you elect to live near the international schools near the Düsseldorf area, housing information from the MFSC will be limited. The Geilenkirchen housing office may be able to assist with providing you a rental agent that can facilitate the process.

When requesting to view a residence found on the websites, be sure to ask well in advance of your HHT and mention any pets you are planning to bring. Germans love dogs, and might list the unit as pet friendly because of this but this may not be true when it comes to cats.

Rental House Costs and Contracting Fees

The CFSU(E) Orderly Room will assist you in obtaining an advance of funds for your HHT sufficient to pay a substantial House/Realtor Finder's Fee as well as a safety/security deposit. Most rental accommodations in Germany are marketed by a realtor with the finder's fee often 2 ½ times the cost of the monthly rental amount. Further, landlords often require a one month deposit.

A typical house in this area of Germany will cost 1,300 to 1,800 €month with utilities included. The so-called rent ceiling and size of house that applies to you is determined by you family size principally and rank. Don't get scared by the representative rental cost; a rent and utility share formula reduces the amount you will actually pay. The amount paid by the member is dictated by national regulation and has no bearing on the price of the accommodation rented.

Be aware that if you decide to live near Düsseldorf, rent prices are significantly higher than in rural Germany and a formal rent ceiling increase request with DCBA via the Housing office at CFSU(E) is most likely going to be required. While the process is fairly straightforward, it will take an extra day or two to seek approval. If there is any doubt that a rent ceiling increase is required, early coordination with the Housing office is necessary. Under normal circumstances, a rent ceiling increase is only required if the intention is to live near the bigger cities in and around Düsseldorf. Justification for a rent ceiling increase is required and typically only approved if the decision to live in the area is justified (proximity to international school and lack of affordable housing in the area). If you make a decision to live in a house beyond the rent ceiling, it may be possible to 'opt out' and pay the difference in costs between the ceiling and the actual rent. Close coordination with the Housing Office at CFSU(E) is required and they will deal with issues of this nature in real time.

Lease Contract Support

The Housing Officer (tel# +49 (0)245 1717 157 or 120) at CFSU(E) Geilenkirchen is specifically mandated to draft the lease contract for your rental accommodation once you have decided on one. There is two key contractual elements you will need to address both during your house visits and while engaged with the Housing Officer: Canadian Government mandated lease requirements; and any other specific clauses you would like captured in the lease.

Canadian Government requirements include things like kitchen cabinetry and appliances, light fixtures throughout the house, a military clause that will end the lease early if repatriated prior to the end lease date and separation of rent and utility costs. Consult with the Housing Officer for all the details.

The other key is to discuss your specific requirements or circumstances with your landlord or his representative and ensure these requirements are captured in the lease as permitted by the landlord. A few examples of specific clauses might include:

- a. permission for pets on premises;
- b. who cuts the grass, trims the hedges or clears the snow (even who provides the mower or blower) This is important as Germans expect tenants to do the gardening unless otherwise specified.;

- c. at least one window in each room with a screen; and
- d. whether a room or rooms may be painted and by whom or whose cost. (Consult with the Housing Officer for details and specifics. It is customary for residents to have their rental accommodation painted upon departure. Painting upon departure is expensive and not a normal Canadian practice. When negotiating a lease, speak with the landlord and Housing office and attempt to have this requirement removed from your lease if applicable. The Canadian Forces moving directives do not cover this expense.)

Initiate a German Bank Account

It is strongly recommended that you initiate a German bank account; **note you will require a German address to do so.** The account will permit you to transfer funds as necessary and set-up or provide banking details to other service providers. Also you will need this account to receive your pay once you are at post. A number of banks are available in the immediate area of Kalkar, Uedem and Wesel; which you chose depends on ease of access to services and fee structures. Main banks used by Canadian members are Volksbank, Sparkasse and Commerzbank, be sure to ask about any fees for transferring funds between Canadian and German banks. Your sponsor will guide you regarding banks in the area and assist you to initiate a meeting or appointment to set-up accounts as well as debit/convenience and credit cards. For interest sake, the contact information for the Volksbank mentioned above is:

Address: Altkalkarer Strasse 7-11, 47546 Kalkar

Advisor: +49 (0)2824 4030; norbert.hos@volksbank-kleverland.de

Do not assume that a bank account can be setup on short notice. Opening an account will likely require an appointment and banking institutions have short hours of operation and many are closed on Mondays. It is best to plan early and book an appointment as soon as the house selection process is complete.

Recommended Optional Actions during HHT

You will likely visit Geilenkirchen during your HHT, it is recommended, if your house is heated by fuel oil, to make contact with CE (tel# +49 (0) 2451 717 114) to arrange delivery of fuel if not sufficient to get you through the winter (Note: generally the landlord is requested to ensure full on start of lease and you ensure it is full on departure, so likely not a concern for you upfront). Also if you have dependants you should visit the MFS(E) it's filled with loads of information for your spouse and children (e.g. including Rosetta Stone).

Set-up School Visits

You are advised to research the schools in the area and in particular to schedule visits with the school administration to gain first hand an understanding of what they offer and discuss registration requirements plus timelines. Many schools also require interviews with the parents as well as payment of a one-time fee, prior to guarantee of admission; the HHT is your time to do so. The Children's Education Management (CEM) office in Geilenkirchen should contact you before your HHT in order to assist you in the school also be contacted (tel # +49 (0)2451 717 x164 or 213) to establish a rapport and answer any questions you may

have ref benefits, registering and funding mechanisms. The MFSC office can also help in making appointments if language becomes a barrier.

The websites to the two approved English and one French language International Schools in the area are at the links below. (Note: German public schools in the area may be an option for very young children but are not discussed herein). A brief description or summary is provided of the school environment and programs. Refer to the links and get engaged early with CEM.

Arnhem International School – www.arnheminternationalschool.nl/

The school has both primary and secondary school divisions, offering an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program curriculum. Language of instruction is English with a mandatory 2-3 classes Dutch language introduction per week. The curriculum focus is on literacy, mathematics, international cultural awareness, and fitness. Uniforms are not worn. The school is approximately 40-50 minutes from Kalkar/Uedem and more than an hour from Wesel.

International School of Düsseldorf – www.isdedu.de/

This school also has both primary and secondary school divisions, and offers an IB Program. Language of instruction is English with a mandatory introductory German language element. The curriculum is well balanced in terms of arts, sciences, and physical education. Students are not required to wear uniforms. There is also a large international community in the area, including many Americans and Canadians. Spouses and children attending the school are quite happy with the resultant sense of community afforded to their families. The school location is approximately a 45-50 minute daily commute to Wesel and an hour Kalkar/Uedem.

Lycée français de Düsseldorf – <http://lfdd.de/>

The school was relatively recently added to the certified schools list; however it is under review by CEM using a more stringent evaluation process. Questions have arisen re program transferability to Canadian curriculum. Consult with the CEM office for any updates should you wish to pursue this schooling option. The school offers primary through secondary programs and follows the curriculum of Ministère de l'éducation de France. Current families have chosen to school at English schools augmented by very limited French language tutoring. Discuss tutoring with DEM office in Geilenkirchen for entitlement details. Note that tutoring services are limited in the area. Part 3 of this Newcomers' Guide will contain a list of known tutors.

**As per WG B decisions Sept 2018, the British curriculum is deemed non-compatible at the secondary level from grades 9 to 12 (years 10 to 13). For students to attend a British curriculum school at the secondary level, a request must be submitted to WG B for approval on an individual basis. You must contact the CEM office in Geilenkirchen.

St George's The English International School Duisburg/Düsseldorf –
www.stgeorgesschoolduisburg.de/

The school offers both primary and secondary school divisions, and follows an IB Program. Perhaps one distinction is the school allows for two levels of academic pursuit to challenge students. The curriculum is a mix of maths, sciences (including computer), arts and social studies. Introductory German language is also a mandatory element, along with the requirement for students to wear uniforms (not reimbursed). With the proximity of this school to the Düsseldorf one, there is a relative connection and community amongst the schools' communities. Being in Duisburg (north end of Düsseldorf), St George's is marginally closer to Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area than ISD meaning a slightly reduced commute time.

Important Note re: Children's Language of Instruction

Current governmental policy generally requires or expects that a child will continue instruction in the same language as at the last post. Bottom line, based on the policy, is the system will do what is best in the circumstances for the family and child. Exceptions are made. Contact and engagement with CEM office in Geilenkirchen is paramount as you move forward to register your children in school(s).

Section 4 - Preparing for the Move Over; What to Bring or Retain?

Bank Account/Credit Cards in Canada

Retaining your Canadian banking privileges such as accounts and credit cards is a must, so do not close them out. You will need access to Canadian funds for various reasons, not the least of which is setting up allotments and to process your Move Claim and Temporary Duty claims while at post. Make sure to change the address of your Canadian Credit Cards to the PO Box 5053 Belleville billing address. Note that your credit cards bills will take longer to arrive by mail, so it is recommended you be proactive in determining balance owed and in making payments on time.

German bank convenience/debit and credit cards can be finicky outside Germany, so having alternate (Canadian) means or cards is advantageous. Note that Mastercard and Maestocard are more widely recognized across Europe, whereas many of the other brands are not – especially American Express! Further, German credit cards do not permit you to carry over debt; you must pay in full at end of month what you have racked up. Look into getting a Debit/credit card (works like a credit card but will debit your account directly).

Driving History Letters

An accident-free (not at fault) driving history must be proven for the previous 10 years to obtain the maximum insurance discount. A simple historical rating is insufficient. Germany has a unique approach to vehicle insurance; because the discount can only be applied to one vehicle per driver, **it is important that separate insured driving history letters for each driving age family member be secured.** This will allow you to ensure a second vehicle at the discount under the second driver.

Drivers' Licenses

Two aspects of licensing: retention of provincial license; and learner or young driver licensing. Although you will receive a Canadian Forces Europe driver's license, you must keep a valid provincial driver's license and ensure it does not lapse or expire to preclude problems prior to and on return to Canada at end of posting.

In Ontario, Services Canada will not renew a driver's license if it is scheduled to expire during your tour overseas. Unless your license is scheduled to expire in the next few months, it is possible that you will need to try and renew your license during your tour or upon return. Failure to produce a valid license upon return could potentially mean that a new graduated license period (2 years) could result. Written in the Ontario drivers licensing policy, there is an agreement that they will honour a license from the Canadian Forces Support Unit Europe. Members have reported that when attempting to renew a license, it was a difficult process but with enough persistence and push back, Services Canada was able to dig out the reference and honour the agreement (thus avoiding the graduated licensing process).

If you have a family member who is a young or new driver, **getting at least their G2 (or provincial equivalent) driver's license before coming to post cannot be over-stated.** Obtaining a full license over here is costly if not difficult. Talk to the experts at the Licensing

Office (tel # +49 (0) 2451 717 127) in Geilenkirchen if you have any specific questions re licensing or vehicle registration.

Vehicles

Options and Considerations

There are a number of options available to you, but you must also weigh them by their merits and your personal family circumstance. The basic question is, should you bring your current vehicle(s) or buy new either in Canada or in Germany or used on arrival?

A few things to consider if you wish to keep your current car and ship it:

- 1) Is the brand and model readily serviceable at or near post? Many global brands when it comes to cars have different engines or components.
- 2) If your car still has a (Canadian) warranty, check to see if it will be honoured by the manufacturer – the answer is likely to surprise you!
- 3) Are you still making loan payments? You must pay out the loan before the car can be shipped out of country. A low-interest Posting Loan can/should be requested from your losing unit to cover this situation.

Considerations for buying new and shipping or buying new/used in Germany include:

- 1) You will need to have cash in your Canadian bank account, because a bank loan is problematic. A Posting Loan is likely a must and should be secured from your losing unit during the screening/posting process. This loan is provided on request through your Losing Unit/Base OR and can be used for the acquisition of a vehicle required at new post.
- 2) Specific procedures and manufacturers both in Canada and in Germany under diplomatic or United States military sales agreements can be used to acquire a new vehicle or motorcycle either tax-deferred and reduced or tax-exempt. Some also offer significant discounts. Dependent on the program, the new vehicle can be acquired with Canadian or more likely only American specification. These vehicles and motorcycles typically carry a two year international warranty. If you buy new from a Diplo/US Mil Sales program, expect to wait 2-4 months unless you are lucky enough to get a floor model. A good portal to many such websites aimed at Diplo/US Mil Sales is www.gettingaround.net. Even if the Diplo/US Mil Sales agent says the car can be imported, it is up to you to research to confirm what it will take to do so and the cost. See www.riv.ca for additional importation details. Do not find out the hard way!
- 3) Purchasing a European specification vehicle or motorcycle generally means you will need to resell it before your return to Canada; the 'conversion' cost and/or bureaucratic red tape are designed to discourage bringing such a car back. The general exception is to vehicles 15 years or older on return to Canada; specifically, the month of manufacture of the car will be used as the reference point. Refer to the Canadian government's Registrar of Imported

Vehicles website, www.riv.ca, for greater precision and up to date information. Two of the largest auto resale websites in Germany are: www.mobile.de and www.autoscout24.com.

- 4) Purchase a used US specification (and sometimes Canadian) from a number of Diplo/US Mil Sales and third party car lots near American installations, or directly/privately from American servicemen. Each has the same considerations and risks as back home.
- 5) Some people have purchased used cars from the GK Airbase 'Lemon Lot' or advertised in the 'GK/AFNorth/JFC Classifieds', GK/SWAP or Facebook groups.

Household Furniture & Effects

To a certain extent, how much you bring will depend on your allowable Furniture & Effects (F&E) weight limit, your willingness to use personal funding elements, and your desire to bring back German or other European F&E. Opportunities abound to acquire high quality furniture, other common household items or even antiques. Refer to Part 3 to this Newcomers' Guide for some of these opportunities.

If you take over a home from another Canadian it is recommended to negotiate purchasing the appliances, tools, furnishings etc... At this time you are entitled to claim 50% of the cost up to \$5000, and this must be requested within 30 days of acquiring you residence.

Furnishings & Appliances not to Bring

Geilenkirchen Supply Depot no longer supplies appliances, closets or power transformers.

If you negotiated your rental agreement effectively, all drapes and window covering should be taken care of too. The remaining furnishings are up to you to provide. Refer to the next paragraph ref appliances and effects not recommended for Europe due to power and/or cycle issues.

Electrical and Electronic Considerations

If you weren't already aware, you might want to take note that the standard voltage in Europe is 220V/50 cycles or Hertz. It differs from Canada which is 110-120V/ 60 Hertz. If you have electronics that work on 220V 50 Hz and have detachable power cables, you can find a German replacement cables at electronic stores like Saturn and MediaMarkt. These stores carry power cables for common electronics like laptops, gaming consoles, camera charges, etc. While transformers allow the use of many electrically powered Canadian sourced items with the required plug adaptor, there are some appliances or electronic products you'll want to consider leaving behind, namely:

- 1) If your TV is not HDMI capable, the NTSC/PAL variance will limit its usefulness; however if HDMI bring it. Internet streaming broadcasts via a laptop/desktop as well as VPN services provides increased English (or French) language programming access. UK satellite service is available;

- 2) Alarm clocks and clock radios which are not designed to switch between 60 & 50 Hertz. They will not keep the time!
- 3) Telephones (incl cordless) and any small appliances which require continuous/prolonged use via a small AC to DC voltage transformer; and

Cell phones in Europe and Canada work in different bands and modes. If your cell phone is multi-band you may be in luck; check with your local provider and/or manufacturer (it will also have to be unlocked by your Canadian service provider prior to leaving Canada, as of Dec 2017 all new devices must be sold unlocked or carriers must offer to unlock existing phones free-of-charge). The purchase of a German SIM card will then be all you need.

Be careful of extended warranties. Apple Care purchased in Canada, for example, is only valid in Canada. You may also need to change your app store account's region to get service provider apps such as MeineVodafone.

Other Sundry Items You May Wish to Leave Behind

Clothing

The climate in this part of Germany is 'tropical'; 20-25 degrees centigrade in the summer with some humidity, and slightly below 0 – 10 degrees in the winter with a fair number of rain days. Choose clothing accordingly, but be prepared for -10C should your travel plans take you to higher latitudes or elevations. Clothing is generally a fair amount more expensive in Europe, but deals can be found if patient.

Yard Tools

Definitely park or sell that snow-blower! If you were unable to negotiate use of one in your rental accommodations lease, bring your gas lawnmower from back home.

Power Tools

Consider yourself 'handy'? If you decide that you are, know that the 220-240V/50Hz outlets will do a number on motors over time even with the use of transformers. Cordless power tools are a good option.

BBQ

A great Canadian tradition - bring it! A simple adapter (25€- 35€) modification (easily found on Amazon or at the local hardware store) will allow use of German propane tanks and ease refills. Alternatively some petrol stations in the area can fill North American cylinders (available from Geilenkirchen or US Bases).

Outdoors Gear

Camping in most of Europe is a far cry from what we are used to in Canada; some countries like Norway and Austria have what we recognize as austere tent camping. Camping in Germany is generally RV/trailer based, and seen as an affordable alternative to hotels. Backpacking and hiking opportunities abound in the mountainous regions of Europe. Some canoe but mostly kayaking clubs exist in the local area, but there is limited tranquility. Verify with the directives if you wish to move items such as canoes, ATV or utility trailers.

Decide your needs accordingly.

END PART 1 – GOOD LUCK WITH THE MOVE!

Critical Items to Understand for HHT

- Refs: A. [MFSI 10 Chapter 10](#)
B. <https://jopf.re/osmaps-radius/>
C. [FSD 30](#)
D. [FSD 34](#)

1. There are a various allowances that may provide you financial relief during your posting in Europe. It is very important that you understand these allowances, and their applicability, caveats and limitations, prior to signing your lease. This addendum to the Newcomer's Guide is an attempt to ensure that our newcomers have as much information as possible prior to conducting their House Hunting Trip (HHT).
2. The location of your house, both in distance from work and location in relation to transports for children to school, may/will impact the availability of these allowances. It is very important that you understand the ref documents and that you work with CFSU(E) Orderly Room and Children's Education Management (CEM) prior to leasing a home.
3. Ref A Definitions defines the term geographical area as an area within a radius of 50 kilometers from the member's post. It is important that you understand whether the properties you are viewing and may ultimately lease are inside or outside this geographical area. There are several tools that are available that can assist you and ref B is only one such tool. If you try ref B then ensure you set the radius to 50 and the units to km. Addresses for Joint Air Power Competency Centre (JAPCC), CAOC Uedem (CAOCU) and 1 NATO Sigs BN (1 NSB), that can be entered into ref B's search tool (upper right), are as follows:
 - a. **JAPCC** – Romerstrasse 122, Kalkar
 - b. **CAOCU** - Muhlenstrasse 89, Uedem
 - c. **1 NSB** – Bocholter strasse 6, Wesel
4. If you live within the geographical area then you may be entitled to Commuting Assistance Allowance (CAA). CAA is applied according to 10.18.05 of ref A. Important points are that you must be within the geographical area and that the terms and conditions for CAA are under FSD 30, ref C. It is very important that you understand ref C. Key points to understand regarding CAA and ref C are:
 - a. At time of drafting this addendum, in the majority of the geographical area for JAPCC, CAOCU, and 1 NSB there is not adequate public transportation from residence to work. This implies that for the majority of the cases, individuals will be seeking CAA under FSD 30.6.2 (Commuting Assistance – Location of Residential Accommodation – Employee Choice - adequate public transportation does not exist). Note that there is a determination required regarding the mileage distance that will be used in this instance.
 - b. Something to pay attention regarding the distance used. Previously CAA claims were processed using the radial distance vice the driving distance. Ref C does not use radial distance (shorter) so ensure you are getting the proper road distance for your CAA claims when processed. *(Still under review at time of writing)*

- c. If you apply for CAA under 30.6.2 then you only receive CAA for those days that you travel to work. You will have to pay a portion, commuting share, that is equivalent to 2 bus tickets on OC Transpo per day of work up to a maximum of a monthly bus pass. Note, this is different than those who apply for CAA and where there is adequate public transportation (FSD 30.5.1 & 30.6.1). In that situation the member is expected to buy a monthly pass and so can expect to have their commuting share set as the cost of a monthly OC Transpo pass.

5. If you have school aged children attending school in Germany/Netherlands during your time in Europe, then you should understand the Education Transportation section (30.8) of ref C. If your child will attend an International School (Düsseldorf/Arnhem) then their tuition will be paid under section 34.2 of ref D. With this caveat, defined at section 30.8.1 of ref C, you may then be eligible for transportation costs of getting your child to school. Important items to understand regarding Education Transportation:
 - a. This is not an entitlement and the wording of section 30.8 emphasizes this. Statements like “assistance may be provided” and “assistance may be extended” highlight that this is not an entitlement. This suggests that you should work with CEM prior to leasing a house as they may not be able to support your education transportation costs depending upon where you reside.

 - b. Actual cost is the cost that should be sought as it is referenced within this section. Actual cost could be the monthly cost of commercial transportation or of PMV. Regardless, it needs to be authorized by CEM and so establish contact with CEM prior to and during your HHT.

PART 2: THE FIRST SIX WEEKS

Emergency and other Key Phone Numbers

Police	110
Fire / Ambulance	112
International Operator (within Germany)	11834
Police (Kalkar)	(0)2821-5040
Police (Uedem)	(0)2825-8869
Police (Wesel)	(0)281-1070
Military Police (GK)	(0)172-534-5903 (C)
CFSU(E) Duty Officer	(0)172-534-5900 (C) CFSUEDutyOfficer@forces.gc.ca
Member Assistance Program (no charge)	001-800-875-070
Social Worker Geilenkirchen:	(0)2451-717-309
Chaplain Geilenkirchen(24 hrs)	(0)2451-632-229
Medical Office (GK)	(0) 254-1717-301
MFS (E) (GK)	(0) 254-1717-500
Others:	
MFSC Kalkar	(0)2824-902-690
Officer Commanding Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel	(0)172-767-5123 (C) /(0)2824-90-2263 (W)
Senior National Rep Uedem	(0)173-741-6904 (C) /(0)2824-978-1534 (W)
Senior National Rep Wesel	(0)171-864-2686 (C) /(0)2812-0609-1036 (W)
Unit CWO	(0)171-862-2808 (C) /(0)2812-0609-1002 (W)

Telephone Dialing to/from a German Telephone Number

German phone numbers are commonly shown as +49 (0) xxx-xxxxxxx. The +49 is the country code, which is dialed as 0049 only when calling the number from within Europe but from outside Germany. The zero in brackets (0) is only dialed if you are calling a German telephone number from within Germany; and in this case you do not need to dial 0049.

Dialing Examples:

German to German Telephone: (0)2824 902262

Europe to German Telephone: 0049 2824 902262

Canada to German Telephone: 011 49 2824 902262 where 011 must be dialed.

Germany to Canadian or US Telephone: 001 (3-digit area code) xxx-xxxx where 001 must be dialed.

Canadian Forces Support Unit (CFSU(E))

Identified in Part 1 to this Newcomers' Guide, Canadians in Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel are considered Remote Personnel (RP). The support unit is located in Niederheid, Geilenkirchen (a.k.a. "Selfkant," "Niederheid," or "GK") and is approximately 125 kms to the south of us. The CFSU(E) street address and website are:

Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe)
Selfkant-Kaserne
Quimperlestraße 100
52511 Geilenkirchen, Germany

Postal Services and Mailing Address

Selfkant provides a postal service to Remote Personnel. All mail addressed from Canada is repackaged and redirected to your German house address or workplace as arranged during in-clearance. The reverse service is also possible, that is, mail intended for Canada is double wrapped with appropriate postage so it can flow through Selfkant. It is your choice but you may wish to consider mailing items direct to/from Canada through the local Deutsche Post or German mail system. Certainly family and friends will want to take advantage of free parcel service offered by Canada Post in the two month period leading to Christmas. The mailing address to receive mail from Canada via Selfkant is:

Rank Surname
RP (Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel)
Canadian Forces Support Unit Selfkant
CFPO Box 5053 Stn Forces
Belleville, ON
K8N 5W6

Or

Name
RP Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel
15 Westwin Ave
Bldg. 348 CFB Trenton
Astra ON K0K 3W0

The Military Family Services Europe (MFSE)

MFSE is also located in Selfkant. As remote personnel you will not receive the same level of support as you might expect from a local MFRC in Canada. They do have a lending library from which travel books and language education tools are available to sign out. Remote personnel also receive a monthly bulletin, "MFS News" by e-mail. You will get more info and a package about MFSE services during your in-clearance.

Local German Bases

The area is served by three German bases (or Kaserne): von Seydlitz and Paulsberg bases just outside the Kalkar and Uedem town sites respectively; and the Schill Kaserne just north of Wesel. Most base services are concentrated on the von Seydlitz Kaserne, specifically the German military MIR¹, dental clinic, tax office and a Day Care Facility. The Multi-national Family Support Centre (MFSC) and a similar agency are located at the von Seydlitz and Schill Kaserne respectively.

The German bases, although quite small by Canadian standards, all offer or provide access to the following messing and sports facilities for use:

- Small gymnasium – gym floor, badminton, volleyball, indoor soccer etc.
- Weight gym with some aerobic machines
- Outdoor soccer fields and running track
- Mess hall – reasonable prices
- Kasino Club – meals and functions

Unique to the Schill Kaserne is a NATEX/CANEX shop (open Mon – Thu 0930-1600hrs and Friday 0930-1330 hrs). The von Seydlitz Kaserne has an American AAFES PX shopette.

International Spouses Clubs

There are two international spouse clubs in the area run via volunteer Executive Committees: the Kalkar Wesel CAOC (KWC) and the Wesel Spouses' Club. They serve to provide a venue for all spouses of military members and the International Civilian Community posted to Kalkar, Uedem and Wesel to socialize, share in the enjoyment of the area, and promote international friendship. Membership is open to all spouses. The programs of the clubs are developed and organized by members. Club members meet at least monthly at a social venue.

You could contact the KWC at kwcpinkletter@gmail.com or the Wesel club at carisa.glavin@gmail.com.

In-Clearances plus Sponsor Responsibilities

Your sponsor is there to assist you with your initial in-clearances and familiarization with the local area. This section will outline what you can expect from your sponsor on arrival. Note that the information provided below is only a general description of the in-clearance process. You will receive an in-clearance card from the CFSU(E) Orderly Room (OR) and your assigned NATO unit detailing all of the stops you must make during your first days on the ground.

Before commencement of your in-clearances, the CFSU(E) OR in Geilenkirchen will have sent you or your sponsor all the documents that must be completed. Filling them out beforehand will speed up the process on your first day. Also, your sponsor will complete the

¹ A bus service is provided from Schill Kaserne to/from Seydlitz Kaserne to obtain Medical assistance runs daily.

form to request your NATO cards for you and your family members through the respective 1 NSB, CAOC or JAPCC OR. The sponsor will then book appointments for you and your family to get the NATEX shopping privilege card at the Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, and for you and your family at the CFSU(E) OR.

In clearance for 1 NSB, you need to make sure you and your family have your NATO cards from 1 NSB prior to going to GK.

In-clearances – The following is a general description of in-clearances during your first few days on ground. Don't worry about figuring out exactly where everything is as your sponsor will arrange your initial appointments.

Day One

You, your family members and your sponsor will head to Geilenkirchen. You will first pick up the paperwork for your NATO ID cards at the main gate, and then apply for your NATEX shopping cards at bldg 80.

After this you will go to the CFSU(E) OR for your pre-arranged appointment (typically 1000hrs). Here you will set up your pay allocation, learn about OUTCAN benefits such as Vacation Travel Allowance, and complete a multitude of other administrative paperwork. This will last approximately 1.5hrs.

At this time you will need to request to book a time to get your US Air Base Schinnen Netherlands access card as that appointment needs to be booked 48 hrs in advance. They will book at the same time an appointment to get your Schinnen shopping privilege (yellow) card; acquired in Brunssum. It is recommended to set up an appointment on Day Three: in the morning to get your shopping card in Brunssum, and then in the afternoon to get your Schinnen base access card. Thereafter scout the American PX shopping facilities at Schinnen.

Day Two

Back to Geilenkirchen to obtain your quota of VAT (tax exemption) forms. The office for this is located on the right just before you go through the main gate to the Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase. You will require your ration card and NATO ID card (acquired Day One) in order to show entitlement for the forms.

You may wish to scout the NATEX facilities located at the Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase. NATEX offers grocery, clothing, alcohol and tobacco, and limited department store products. Near the NATEX facilities is a US AAFES store which has better selection than the Kalkar AAFES facility.

Finally, you will return to CFSU(E) Geilenkirchen to finalize your in-processing.

Day Three

In the morning you will obtain your Schinnen shopping card in Brunssum, and during the afternoon acquire base access cards to Schinnen then visit their BX shopping facilities.

Banking

Affiliations

Some banks in Canada have affiliations with specific German banks, for example Scotiabank has one with the Deutsche Bank. Check with your Canadian bank as such an affiliation tends to minimize fees such as International withdrawal fees when using your debit card in associated ATMs. Your monthly pay (less an amount you designate) is automatically converted to Euros and deposited into your German account. Should you wish to draw and convert additional funds from Canada and your bank is not affiliated, you may wish to investigate third party trading services such as xe.com as an alternative.

Banking Hours

Typical Banking Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Friday: 08:30 – 12:30 and 14:00 – 16:00

Wednesday: 08:30 – 12:30

Thursday: 08:30 – 12:30 and 14:00 – 18:00

ATM machines of course are always open.

Unique ATM Banking

There are generally two and sometimes three different ATM machines: one to withdraw cash (Geld Automat or also Auszahlung); one to pay bills (Überweisungen); and one to obtain a bank account balance (Kontostand). Typically only the cash withdrawal ATM allows language choice. Ask staff for assistance; that is why they are there.

Online Banking

Most banks offer such service often coupled to the requirement to possess a cell phone to allow application of the security protocol; PhotoTan is used for a two factor authentication containing a time-sensitive transaction code. Online banking is very useful for the payment of bills and monitoring of account transactions. A business often sends or provides a bill containing its bank account details to permit direct ATM or online bill payment.

Shops and Services

*** Tip for online browsing. Surf the net using Google Chrome as it has the option to automatically translate web-pages from German to English.

Hours of Operation

Many stores or agencies operate Mon-Fri 09:00 to 17:30 but many smaller, family businesses close for a two-hour lunch break. Many are also only open until 13:00 on Saturdays, and most stores are closed on Sundays. In general, only gas stations and restaurants are open on

Sundays or statutory holidays. If you must shop, the more liberal laws and practice in the Netherlands provide greater access.

Groceries

The main grocery chains in Germany include [Rewe](#), [Edeka](#), [Lidl](#), [Aldi](#) and [Netto](#). There are also many smaller grocers and open air markets.

Hardware/Electronic/Furniture stores

In Canada we have Lowes, Rona and Home Hardware (to name a few) in Germany you will find [Bauhaus](#) and [OBI](#). For the electronic stores similar to Best-Buy you will find [Saturn](#) and [MediaMarkt](#). Look into [IKEA](#), [Höffner](#), [POCO](#) and [Roller](#) for furniture.

Tax-free facilities

Exist locally but are rather limited in choice: a NATEX detachment located at the Schill Kaserne in Wesel (liquor and cigarettes), and an American PX shoppette on the Seydlitz Kaserne in Kalkar (goods similar to a corner store). Of course the American PX in Schinnen you visited during in-clearance has an array of goods, some not available in Germany, as well as North American electronics.

'Surviving Driving': Road Signs and Travel Terms Translated

Many road signs in Germany are similar to Canada, but many are quite different. ***The concept of Priority to the Right must be grasped quickly – ask your sponsor.*** You will complete a written licensing test shortly after arrival; the CFSU(E) Licensing Office provides a driving in Germany booklet and administers the test. If you wish to get a head start, the link, <http://www.gettingaroundgermany.info>, is a thorough German road signs reference. ***Some of the critically important signs found on the German roads that are not common to Canada:***



Pedestrian Crossing - Marks a crosswalk and pedestrians always have the right-of-way.



Priority road - You have the right-of-way at all intersections on this road until cancelled by a "Yield", "Stop", or "End of Priority Road" sign; outside of urban areas, parking is prohibited on this road.



End of Priority Road - You must yield right-of-way (or priority) at all subsequent intersections to traffic approaching from the right.



Priority - You have right-of-way through the next intersection only.



Unmarked intersection ahead - The next intersection is uncontrolled; yield the right-of-way to traffic approaching from the right.



Priority over oncoming traffic - You (white arrow) have the right-of-way over oncoming traffic along the narrow one lane road ahead.



Yield to oncoming traffic - You (red arrow) must give way to oncoming traffic along the narrow one lane road ahead.



End of all restrictions - This sign cancels all previous speed limit and passing restrictions; however, the general speed limit applies. On the Autobahn this means a *recommended* speed limit of 130km/h but no *legal* speed limit. On undivided highways, this generally means a *legal* speed limit of 100km/h.



Entering urban area - Posted at the entrance to a built-up area and indicates that the 50km/h speed limit.

This list of road signs is by no means exhaustive; complete the licensing test soonest.

A Final Note on Speed Limits:

Germany is famous for its unrestricted autobahns, and indeed you will frequently observe people driving in excess of 150km/h on those highways. Enforcement of traffic laws, particularly speeding, is taken seriously; even 6-10 km/h can yield a fine. Well disguised static and mobile traffic cameras are the main means of enforcement. Be **very cognisant** of the speed limit where you are; speed zones change frequently. When in doubt, flow with local traffic.

Right on Red: Right on red is not authorised anywhere in Europe, unless it is indicated otherwise. In Germany you can lose your license for 30 days.

Common Roadside Language

Some common words you will see on signage while travelling throughout Germany is translated in the below table:

English	German	English	German
Entrance (Vehicles)	Einfahrt	Forbidden	Verboten
Exit (Vehicles)	Ausfahrt	Main Train Station	Hauptbahnhof
Entrance (Pedestrians)	Eingang	Airport	Flughafen
Exit (Pedestrians)	Ausgang	Customs	Zoll
City Centre	Zentrum	Departures (tpt)	Abfahrt
2 Highways Intersect	AutobahnKreuz	Arrivals (tpt)	Ankunft
Stop	Halt	Inn	Gasthaus/Gasthof
Left	Links	Vacation Home	Ferienwohnung
Right	Rechts	Room	Zimmer
Middle	Mitte	Adult	Erwachsene
Slowly	Langsam	Children/Child	Kinder/Kind
Detour	Umleitung or (U)	No Smoking	Nicht Rauchen / Rauchen Verboten
Caution	Achtung	Congestion ahead	Staugefahr

Dental Care

Dentist (Zahnarzt)

Military personnel can receive services from the Dental unit in GK or use a German dental clinic in the area. Family members receive services from local German dental clinics (see list at Annex A) and utilise the Canadian Forces Dependents Dental Care Plan to recover expenditures. Dental bills for military personnel should be directed to:

1 Dental Unit Detachment Geilenkirchen
 CFSU(E) Selfkant Kaserne
 Quimperlestr 100
 52511 Geilenkirchen

Billing for family members should be sent to your home address, or you can pay directly on the day of treatment. Use the form from Great West Life and mail it to the address for members posted outside Canada. The insurance company may request you provide a letter from the dentist indicating the duration of your treatment in hours.

Medical Needs

Medical Care

Whether from a General Practitioner (Hausarzt), a specialist, or for tests and hospitalization, medical services are provided via the German medical system. You are considered a privately

insured or funded patient, and as such you can expect timely medical care in Germany. You may see any doctor you like; Annex A to Part 2 of this guide identifies a few who have been used by families and known to speak English. Usually you can get an appointment the same or next day. If you go in person to the doctor's office to make an appointment, he will assume that it is urgent and you may be seen right away.

Military members should have the doctor's office bill GK directly:

Care of Support Service Manager
Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) Selfkant Kaserne
Quimperlestr 100
52511 Geilenkirchen, Germany

Family members will receive a bill in the mail, which you pay at the bank or online. You will be sent two copies of the medical bill; keep one to send to Allianz Global Assistance for reimbursement using the Out-Of-Country Claims form from PSHCP. Mail to:

Allianz Global Assistance
Public Service Health Care Plan
PO Box 880
Waterloo, ON N2J 4C3

IMPORTANT NOTE: Military Members **must sign** all medical forms before being submitted for reimbursement, as spousal signatures will not be accepted. Also, Allianz is very strict about the spelling of dependent names and birth dates on forms. Expect that claims containing even obvious typos will be delayed or denied, so check all paperwork over carefully.

Pharmacy (Apotheke)

A German pharmacy is called an Apotheke; there are numerous throughout the area. Note that unlike a Canadian pharmacy, an Apotheke typically only offers drugs, homeopathic remedies and cosmetics. Military members may fill prescriptions through the GK medical clinic pharmacy, or purchase locally and seek reimbursement.

Member and Family Assistance Services

This is a voluntary, confidential and free service initiated by the Canadian Forces to help members and their families who have personal concerns that may affect their personal wellbeing and/or work performance. This is a short-term, problem solving service. If long-term help or a more specialized service is needed, a referral to an appropriate professional can be made. The program is available to all CF members and their families. Call for a confidential talk 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Number from Europe: 00-800-268-7708 (Toll free)
Or Check it out Online: <https://www.canada.ca> and at CFMAP

Family Information Line

As a family member of a Canadian Forces member, you can contact the Family Information Line (FIL) for any support your family may need as a result of the unique nature of military life. The FIL offers confidential, personal and bilingual assistance. The counsellors can help your family obtain information, and provide reassurance, support and referral to the various services offered to families. On the Family Force website, the FIL counsellors moderate an online forum to help you learn more about the services available, and to receive support.

Number from Europe: 00-800-771-17722 (Toll free)

365 days a year, 24 hours a day. We listen.

Website at: www.cafconnection.ca

Pet Care and Insurance

Pets are much beloved and spoiled here in Germany, which ensures a good number of pet services and products in the area. Dogs are a particular favourite: they are well and formally trained, and are provided virtually unlimited access to public facilities.

Pet Insurance (Tierversicherung)

It is highly recommended you purchase *pet insurance*. In Germany if your pet bite someone, causes damage, or even collides with a vehicle, you will be held liable for any restitution. Pet insurance is very cheap and is available from your house and vehicle insurance provider.

Veterinary Services (Tierarzt)

There are several vet services in the area. Ensure that you have your “pet passport” with the list of vaccinations etc. Many international members have pets so ask around for any recommendations. Below are a list of some that you can contact to determine the best for you and your pets:

Here is one clinic that has been used in Wesel:

Dr. Frans Evers & Dr. Svenja Diste

Handwerkerstrasse 17

46485 Wesel

+49 (0)281 962920

Kennel (Hundepension)

A few dog kennels exist in the area. One used is located just outside the town of Sonsbeck:

H. Hinz

In de Deel 5

47665 Sonsbeck

+49 (0)2838-2244

<https://www.snautz.de>

Tax Exemption in Germany

Most goods and services in Germany are subject to a 19% Value Added Tax (VAT) which is included in the price tag. Referred to as Mehrwertsteuer (Mwt) in German, Canadians can be exempted from this substantial tax with the appropriate paperwork and acceptance of the product or service provider. Two independent options are available to take advantage of this cost saving privilege: one administered by AMSTO/NATEX in GK; and the other administered by the von Seydlitz Kaserne Tax Office in Kalkar. The first allows you to contract directly with the provider or supplier, while the latter requires that the Tax Office act as contracting agent. Ultimately the AMSTO form allows you to immediately pay for the goods or service and walk away with it. The Kalkar form and process does not. Learn more about each from your sponsor during in-clearances. Tax office contact information follows:

AMSTO Tax Office: (0)2451 915 2115 (Ms. Penny Wall, Mgr)

Kalkar Tax Office; (0)2824 90 2692 (Frau Bünnig)

Home/Car Insurance

Renter and vehicle insurance is required in Germany. Insurance provider options are limited at least for vehicles due to our national (Canada) license plates. Two known brokers in Geilenkirchen offer insurance to foreigners with nationally plated vehicles:

Culpeck. Contact Astrid at ar@culpeck.com, (0)2451 71028.

Ericon. Contact Richard at rc@ericon-broker.com (0)2451 910 9450.

Be sure to lock your cars doors, your garage doors and the doors from your house to your garage and don't leave your house keys in the car (even if locked in the garage) to avoid any complications or even voiding claims for burglary.

Discounted Vehicle Fuel

You have no entitlement to discounted fuel until your vehicle(s) are licensed with GK. Two options currently exist to purchase discounted fuel in Germany: Aral or Esso fuel cards. The Aral card is administered by the CFSU(E) Licensing Office, while the Esso card is by the American authority at the Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase. You can only opt to use one of these card options per vehicle. In general, gas stations will be familiar with the cards; however, periodically you may encounter station attendants who refuse them. It is wise to check with the attendant before filling at an unfamiliar location. Make sure you get the written guidelines in German that you can show to the Gas Station attendant. Telephone / Internet / Television

Telephone and internet services

When choosing internet and telephone service, you should consider options to call back to Canada, via phone plane, skype, IP phones, etc. When you need to reach an organization back in Canada it can be expensive otherwise. Also when choosing, keep in mind what band-width

and data plans you will need. Shop around, there are many choices to choose from. Talk to your sponsor.

Television

German digital cable and satellite television subscription services are available, but as you would expect, English content is extremely limited. Another TV service option is to set up your own satellite dish and receiver to obtain free, unencrypted television broadcasts. There are two main satellites that service this area: Astra 1 and Astra 2. Astra 1 provides mainly German channels, but does have some English stations (mainly news). Astra 2, also known as British Freesat, is all English. The free channels, similar in quantity to basic cable back in Canada, include news, drama, sports and family stations. If you are interested in getting British Freesat, then you will need a complete satellite dish, satellite receiver and coaxial cable. This equipment can be bought separately or in bundles for around 200 EUR (more if you have multiple TVs) at major electronic stores such as Media Markt or Saturn. Installation should be done only after consulting with your landlord.

Internet Streaming Video

TV and movies via registered means is perfectly legal over the internet; however, you may find the English language selection of shows to be limited. Virtual Private Network (VPN) services abound which provide opportunity for greater access to programming; consult the internet and know the rules in regards to illegal downloading and streaming.

Household Information

Transformers versus Adaptors

Transformers convert voltage from 220 volts to 110 volts. Adaptors (also referred to as converters) simply allow North American plugs to fit into German sockets, but do not change the voltage. Adaptors are intended for use with electronic devices which are clearly identified as able to accept a 220 volt input; often laptops, cell phone chargers, and other similar power packs can—but check first! Transformers come in different sizes and most importantly have maximum power or wattage ratings which must not be exceeded or you risk a fire. If the maximum wattage is not indicated on a transformer, but the maximum current (expressed in amperes or ‘amps’) is, the wattage can be determined by multiplying the number of amps by 110V.

Water

The tap water in Germany is safe to drink. Water in this area is considered hard water with a grade of 3. This accounts for a considerable amount of calk (lime) in the municipal water system. There is also no fluoride added to German water. Care needs to be taken as a result of the hard water relating to appliances which use water, such as with dishwashers and washing machines. See below.

Dishwasher

Use the “5 in 1” dishwasher tablets, powder or “anti-kalk” tablets to counter calc. In addition, it is very important to add dishwasher salt to the compartment in the base of the dishwasher every one to two months. Do not use regular table salt. You may purchase a box of dishwasher salt crystals (eg: Somat Spezial Salz) in German grocery stores. Use a readily available dishwasher cleaner on an empty cycle every 2-3 months to clear away hard water deposits. A filter in the bottom of the dishwasher needs cleaning periodically.

Washing Machine

Again, due to the high concentration of calc, you should add water softening salt/tablets to your washing machine. This is sold in German grocery stores (for example: Calgon in tablet, powder, or liquid form). Use a washing machine cleaner on an empty cycle every 2-3 months to clear away hard water deposits. A German machine's wash cycle is very long compared due to the fact hot water does not enter the machine directly, but instead cold water enters and is heated in the washing machine. Another difference is that a filter typically located on the front panel must be cleaned a few times a year. Refer to the owner's manual for instructions or Google to download the instructions.

Clothes Dryer

Dryers are smaller than in Canada and take much longer to complete a cycle. Often they do not have an exhaust hose, and therefore you must attach the water outlet pipe to your main water outlet pipe, and/or you must empty the “water drawer.” Also, clean out the main dryer filter every 2-3 months or when drying times have become extended. Suggest newcomers bring/buy a drying rack to dry clothing to prevent shrinking as the dryers here tend to shrink clothing because they are steam dryers and not heat dryers like back home.

Stove/Oven

Many stoves work like a convection oven because there is always a fan blowing. Food generally cooks faster in these ovens. You may have to shorten the cooking time and/or turn down the temperature (indicated in Celsius).

Clothes Iron

Use distilled water in your iron; available from most grocery stores.

Coffee makers and Kettles

Use distilled or tap water. Tap water use will require clean out of coffee makers with a special citrus cleaner such as “BIO – ENTKALKER” made by Heidrun. Kettles clean well with vinegar.

Heat Radiators

Most houses are heated using hot water radiators in each room which are operated individually vice centrally. If you hear a lot of excess water “tinkling” from a radiator or if it seems to be throwing less heat than normal, it is time to let some air out of the radiator line. Contact you landlord to remedy and/or to show you how to do this.

House Airflow

Airing out your house regularly is a necessity to preclude unwanted mould and mildew; German homes do not have forced air furnaces, and so, little air exchange.

House Exterior, Driveway and Yard

You are responsible for upkeep or cleaning, not your landlord. Review your lease contract. Germany is very strict about cleanliness and people very proudly tend to their property, meaning you are expected to do the same, some members are able to add gardening, trimming and pruning as the landlords responsibility in their contract.

Milling About the Yard on Sundays

Sunday is a strictly held day of rest. Do not mow your lawn, hang washing out or make excessive noise on Sundays. If you wish to test how seriously this day is held, set aside some funds.

Washing Car Not Permitted

Washing your car on the street, in your driveway or yard is not permitted in most areas by environmental law. There are many car washes in the area that must be used. Application of the law is strict and fines are significant, verify with your local regulations.

Barbeques and Propane Tanks

BBQ'ing is quite popular. An adaptor to allow a European tank to work with your Canadian BBQ is available, or you can have the connector modified. Or if you wish, you can buy a Canadian tank at the NATEX gas station in GK.

Door Latches

House exterior doors have a lock system which locks on closure. Beware as you step out to check the mailbox, only to discover the door has shut. You may wish to consider leaving a house key with another Canadian in the area in the event you accidentally lock yourself out. Some doors are equipped with a lever in the doorframe which allows the door to operate like in Canada.

Bicycles

Paths

The Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel and even the Düsseldorf area is located along the Rhein River, with bike paths virtually alongside every road. With the winter conditions limited to typically a couple weeks of light snow, people commonly bike year-round.

Signage

Within urban areas, bike lanes are commonly marked by a **RED** sidewalk lane and are not intended for pedestrians. As this is not the case in all areas, some of the common signs intended to help control the flow and safety of bikers and pedestrians are:



Pedestrian and Bicycle Path - Pedestrians and bicycles only; both can use the entire pathway.



Split Pedestrian and Bicycle Path - Pedestrians and bicycles only; pedestrians and cyclists must keep to the side of the path indicated by the sign.

Mandatory Bike Equipment

The following is required:

- Bell/Horn: For acoustic warning. German pathways can be congested at times.
- Lights: Non-blinking front headlamp (white or pale in color) and a red tail light that stays lit when stationary.
- Reflectors: One front (white), one rear (red), and 2 per wheel (yellow).
- Helmets: Required for children less than 13 years of age.

Hand Signals Variation

There is a slight variation to signaling a 'turn' while riding in Germany compared to Canada. Left turns are designated by extending the left arm to the left and Right turns are designated by extending the right arm to the right. Stopping is designated in the same manner with the arm extended and the forearm pointed to the ground.

Road Safety and Impairment

It is illegal to ride a bike while impaired. **Violations include the loss of your motor vehicle license.** Bicycles as vehicles of the road are subject to the law.

Garbage and Recycling

Recycling is taken very seriously in Germany and you can be fined if you do not properly do so. Garbage and recycling receptacles are provided by your property owner. Garbage pickup schedules can be found at (note that Bezirk means borough or area that you are in):

Wesel: <http://www.asg-wesel.de/>

Dusseldorf: <http://www.muellmax.de/>

Krefeld: <http://www.gsak.de/abfuhr-termine/>

Goch/Kalkar/Uedem and area: <http://www.kkagmbh.de/termine/termine1.html>

The various containers are identified below with what can and cannot be recycled therein:

The Grey/Black container is for waste that cannot be recycled (garbage). Cooked foods, bones, sanitary napkins, diapers, light bulbs, ceramics, porcelain, mirrors, cold ashes, soiled or wet paper, wallpaper and carpeting, toys, audio and video cassettes. Items that do NOT go in the grey/black container: energy saving bulbs, construction and electrical waste, or clothes.

The Brown container is for compostable/biodegradable material. You may have to buy green 'Abfallbeutel' bags at the grocery store, depending on the type of bin provided. You may dispose of: garden waste, flowerpot soil, cut grass, weeds, stems, cut flowers, kitchen food waste, coffee/tea filters, and cellulose cloths. Do NOT dispose of: meat, bones, diapers, vacuum cleaner bags, pet litter, ashes, dirt, newspapers, books, cardboard, and medicines.

The Green container is for paper and cardboard products. Items that do NOT go in the green container: carbon-paper, hankies, diapers, soiled/wet paper, wallpaper, milk/juice cartons.

The Yellow container is for plastic, Styrofoam and metals. If no yellow container is available in your area, you may have to buy rolls of yellow bags at the local grocery store. Items that go in the yellow bags are: commercial packaging made from: tin/aluminium, plastic or foam, composite material (milk cartons, juice cartons, and vacuum packing). Clean items and leave loose. Items that do NOT go in: electrical waste, pots, pans, cycle parts, toys, plastic bowls/baskets, soiled films (saran wrap). Verify with CE in GK about the possibility to obtain bags.

Glass containers: You need to separate white (i.e. clear), brown and green glass into their respective containers. In some areas you may need to use a neighbourhood drop point. Check your local regulations.

Other Items: Material like metal, paint, motor oil, wood, hydraulic oil, furniture and appliances must go to the Recycling Yard/Hof. Check your area website for the location.

Special Collection: Hazardous materials will be accepted for collection on specific days; check your calendar (links above) for your area. They will normally take pesticides, acids, lye and chemicals, oil filters, paint, antifreeze, car batteries, expired medications, spray cans, etc.

Many neighbourhoods also have public collection bins for “altkleider” (old clothes and shoes) and glass bottles (one each for green, brown and white glass recycling). It is worthwhile taking note of where the closest one to your house is located.

Final Word

This guide is by no means comprehensive or authoritative; **consult your sponsor**.

Good luck with your move, and welcome to Germany!

Doctors, Hospitals and Specialists

Most doctor's offices are open at 8:30 am. They are closed for lunch and the afternoon and open between 15 – 1600 hours until 18 -1900 hours.

German Hospitals

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Evangelisches Krankenhaus Wesel	Schermbecker Landstraße 88 46485 Wesel	(0) 281 106 2999	www.evkwesel.de
Marien-Hospital	Pastor-Janssen-Strasse 8 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 1040	http://www.marien-hospital-wesel.de
Wilhelm-Anton-Hospital	Vobbeider Straße 214 47574 Goch	(0) 2823 8910	https://www.kkle.de/klinikum/wilhelm-anton-hospital
Sankt Willibrord-Spital Emmerich-Rees	Willibrordstraße 9 46446 Emmerich am Rhein	(0) 2822 730	www.willibrord.de
St. Antonius-Hospital	Hagsche Poort 25 47533 Kleve	(0) 2821 7133958	kkikk.de
Sankt Josef Hospital	In der Hees 4 46509 Xanten	(0) 2801 7100	sankt-josef-hospital.de

Family Doctors / Hausartz

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Eckholt	Grosser Markt 2 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 25049	www.praxis-eckholt.com
Dr. Nina Saathoff	Lübecker Straße 24 46485 Wesel	(0) 281 1633919	Monday - Friday 08:30 - 11:30 Monday 16:00 - 20:00 Thursday 16:00 - 1800 Saturday/Sunday Closed
Dr. Karl-Heinz Krause	Gartenstrasse 4 47574 Goch	(0) 2823 2525	krause-goch.de/
Dr. Sarah Bremer	Florastraße 5 46459 Rees	(0) 285 191 550	www.doctorees.de

SPECIALISTS

Ob / Gyn / Frauenartz:

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Philippe Deblieck	Ev. Krankenhaus Wesel Schermbecker Landstraße 88 46485 Wesel	(0) 281 23626	www.evkwesel.de
Dr. Dorothee Schonfelder	Klosterstege 10 47545 Kalkar	(0) 2824 4735	
Dr. Susanne Krebber	2-4 Goldstrasse 47533 Kleve	(0) 2821 975754	www.gyn-kleve.de

Pediatrician / Kinderarzt:			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Soemantri Peter Andoko, Dr med Kinderarzt	Kapellenstrasse 27 47533 Kleve	(0) 2821 13036	
Dr. Nehlsen Bjoern	Luisenstrasse 11 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 24227	
Orthopedic Surgeon / Orthopaede			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Praxis Michael von Abercron	Berliner-Tor-Platz 1A 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 16 44 69 0	www.orthopaediezentrum-wesel.de
Dr. med. Hans-Reiner Schwemm	Altkalkarer Strasse 19 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 3001	
Chiropractor			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Hans Werner Schreiber	Julius-Leber-Strasse 8 46485 Wesel	(0) 281 1644710	www.dr-schreiber-wesel.de
Dr. Med. Matthias Vollmar	Douvermanstege 8 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 2522	
Ear, Nose and Throat / HNO-Arzt (Otolaryngologist)			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr.Peisert und Dr. Van Bebber	Hohe Straße 27 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 21226	
Bleckmann Lothar Dr. HNO	Bruecktor 2 47533 Kleve	(0) 2821 20620	www.hno-drbleckmann.de
Optomologist / Augenarzt			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Erbe Manfred Dr. med.	Brueckstrasse 19 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 22099	
Dr. med Frank Toonen	Altkalkar Strasse 22 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 977787	
Physiotherapy			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Ulrike Ridder	Hansaring 9 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 1636690	www.physiotherapie-ridder.de
Mariet Johannes Krankengymnastik Physiotherapie	Grabenstrasse 36 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 962936	

RADIOLOGY CLINICS (XRays, Ultrasound, Mammography)			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. med. Bernhard Sachse-Heusser	Evangelisches Krankenhaus Wesel Schermbecker Landstraße 88 46485 Wesel	(0) 281 1062519	
Dr. med Rainer Weidner	Karl-Leisner-Strasse 2 46533 Kleve	(0) 2821 77880	www.radiologie-kleve.de
Zahnarzt Praxis Berdi	Douvermannstege 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 976788	hypnose-zahnarzt.info
Dental Surgeon / Zahnklinik			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dostmann Klaus Werner Zahnarzt	Gocher Strasse 17 47546 Kalkar	(0)2824 5255	
Finck Karsten Dr. Zahnarzt	Kaiserring 20 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 25949	
Dr. Erling Burk	Kreuzstrasse 5 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 26982	www.dr-burk.de
Orthodontists / Kieferorthopaeden			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. med. Dent. Jasmin Kessler und Marie Christine Van Doren	Luisenstrasse 21 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 25000	www.kfoteam-wesel.de
Dr. Med. Dent Theodor Paessens	Monrestrasse 70 47546 Kalkar	(0) 2824 4155	www.dr-paessens.de
Dermatologist/Hautarzt			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Fuchs & Dr. Mader	Dimmerstraße 2-4 46483 Wesel	(0) 281 16 48 44 40	www.hautarzt-wesel.de

Doctors, Hospitals and Specialists

Most doctor's offices are open at 8:30 am. They are closed for lunch and the afternoon and open between 15 – 1600 hours until 18 -1900 hours.

German Hospitals

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Kaiserswerther Diakonie Hospital	Kreuzberg strasse 79 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 4090	Hospital has no Eye or ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) department for these emergencies please go to :
St. Martinus Krankenhaus	Gladbacher strasse 26 40219 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 9170	Hospital for Eye emergencies
Evangelisches Krankenhaus	Kirchfeld strasse 40 40217 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 9190	Hospital for ENT emergencies

General Doctor/ Family Doctors / Hausartz

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Dennemann/Dr. Bui	Niederrheinstraße 372 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 402202	www.praxis-dennemann-winkelmann.de
Dr. Neubauer & Dr. Herfort	Fliednerstrasse 7 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 403132	www.praxis-neubaur-herfort.de

SPECIALISTS

Ob / Gyn / Frauenartz:

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Coenen & Colleagues	Im Klemsviertel Am Kreuzberg 3 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 1799850	www.frauenaerzte-kaiserswerth.de

Pediatrician / Kinderarzt:

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Stephan Kollmann	Duisburger Landstrasse 39 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 4371567	www.praxis-kollmann.de
Dr. Wirtz-Gerlach	Kittelbach strasse 11 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 5180880	www.kinderaerzteuesseldorf.de
Dr. Susanne Kluger	Einbrunger strasse 66 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 5287050	www.kinderarztpraxis-kluger.de Private health insurance only
Dr. Von Lilien Waldau	Klemensplatz 10 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 98439793	Private health insurance only

Orthopedic Surgeon / Orthopaede

Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Kluger	Ikarus strasse 24 40474 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 9848440	www.orthopraxis-duesseldorf.de Private health insurance only
Dr. Arlt & Colleagues	Einbrunger strasse 66 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 9133 6820	www.one-duesseldorf.de

Ear, Nose and Throat / HNO-Arzt (Otolaryngologist)			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Eva Klasen	Kaiserswerther Markt 38 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 400840	www.hno-klasens-miebach.de
Dr. Korbmacher	Klemensplatz 7 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 41559490	www.hno-kaiserswerth.de Private health insurance only
Ophthalmologist / Augenarzt			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Ameye	Kaiserswerther Markt 20 2040489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 4790648	
Dentist			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Büttner	Kaiserswerther markt 38 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 4080960	www.zahn-experten.de
Orthodontists / Kieferorthopaeden			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr. Malcolm Goteni	Grafenberger Allee 57 40237 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 689560	www.international-orthodontist.de
Dermatologist/Hautarzt			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours/Notes
Dr Klein	Kreuzbergstraße 79 40489 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 409 3606	
Dr Bell	Stifts Gasse 3 40878 Düsseldorf	(0) 211 4962174	Private health insurance only

Part 3: Time to Explore Your New Home Culture

Introduction

The intent of this Part 3 is to provide members with a basic understanding of some of the services and adventures that are available now that you are settled into your new home and job. There are many spectacular things to do and see, not only in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area, but also throughout Europe and more.

This is your document and everyone in the region will benefit from continuous updates. The OPI for this volume is the CAN SNR at CAOC Uedem. Please pass lessons learned, new websites, updates to old websites and of course new experiences/adventures that everyone can explore.

Do not limit yourself to just the sources in this guide. The internet is a great source of information but so are your NATO colleagues. They can provide information about their home stations and areas that may be difficult to find elsewhere. Nothing beats insider knowledge on places to visit and you will see/do things that the average tourist can't even imagine. Enjoy your new post!!

It is recommended that you review the Newcomer's Guide Part 2. To avoid duplication, many of the resources mentioned in that guide are not included in this one. If you have misplaced your copy, contact the RSM or the SNR of Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel.

Language Courses

Perhaps the best way to take your German skills to the next level is to take evening classes. The Hochschule (literal translation; "College") in Goch, Kleve and Wesel have evening classes. There are lessons tailored to various degrees from the very beginner to more advanced levels.

<https://www.vhs-goch.de/>

Contact the MFS(E) for more information on the different language course options that are available to dependants. Additionally, military members are entitled to use the "European Fund Grant" towards any language classes, amongst other approved uses. See the website for more information on Rosetta Stone and Duolingo.

Military Family Services Europe = <https://www.cafconnection.ca>

Neighbourhood Life

Neighbourhood life is a bit different in Germany than you find in Canada. That doesn't mean that you have to lock yourself in your home and not visit those around you. They enjoy much of the same things as we do in Canada. As you would back home, it is customary to introduce yourself to as many people around your home as you feel comfortable. The rural life (or smaller town) has many advantages.

Here are some common practices that you may see over your tour in Germany:

- a. The mail-person may deliver packages for your neighbours to your door, or vice-versa if there is no one home. This is common in the region, although they will not make you sign for someone else's mail. If there is a signature required they will take the mail to the post station, unless you have a specific arrangement with your neighbour(s) to sign for each other's mail.
- b. There are many festivals and holidays in Germany throughout the year. Often there will be neighbourhood parties and gatherings. Soccer fans will also have BBQ's and social events in their homes. It is a common courtesy to inform your neighbours if you plan on a party of some sort and even pass on an invite. They normally will do the same for you.
- c. Sunday is a day of rest in many areas. Therefore it is not recommended to do things such as mow the lawn, wash your car or do other yard/home tasks. Of course what you do inside your home is your own business just don't do things outside. There is limited to no shopping on Sunday although there is a rotating day for each area that some of the shops are open. If in doubt, do what your neighbours do or ask them what the local customs are. Across the border, in the Netherlands, there are some wonderful towns to explore: Siebengewald near Goch and Roermond near Düsseldorf just to name a couple.

Communities throughout the area have various events. They are not limited to 'locals only' so feel free to invite friends to enjoy the events your community has to offer. These include, but are not limited to, St. Martin's day parade, Oktoberfests, local markets and Volks Marches. The best way to find out about these events is to register with your local community center and/or your nearest tourist information center. Do not register with the local city hall; this could result in taxes being levied against you and will require de-registration with explanation/assistance from the AJAG. They will provide newsletters and leaflets for various events throughout the year. These events are also a great opportunity to get out and practice your new Germany language skills.

Most of the towns and villages in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area have local markets for food and other goods. You'll find nearly everything you need directly from local farmer's fields rather from the big supermarkets (although they tend to source their stock from local farmers as well). Many areas also have markets in the town centres. Schedules can be found at the community centres or on the town/village websites. Some markets that are in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel areas are:

- a. Bauernmarkt Lindchen - <http://www.bauernmarkt-lindchen.de>;
- b. Flea Market (Trödel Markt) Cuijik, Netherlands - <http://www.vrijemarkt.nl>
- c. Fish Plaza Siebengewald - <https://fish-plaza.com/>

Sports

Note: If you can avoid giving your banking information to local clubs, you will be better off. Cash payments or a one-time transaction will be easier for you as NATO members. All clubs require a 3-month notice of leaving to avoid future charges (hence why you shouldn't give your bank info for monthly payments if possible).

Hockey

There are not any local minor hockey teams in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area. The two nearest locations that provide minor hockey teams from Under 8 (U8) all the way to Under 18 (U18) are Nijmegen, Netherlands and Krefeld, Germany. Nijmegen is 35km from Kleve while Krefeld is 70km. Both are options although neither offers exclusive English teams. Most of the coaching staff speak some English. Both cities offer entertaining games to watch that are comparable to junior level if you prefer to watch rather than play.

<http://nijmegendevils.nl>

<https://www.krefeld-pinguine.de/>

Soccer

Every community normally has several soccer teams. The best way is to visit the local community centre to determine the best team for you. There are teams for all ages and skill levels. Normally they are only in German, but many of the players do speak English.

Tennis

Tennis is a popular sport in Germany and Netherlands. There are clubs in many areas. One that offers English services is:

Huissen, Netherlands (near Arnhem International School) - <http://www.tvhuissen.nl>

Volleyball

Volleyball is not quite as popular as some of the other sports in Germany. There are however local clubs in most towns. One located in Bedburg Hau (near Kleve) is:

<http://www.svb-volleyball.de>

Triathlon

Triathlon is very popular in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area. There are numerous triathlon events throughout the summer and are very well advertised. They range from events with

indoor pools, outdoor pools and local lakes. Kleve and Goch both have well developed teams and training events. The Kleve team, for example, has an annual one-week training event in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. PSP may have a list of local teams however the gyms mentioned in the following section normally have teams of their own for various skill levels (beginner to iron-man).

Swimming

Most pools in the area have associated swimming clubs. Your best bet is to either check the websites for club information or visit the individual facilities and inquire about swimming clubs. The website in the following section is very helpful to locate pools and swimming clubs throughout Germany and Netherlands.

- a. Stern Busch Bad aquatic facility <http://sternbuschbad.de/>

Golf

Golf is popular in Germany. There are three main clubs in Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area that offer non-member golfing. They are:

- a. Scholß Moyland - <http://golfinternationalmoyland.de/>
- b. Mühlenhof Golf and Country Club - <https://muehlenhof.net/golf/club/>
- c. Bruckmannshof Golf Club - <http://www.gcbruckmannshof.de/>

Cycling

This area is extremely cyclist friendly. There are separate paths for bicycles throughout the area extending well into the Netherlands. Both road cycling and mountain biking are popular in the region. Most GPS systems have local trails in their database. There are also tours offered throughout Europe if you want to try something different. Some resources:

- a. <http://www.cycletourist.com>
- b. <http://www.cyclebreaks.com>

Skiing/Hiking

There are several indoor and beginner level ski areas near Kalkar/Kleve. If you want to visit areas that are similar to Western Canada and Quebec, you'll have to travel south to Bavaria, Austria and Italy. PSP has details on resorts and tours as well as equipment rentals.

Local Gyms and Fitness Facilities

The local areas are very well set up for fitness activities. This includes an extensive cycling network of road paths and off-road paths. One can get almost anywhere in the region via bicycle. This network extends into the Netherlands, which is known as one of the most

bicycle friendly nations in the world. There are numerous gyms, tennis clubs, golf courses in the region.

Depending on where you work (JAPCC, CAOC Uedem or 1 NSB Wesel) fitness facilities may be limited. If you choose to buy a membership in your local area, the fee is partially covered by the European Grant Fund.² There are some facilities that have special prices for NATO members and their families:

- a. Physio Sport (Goch-Pfalzdorf) – <http://www.physio-sport.de/>
- b. Mega Sport (Goch) - <http://www.mon.de/nr/mega-sports>
- c. Allround Sports (Kleve) - <http://www.allround-sports.de>
- d. Funsport Goch - <https://www.funsports-fitness.de/fun-sports-goch>

Other local fitness facilities:

- a. Gochness Waterpark (Goch) – <http://www.gochness.de>
- b. Embricana Pool/Spa (Emmerich) – <http://www.embricana.de>
- c. BedburgerNass (Bedburg-Hau/Kleve) - <http://www.bedburgernass.de>

A useful website for pools and outdoor swimming areas and swim clubs (lakes etc.) throughout Germany is: <http://www.schwimmbadcheck.de/en/>

In addition there are occasional fitness classes run by NATO spouses such as Zumba and Yoga. Details for these classes are normally advertised through the MFSC (Kalkar) or the registry of your unit. They are also advertised through the KWC (Kalkar, Wesel, CAOC club) on Facebook if you choose to be a part of the club and receive notices of local events, tours and festivals.

Local Attractions and Events

English Movies

There are several movie theatres throughout the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area that offer English language movies. Look for the movies that have (OV) for *Original Version* in the title. Unfortunately there are not any that offer movies in French language unless the original version is such. The list below is a few of the ones nearby:

- a. Tichelpark 5 – Kleve (Thursday evenings only for English) <http://www.kleverkinos.de>
- b. Vue Arnhem – Arnhem, Netherlands - <https://www.vuecinemas.nl/>
- c. Vue Nijmegen Walstraat – Nijmegen, Netherlands - <https://www.vuecinemas.nl/>
- d. Vue Nijmegen Square – Nijmegen, Netherlands - <https://www.vuecinemas.nl>

² The amount spent on a fitness facility comes from the total grant for all activities. The amount is subject to change through the European Fund Working Group. Check with PSP in GK for up to date grants.

Local Attractions

The Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area has many local attractions and events; too many to list all of them here. A partial list (to get you started):

- a. Kalkar Wonderland - <https://www.wunderlandkalkar.eu/en>
- b. Kloster Graefenthal (dinners, medieval events) - <http://www.kloster-graefenthal.de>
- c. Xantan Archäologischer Park (events & festivals) - [LVR-Archaeological Park Xanten](http://www.lvr-archaeological-park-xanten.de)
- d. GPN Grand Prix Niederhein (go cart track) – <http://www.kartbahn-weeze.de>
- e. Netherlands Open Air Museum (Openluchtmuseum) - [Netherlands Open Air Museum](http://www.openairmuseum.nl)
- f. Irrland Farm Adventure Oasis - <http://www.irrland.de/en/anfahrt.php>
- g. Sonsbeek Park (Arnhem, Netherlands) – <http://www.parksonsbeek.nl>
- h. Burger Zoo (Arnhem, Netherlands) – <http://www.burgerszoo.com>
- i. Hoge Veluwe (Arnhem, Netherlands) – <https://www.hogeveluwe.nl/en>
- j. Spoorwegmuseum (Utrecht, Netherlands) <http://www.spoorwegmuseum.nl>
- k. Keukenhof (Near Amsterdam, Netherlands) – <http://www.holland.com>
- l. Dolfinarium (Harderwijk, Netherlands) - <http://www.dolfinarium.nl/>

There are also numerous WWI and WWII related museums, parks and cemeteries throughout the region. The Kleve/Goch/Nijmegen/Arnhem area was one of the many areas in Europe that Canada played a pivotal role.

- a. Canadian Battlefields - <http://www.canadianbattlefields.ca>
- b. Traces of War - <https://www.tracesofwar.com/>
- c. Commonwealth War Graves Commission – www.cwgc.org

Oktoberfest

Oktoberfest is celebrated throughout Germany. It is an annual festival that is primarily centred around Munich, Bavaria region. There are also many events in the Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel area for Oktoberfest. A website to find a location and date for a particular festival is: www.oktoberfest.de Xantan has a substantial Oktoberfest that runs every weekend throughout the month of October. These two particular festivals are very popular and you will need to plan months ahead to secure tickets and accommodation if you wish to attend in Xanten and Munich. There are also many other local smaller Oktoberfest events in Goch, Kleve, and other local towns. You may need tickets for these as well, but generally you don't have to book many months ahead as you will for Munich and Xanten.

Note: – Bavarian dress is strongly encouraged so you can fully enjoy the full spirit of the event!

Christmas Markets

There is a wonderful tradition of Christmas markets throughout Germany. You have to experience it once to appreciate it. Around Christmas time, there are markets all over Germany but they are not all equal. In our immediate region there is a wonderful Christmas market at Schloss Moyland (a few km between Kalkar and Kleve). The cities of Köln (Cologne) and Münster also have beautiful Christmas markets. CFSU provides a comprehensive list of Christmas Markets every fall in addition to lists provided by unit registries and MFSC Kalkar. For other Christmas markets throughout Germany:

- a. <http://www.christmasmarketsgermany.com>.
- b. <http://www.christmasmarkets.com>

The Christmas market in Valkenburg, Netherlands is particularly worth visiting. It is located in an underground cave.

<http://www.christmasmarkets.com/Holland/valkenburg-christmas-market.html>

St. Martin's Day Festival

This festival dates back to the Roman times when a Roman legion commander helped a poor local by providing parts of his cape for warmth. It is celebrated in the local villages with parades and events for children. The festivals are normally advertised locally but your unit registry may have more information.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Martin%27s_Day

NATO Family Events

There are many NATO events in the region however most of them are centred around the Kalkar, Kleve and Goch areas.

International Night (Kalkar Von-Seydlitz Kaserne)

This is an annual event that takes place around mid-September. All of the local military communities in the Uedem-Kalkar-Goch triangle put on a most wonderful event, usually the highlight of the year. On that evening, each and every nation that is represented locally (there are military representatives and families from 18 different nations living and working in the local area) offer food and drinks typical of the home country. This is a casual family event but be aware, there will be a plentiful supply of alcoholic drinks.

United Kingdom Hosted Events

For the past several years, the UK contingent in the area host several formal functions. These events range from mess dinners to commonwealth ceremonies and family barbeques. One of the highlight events has been a formal dining in at the Kloster Graefenthal. The function has been held at the 400 year old monastery located on the outskirts of Goch. These functions are open to all NATO members and their families. There are many other smaller functions that are held at the UK Community Centre (UKCC) located in Goch. These events are advertised at the units in addition to the NATO Kalkar & Uedem Facebook group. Canadians are encouraged to become associate members of the UKCC for a nominal fee.

Canadian Events

Although Canada does not host any events for the NATO community, we do try to hold social functions so we can get together as a nation and enjoy a family setting. The intent is to have one at least every 3 months and the hosts volunteer if they desire. Some units have a heavy deployment schedule and cannot attend all of them but families are welcome to attend without the member. Each event is hosted at a different location so no one area is burdened

with travel. If you are interested in hosting a Canadian social gathering contact the RSM, SNR or CO.

Other National Events

Other nations in the area also hold various social events open to the NATO community. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. USA 4th of July and Cinco de Mayo
- b. Romanian Independence Celebration
- c. Netherlands Kings Day and Liberation Day
- d. UK Battle of Britain
- e. German Carnival

Information on these events are advertised at the local unit registries and the NATO Kalkar & Uedem Facebook group and in the 'Kalkar –Wesel-CAOC Pink Newsletter'.

Local Clubs

Kalkar Wesel CAOC (KWC) Spouses Club (see part 2)

Wesel Spouses Club (see part 2)

Vacations & Travel

The travel opportunities in Europe are nearly limitless. One important note about travel and the need for Visas is that some countries do require Visas in order to allow Canadians to enter the country. It is highly encouraged not to book flight tickets before having a proper travel visa granted for the country you intend to visit.

There are several major airports near Kalkar/Uedem/Wesel that offer travel throughout Europe and other international destinations. There are regional airlines as well as major ones that will suit most of your travel needs. The airports nearby are:

- a. Dusseldorf /Weeze
- b. Dusseldorf International
- c. Schiphol International (Amsterdam)
- d. Eindhoven International

Your NATO colleagues are a great source for travel methods. Many of them travel to work and their families stay in their home countries. Some useful websites to book airline travel:

- a. <http://www.skyscanner.de>
- b. <http://www.cheapflights.com>
- c. <http://www.expedia.ca> or <http://www.expedia.ie> (for prices in Euro)

Travel by rail is also an excellent opportunity to see Europe. Nearly every town/village has a train station that will bring you to a major centre from where you can travel all over Europe. You can bring bicycles on many trains if you are looking for a method to get to some new bike trails. There are overnight trains for longer journeys and even trains that you can load your car on to get you closer to your destination rather than drive the whole way (autozug)..

https://www.bahn.de/p_en/view/index.shtml

Vacation home rentals are very easy to book and access all over Europe. They range from 1 or 2 nights up to weeks/months if you choose. These rental properties tend to be considerably less expensive than hotels. Two main websites to find and book these rental properties are listed below. The third site is primarily for hotels in Europe.

- a. <http://www.airbnb.com>
- b. <http://www.vrbo.com>
- c. <http://www.booking.com>

If you have the CFIFC card and know about CF Appreciation (<https://www.cfappreciation.ca>) you have access to the following websites for deals on hotel accommodations around Europe.

<https://www.govvacationrewards.com> = gives different deals on hotels, cars, cruise, resorts etc.

<https://www.afvclub.ca> = Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) is free to all members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Explore rental options in destinations worldwide, including \$349 usd weeklong Space-A stays.

<http://www.dodlodging.net> = A web-site for accommodations on US bases, either Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps around the world. (if you don't mind sleeping on base). (phone and confirm you are allowed to stay before reserving anything, you will need to have a US installation green card with the mention of USAREUR/USAFE-Wide authorization. (US Army Europe and US Air Force Europe))

MFSE / PSP Support

Please See Annex B for a list of services provided by Military Family Services Europe.

You could also visit their web-site for the most up to date information.

<https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Home.aspx>

CFSU(E) Chalet Program

CFSU(E) Chalet Program – each year chalets are available for rent through the PSP office in GK. When you clear in, PSP office in GK will add you to their mailing list so you can bid for

weekly rentals in the summer and winter seasons in chalets/apartments at vacation spots throughout Europe at a subsidized price. For more details use the link: [Chalet Program - CAFconnection](#)

Vehicle Maintenance

In general terms, the cost for vehicle repairs and maintenance done locally is more expensive than Canada. Depending on your vehicle, there are many dealerships locally that represent major car manufacturers (i.e. Nissan, Toyota, BMW, etc). As well, for other models, local mechanics can generally handle most vehicle makes, even those with North American Standards.

It is widely accepted that for oil changes, you can supply the oil and filter and just pay for the labor to do the oil change at most garages. This will save you significant cost, especially if you can purchase the oil and filters at a duty free shop at places like the NATO base in Geilenkirchen or Base Exchanges in Shinnen and Ramstein.

You could find some oil change stations around the area similar to Mr Lube in Canada (at somewhat reasonable prices) Mac-Oil <https://www.mac-oil.de/> is just one example.

Vehicle inspections (sometimes known as **TÜV**) are required for most vehicles, and these can be done at most local garages. Check with the CFSU(E) traffic section to determine what the requirements for your vehicle are. Normally the TÜV is valid for two years, while an inspection at the NATEX Garage at the GK Airbase is valid for one year.

One recommended garage that deals with NATO people all the time and will accept the VAT tax exemption forms is located in Goch at the following address and web site. The owners speak English and are fair to deal with.

Auto Guenther & Lamers GbR, Hervorster Straße 103, Goch - <http://www.auto-guenther-lamers.de/index.html>

The installation of snow tires is obligatory in Germany, most German motorists have long known the old rule of thumb for putting snow tires on the car: “von O bis O.” The term “from O to O” is short for “from October to Easter” (*von Oktober bis Ostern*)

Other useful links

Canadian Forces in Europe main page - <https://www.cafconnection.ca/Europe/Home.aspx>

NATO Uedem & Kalkar Facebook group – must be invited by a current member. A great resource for local events and help from other NATO families. There are also discussions on many aspects of living in Germany from a non-Germany perspective.

Journey-to-Germany - <http://www.journey-to-germany.com>

How to Germany - <http://www.howtogermy.com>

Guide Improvement: Any feedback or suggestions for improvement based on your own experiences are welcomed. Provide them through/to your respective Canadian leadership at Joint Air Power Competence Centre Kalkar, Combined Air Operations Centre Uedem or 1 NATO Signal Battalion Wesel.