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I Wish I Would Have Known...
EUROPE

Relocation Readiness
Army Community Service
9810 Lee Road
Fort Jackson, SC 29207

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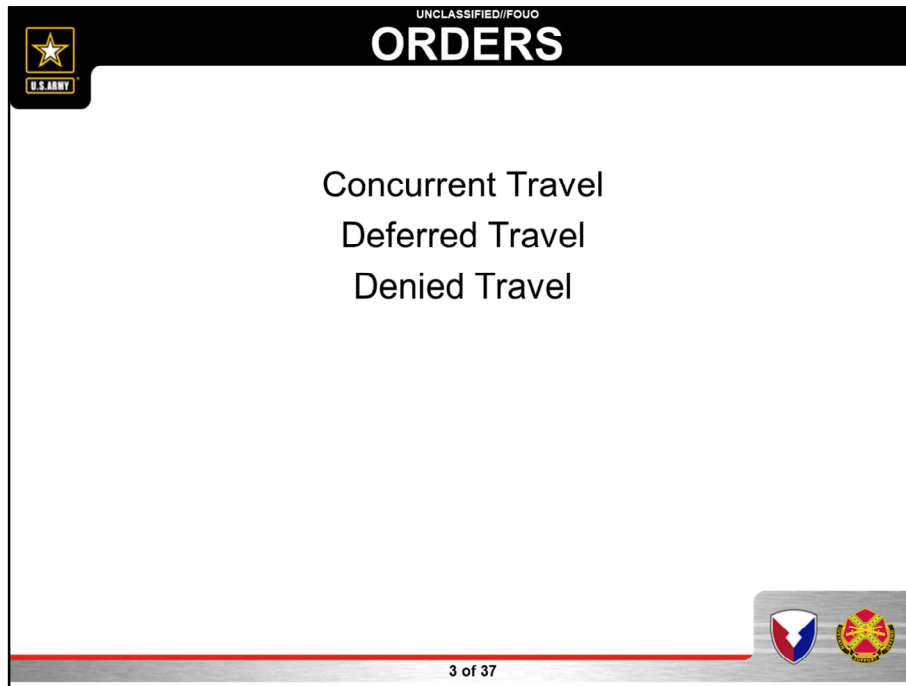
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IN A NUTSHELL

- What It's Like Over There
- What to Bring and What Not to Bring
- What type of Documents and Licenses are Required
- Schools
- Employment for Spouses
- Financial Preparedness
- Traveling Overseas With Pets
- Driving In Europe
- Schedules, Language and Culture
- Housing and Utilities
- Information Resources

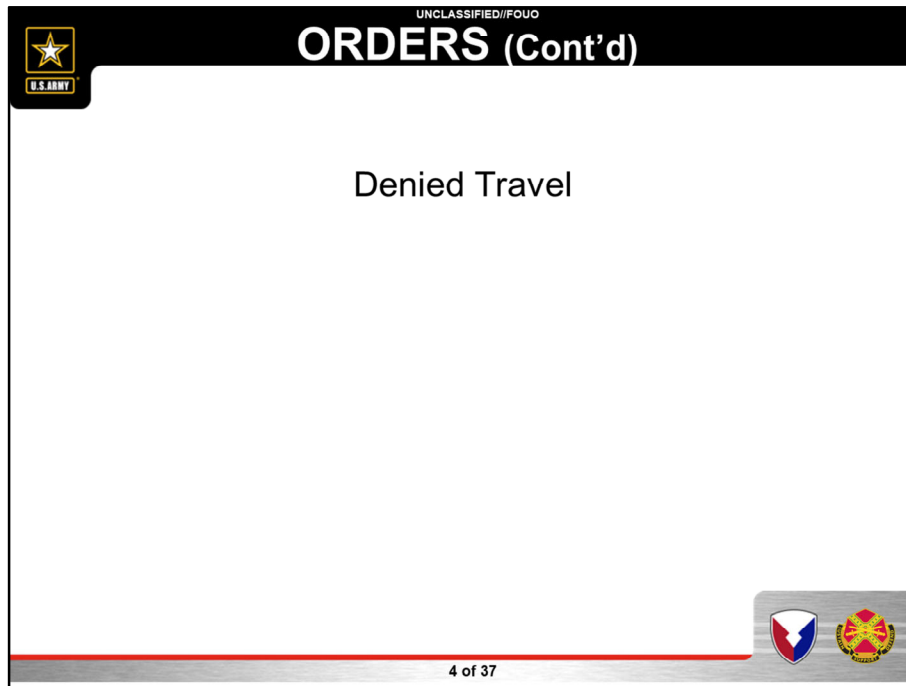


2 of 37

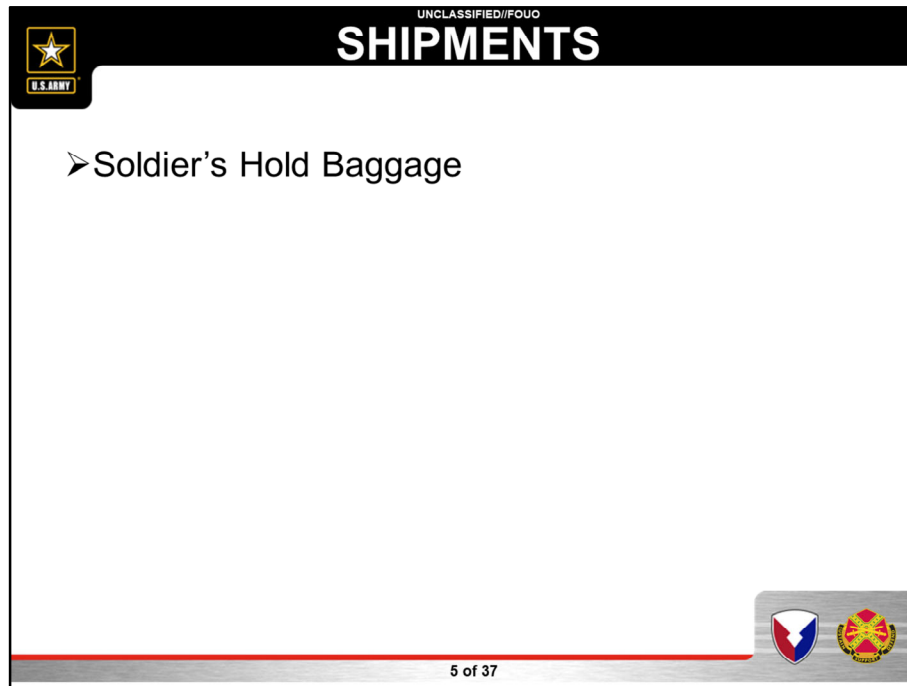


CONCURRENT TRAVEL: You cannot get concurrent travel if you do not have a pinpoint assignment. You may get more than one set of orders. Concurrent travel usually means housing will be provided within 30-60 days, the government is responsible for family members (FM's) while they are in Germany, and will pay temporary lodging allowance (TLA) unless it is your first PCS move. It also means the FMs can travel with the soldier or within 60 days of the reporting date. Some soldiers are being diverted once they arrive in Germany, so you may consider going after the soldier is there and knows for sure where you will be. The orders will state exactly what type quarters you are getting if concurrent. We'll talk about the different types of housing later in this orientation.

DEFERRED TRAVEL means the FM's will travel once housing is assigned. FM's will be able to go, just not as soon and they cannot travel with the soldier. Deferred travel does not mean your FM can move home at government expense. If the FM decides to move home while awaiting travel, the passports and household goods will remain at RIA and will be shipped with the FM when she goes. It is important to note that no arrangements can be made without a copy of the orders in hand. Deferred family travel is normal and given the majority of the time.



DENIED TRAVEL. This means that housing will not be available within a specified period of time or that travel was denied because there were no resources to meet the needs of an exceptional family member. If you were denied travel, you did not receive “Command Sponsorship”. If you do not have Command Sponsorship, the government is not responsible for FM’s while they are in Germany. That means no government housing, no shipment of FM’s household goods, and possibly no educational or medical benefits. It is not recommended that FM’s go without Command Sponsorship.



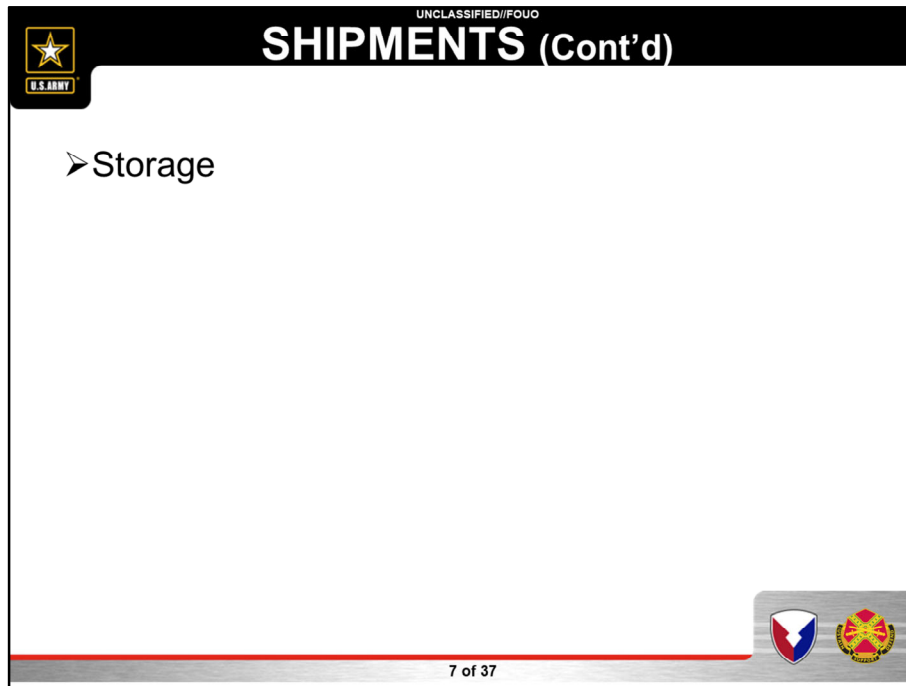
There are six different types of shipments. Note that the weight allowance is the total sum of all shipments, except the POV.

SOLDIER'S HOLD BAGGAGE: The weight of this shipment depends upon the rank of the soldier and should include immediate need items. Furniture items, to include large screen TV's, may be prohibited in this shipment. This shipment is sent in a thick cardboard box and will arrive at the soldier's duty station approximately 30 days from the day it is shipped. Soldiers E-4 and below who do not have a pinpoint assignment will have their hold baggage shipped the day they depart their last duty station. Service members E-5 and above who do not have a pinpoint assignment will have their hold baggage shipped upon assignment. Make sure you include in this shipment items like your standard telephone and answering machine. This will save you money for leasing, which could cost up to \$400.

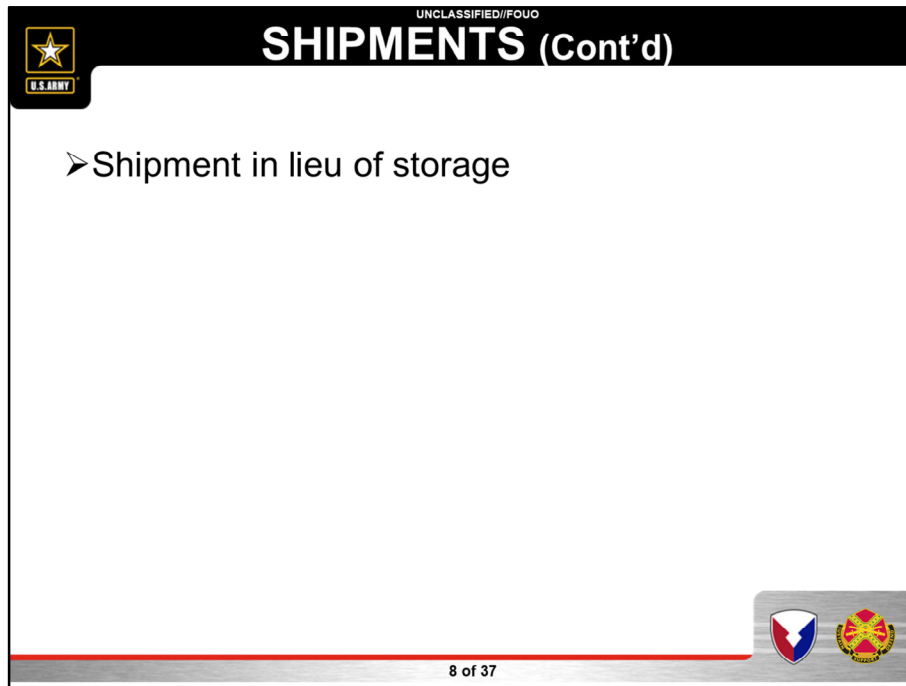


FM's Hold Baggage. FM's are also entitled to hold baggage. The weight is figured according to the age of the FM. FM's with concurrent travel will have their hold baggage shipped with that of the soldier. FM's with deferred travel will have their hold baggage shipped the day they depart for the overseas tour. If you have small children, make sure you include baby furniture. Also, include towels, sheets and clothing for different seasons. You will be waiting approximately another 30 days for your large shipment and you don't want to purchase something you don't need.

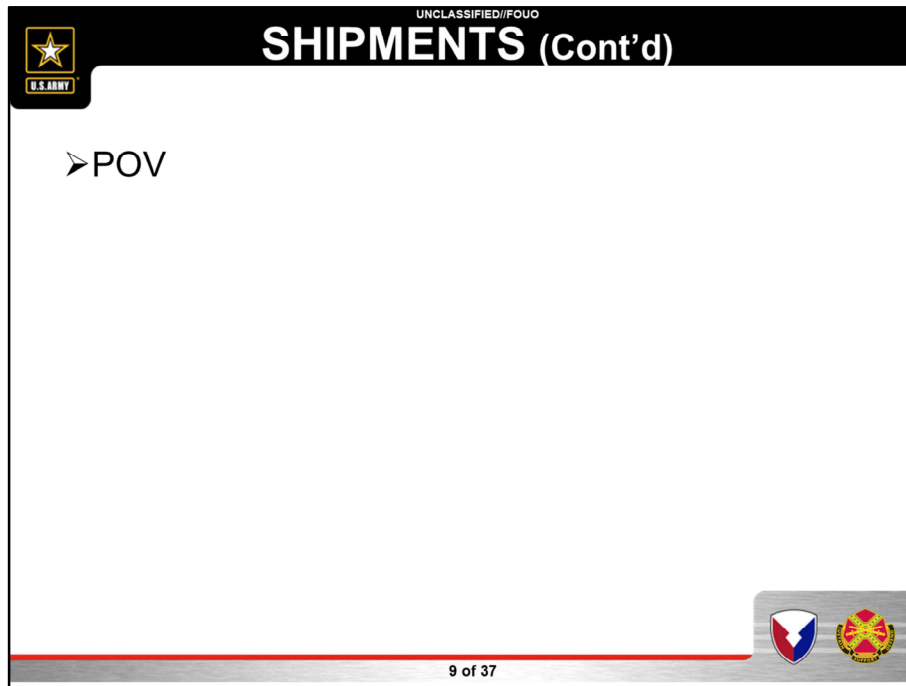
Household Goods. Household goods shipments include everyday living items and furniture. This is packed in large crates which are sealed for movement. This shipment will leave on the same day the FM's depart. Washers and dryers cannot go due to the electrical differences. These should be available from Furniture Support. Also, your curtains probably won't fit since German windows have the channel in the ceiling.



Storage. There are two kinds of storage: temporary and non-temporary. Temporary storage is used when the soldier or family are awaiting movement. Non-temporary storage includes those items that will not be needed by the soldier or family during their tour. It is important to note that this shipment cannot be disturbed during your tour. The whole lot goes into storage and remains there. Soldiers may need to request an extension of their non-temporary storage if their rotation date back to the States changes and more time is needed. This request is processed through the transportation office which did the non-temporary storage paperwork. Failure to do this may result in the soldier having to pay storage fees.




Shipment in lieu of storage. Some soldiers on overseas tours would rather have their extra items shipped to a designated location rather than have the government store them. The transportation office will schedule another pickup and have the items shipped to the specified location. Soldiers electing to do this must make sure the designee stated on the transportation paperwork will be available to take possession of the shipped items. Upon completion of the overseas tour, the soldier will again elect an additional shipment if these items are to be returned to the household. This shipment negates the soldier's right to non-temporary storage. cost.





POV. The government does not store POV's if you are going to Germany. The transportation office will do the initial paperwork and give you the location of the nearest port for shipment. You will be reimbursed one-way travel to the port to drop off the vehicle. You have up to one year from the overseas travel date to ship a vehicle. All vehicles shipped overseas from the United States are entitled to return shipment from overseas. It is important to know that vehicles purchased overseas may not be entitled to shipment by the U.S. government and may have to be shipped at the owner's expense. The transportation office will give you a booklet when you have your transportation appointment that will explain what steps you must take to ship your POV. If you have more than one vehicle to ship, talk to the transportation representative about making those arrangements. You must pay this cost.

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 **MAKING THE TRIP**


- Long flight, 8-10 hours
- 6 hours ahead of us
- Pack something to keep children busy
- Pack squeeze bottles, snacks, gum, lip balm and wet wipes for kids



10 of 37

Making the trip. The flight is very long, about 8 to 10 hours, with Germany being 6 hours ahead of us. If you have children, make sure you take their favorite toy or whatever comforts them. Also, pack something to keep them busy (Fort Jackson ACS has items for children, i.e., coloring books, activities books, etc.) Pack squeeze bottles that can be refilled by the flight attendant, snacks, gum, lip balm, and wet wipes. It is a good idea to take a 3x5 index card with the Soldier's name, unit, SSN, and phone number in case of an emergency. A German translation book will make your immediate arrival easier (Fort Jackson ACS has international translators and language phrasebooks). Also, take some Euro with you. Find local currency exchange near you through google.



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 **CULTURE SHOCK**

- Sets in when the excitement wears off
- Everyone will experience this differently

Common Issues that evoke Culture Shock

- Sex Roles: equality versus inequality of sexes
- Religious customs and beliefs
- Government styles and bureaucracy
- Language: Communication is both verbal and nonverbal so it's important to recognize differences beyond the language barrier

11 of 37

When people go abroad they often talk about experiencing "culture shock" after the "honey moon period." The honeymoon period refers to the first few weeks following a move when people are excited about experiencing the new culture and country. Culture shock sets in when the excitement wears off and the differences become a chore to deal with day after day. Keep in mind that not all people experience a honeymoon period and some are stricken with culture shock almost as soon as they step off the airplane. Some common issues that evoke culture shock include:

- Sex roles" equality versus inequality of sexes
- Religious customs and beliefs
- Government styles
- Language: verbal and non-verbal



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CULTURE SHOCK (Cont'd)

- Pace of day-to-day life: Slower in some countries, faster in others.
- Food selection: depends on locality, but be prepared to learn common dishes and uses of ingredients.
- Transportation: Mass transit is popular and bicycle use as well.
- Cost and supply of goods: American foods not available in the same form. Commissary may not carry what you are used to.

Get Germanized and don't be an Auslander




12 of 37



- Pace of the day to day
- Food options
- Transportation
- Cost of living

Get Germanized and don't be an Auslander

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 **COPING W/ CULTURE SHOCK**

- Get involved
- Volunteer on base
- Experiment with local cuisine, customs, and ways of life
- Search for ways to meet new people in ways that out of your comfort zone or like minded individuals
- Keep a journal of your experiences and feelings. It is fun and effective to go back and look at where you were and where you are.

13 of 37

The best way to conquer culture shock is to take action to learn about your new home. Here are some you tube channels that are thought provoking...no official endorsement implied.

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock
&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=5843472F902E196757A1584347
2F902E196757A1&FORM=VRDGAR](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=5843472F902E196757A15843472F902E196757A1&FORM=VRDGAR)

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock
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[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock
&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=20714B9579421D33A7D420714
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Swearing is rampant....

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock
&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=D4B465F8750CBAAAC7D6D4B
465F8750CBAAAC7D6&rvsmid=5843472F902E196757A1584
3472F902E196757A1&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSrv](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=germany+culture+shock&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=D4B465F8750CBAAAC7D6D4B465F8750CBAAAC7D6&rvsmid=5843472F902E196757A15843472F902E196757A1&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSrv)



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COPING W/ CULTURE SHOCK (Cont'd)

- Keep connected with people from home, if you are feeling very homesick and physical symptoms manifest reach out to your care provider and the family support services like ACS and FRG.
- Take action when you feel overwhelmed by isolation or loneliness.
- Cultivate relationships that are supportive. It is also very helpful to mentor someone that is new after you get through your hurdles.
- Create daily routines that make room for flexibility and a set a pace you are comfortable with.



14 of 37

Cont'd



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10 COMMANDMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

- I. Learn at least a little of the language and some of the basics about the people and customs before leaving home.
- II. If you are taking a vehicle, make sure your insurance will cover you in another country.
- III. Keep all important paperwork and credit cards with you. You should also have a copy of the numbers.
- IV. Remember, you are a guest in the country. Loud and demanding voices are inappropriate. Good manners are essential.



15 of 37



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10 COMMANDMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (Cont'd)

- V. Avoid political or historical topics, especially those that may reflect poorly upon the host country.
- VI. Don't fight the culture. Adapt and enjoy its uniqueness.
- VII. Don't complain to the local people or always compare their country to your own.
- VIII. Ask before photographing anyone.
- IX. Dress at the same or similar level to the natives when off post.
- X. Have a sense of humor, no matter what. Enjoy!!




16 of 37

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WHAT TO BRING AND WHAT NOT TO BRING

- **HOLD BAGGAGE** should include items for immediate needs – linens, towels for bath and kitchen, seasonal plus next season's clothing, toys, etc...
- **HAND CARRY** your official documents, school records, medications, prescriptions, orders, drivers license, important documents, No Fee Passports
- **HOUSEHOLD SHIPMENT** should not include
 - Large SUV's
 - US major appliances
 - Oversized furniture



17 of 37

Make good use of your Sponsor: he/she can tell you more about what you need to bring.

Hold Baggage: for those items you will need immediately, i.e., computer, items for work, baby items, etc. This is not the place for your big screen TV.


Hand carry your important documents: school records, medications, prescriptions, orders, drivers license, etc. Do not pack these items or put where the movers can pack them.

Household Shipment: Dishwasher/Refrigerator/Washer/Dryer are available through housing



- Room size varies in Europe do not bring oversized furniture and too much of it.

- Large SUV: Side roads are not large, public parking lots fit small compact cars. Most driveways/garages are not large enough to fit an SUV. Best to leave large trucks/SUV's back in the States.

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 **WHAT TO BRING AND
WHAT NOT TO BRING (Cont'd)**

- **HOUSEHOLD SHIPMENT** should not include
 - 110 volt appliances - Some wireless electronics
 - Personal WEAPONS


 

18 of 37

- Some 110 volt appliances: most folks store their 110-volt appliances and buy 220-volt appliances once in Europe. Just remember use with a transformer can reduce the life of the appliance. Don't bring any appliance that operates with a timing device such as a bread maker, alarm clock or microwave. They will not work properly.



- Also be aware that not all wireless electronics from the US are legal in Belgium. The following frequencies are banned for private use in Belgium: 49-50 MHz Frequency (baby monitors) and 900-960 MHz Frequency (phones, speakers, etc...)

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 **WHAT TO BRING AND
WHAT NOT TO BRING (Cont'd)**

- Pointers to what **HOUSEHOLD SHIPMENT** should include
 - Rugs
 - Storage items
 - Clothes
 - Special items
 - Sporting equipment

19 of 37

1. **Lamps:** Bring them. You just need a simple plug adapter and different voltage European light bulbs (usually available from the PX).
2. **Rugs:** Bring what you think you will need. Most European houses/apartments are rarely carpeted and companies like Sears will not ship large rugs to overseas locations. Furthermore, the PX selection is limited. You may purchase some European carpets, but they can be expensive.
3. **Beds:** Room size varies. Houses tend to be smaller in Europe and extremely large headboards may not fit up stairways. Be aware of the low upstairs rooflines in many houses in the Benelux. Waterbeds are generally prohibited.
4. **Storage Items:** Bring any shelves, bookcases, wall units and chests that you think you may need. The housing office does provide some storage chests for the duration of your tour but this may not be enough. Remember, there are no built-in-closets in most private homes.
5. **Sporting equipment:** Bring your bike, tennis racket, etc. Europe is a great place for recreation.
6. **Clothes:** You will need rain gear and good walking shoes. It can be cool at anytime of the year so come prepared and remember to layer.
7. **Special Items:** Special drug items, such as particular brands of contact lens cleaners, can be difficult to obtain here in Europe, so it may be best to bring them with you. While on line shopping makes life easier, be aware of items that cannot be shipped to APO (like anything containing lithium batteries).



-SCHOOLS - Education Options differ between Countries. Host Country Education & DoDEA. **In many smaller communities Non-DoDDs & Virtual School are the only options.**

-HOUSING - Rule of thumb when house hunting off post or with privatized lease: Guidelines and rules are applied to almost everything and newcomers often find it frustrating trying to cut through the red tape, and its associated long waiting times, in order to achieve what seems like basic tasks. **Resident vs. Non-resident, Space is limited and many homes do not provide closets or kitchens. Leases and laws vary with pets. Recycling, school bus stops, parking, restricted access zones need to be considered prior to signing lease.



Benelux

- OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS - Passports, Drivers License (International and Stateside, Motorcycle License)

In the Netherlands you will be fingerprinted and photographed for alien registration card.

Italy a Soggiorno- Permission to reside in Italy, must be carried at all times.

No Fee Passport AND VISA for each family member are required. **THESE DOCUMENTS MUST BE IN HAND PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR ITALY!**

Unlike some other overseas assignments, civilian employees and dependents of both Soldiers and civilians assigned to Italy must apply for an official passport and Visa.

Tourist Passports encouraged PRIOR to arrival if you plan to travel while stationed in the European theater – Service Member and family members.



Germany-

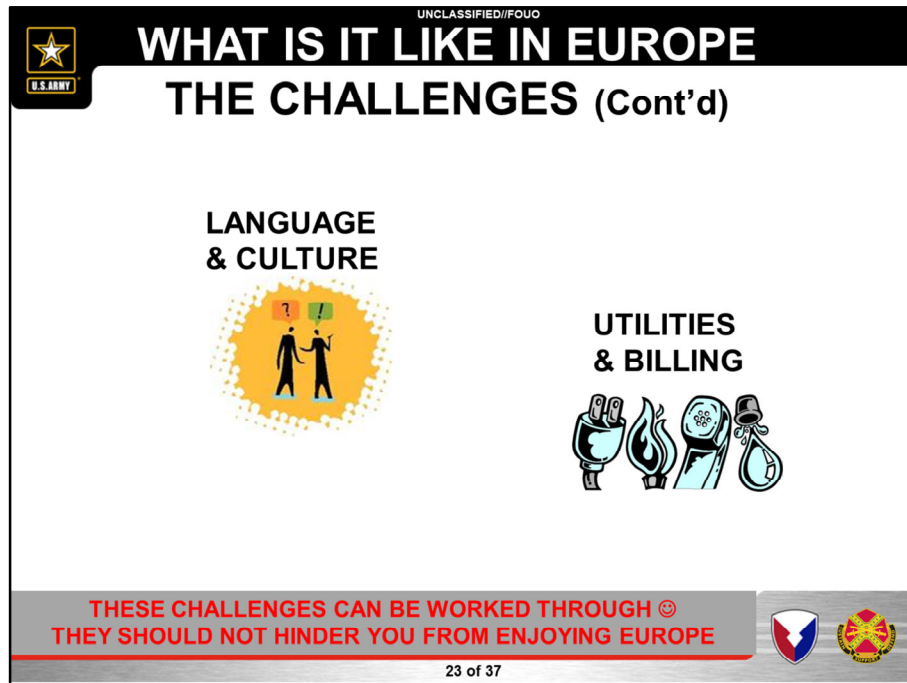
- SPOUSE and DEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT – Fewer Employment Opportunities, SOFA agreement, Scan & Email Documents to personal address or upload into USAJOBS, Volunteer Work, Self Employment/Home Based Business (Postal Office NO-NO)

- SCHEDULES: Hours of operations of offices, shops, business. The 24/7 concept is not part of the local culture.

- DRIVING: Driving standards are different from the US. The biggest challenge newcomers face when coming to Europe is driving. Rules differ. If you plan on operating a Motorcycle you must obtain a motorcycle endorsement Stateside prior to coming to Italy.

You must secure a SETAF license to operate a POV in Italy. Please make this a priority when you arrive on the base. Link to Drivers Testing manual is:


www.usag.livorno.army.mil/docs/2011DriversBook.pdf



-LANGUAGE & CULTURE – Children, Transportation, Personal Space, Theft, Dining,

-UTILITIES & BILLING – UTEP, VAT & IVA taxes. There may be upfront costs to hook up utilities. Bills can be random. With a combination of national, regional and commercial service providers the task of supplying your new home with the necessary utilities can be daunting. Do not get discouraged. It takes time.



- There is much more insistence on sorting trash in some European countries than in the U.S. Do not loose sleep because you are afraid of misclassifying some of the trash - people learn to sort after a while, even temporary residents. And it is an environmental gain.



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FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

- Higher Cost of Living
- Exchange Rates
- Cash/Euro based economy
- Cell Phones
- POST allowance & COLA
- Car insurance & Repairs = Expense
- Banking
- Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Housing & Deposits
- Pets



24 of 37

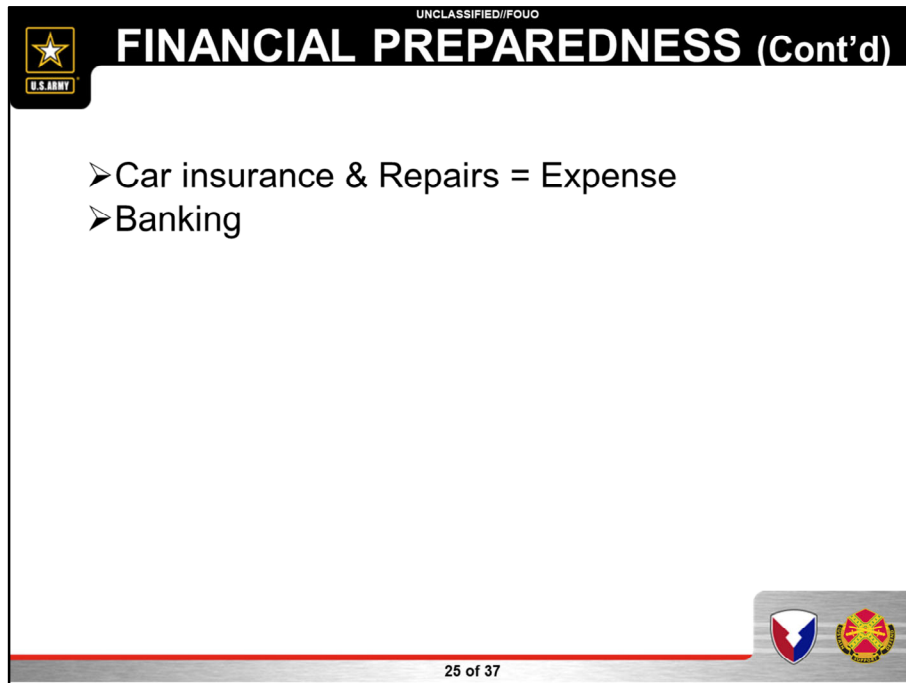
Be financially prepared for life in Europe.

There are a variety of differences to prepare for.

You should be prepared, not only for the higher cost of living – compared to most areas in the U.S. – but also for the exchange rate between the dollar and the Euro.

At times the exchange rate is favorable to the dollar, and other times it is not. Because of the higher cost of living, you'll receive a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) (or Post Allowance for civilians).

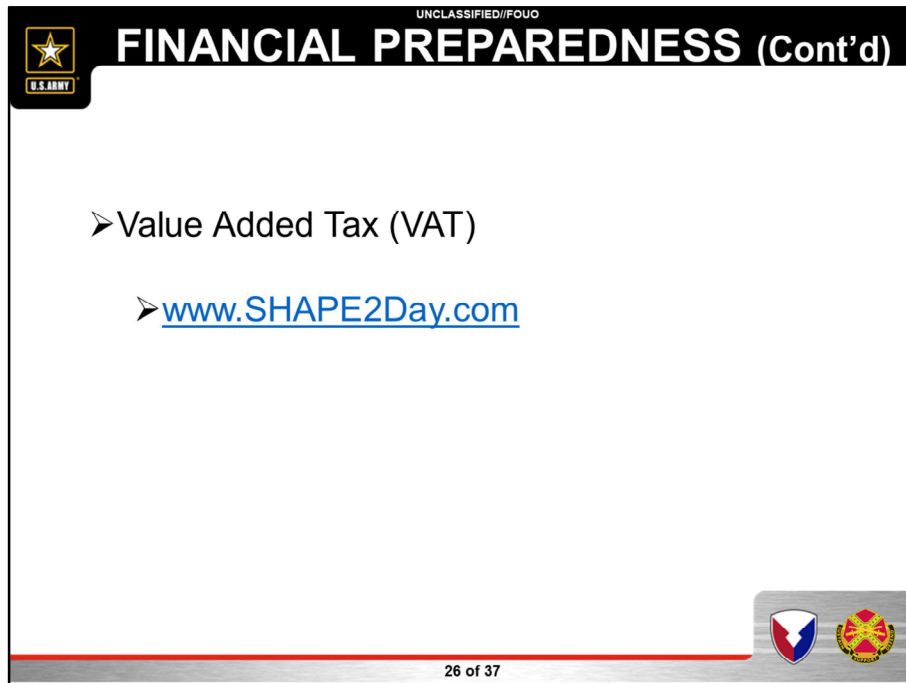
The amount of COLA you receive will fluctuate along with the dollar-euro exchange rate. But rate adjustments are not immediate. And remember, you'll only receive this while overseas, so be careful when making buying decisions (e.g., what is an affordable car payment) based on your income while in Europe, it will go away when you PCS back to the U.S.



Remember to contact your car insurance company before leaving the states to compare international coverage. Along with owning an automobile overseas you may have repairs which equates to added expense; be financially prepared. If you encounter any problems, remember Army Emergency Relief is here to assist.

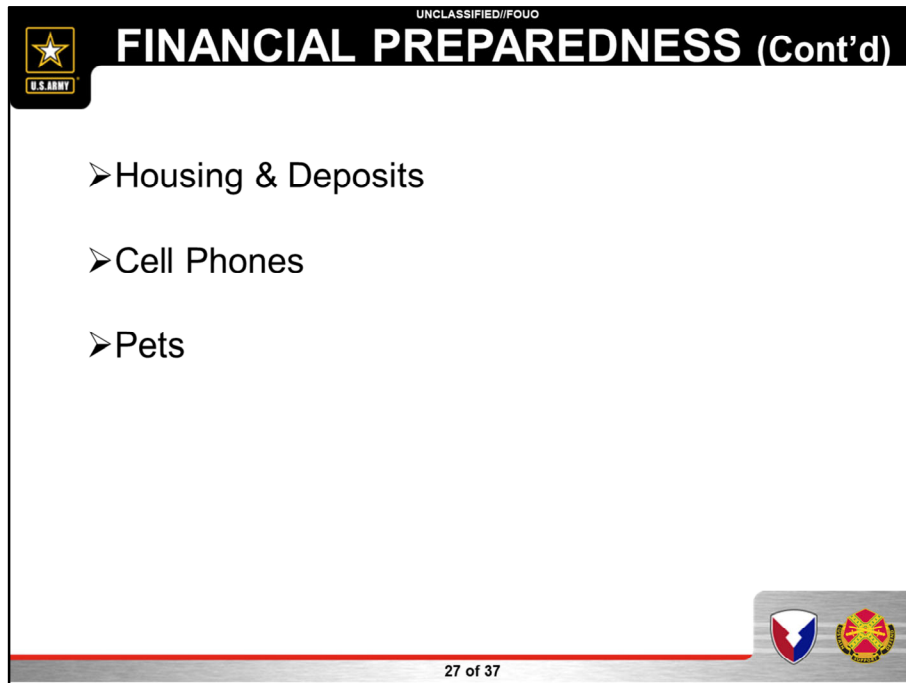
Also be aware that you won't be able to use your U.S. bank or credit union (aside from Service Credit Union and Andrews Federal Credit Union) to pay your European bills. There are advantages to using a local (European) bank, foremost being getting the best exchange rate available (Finance and U.S. financial institutions typically have to buy euros, which results in a lower exchange rate than using a European bank). You can set up an allotment from your pay directly to the European bank (which gets you the best rate), and can then set up automatic payment for your rent, utilities, etc., as well as being able to withdraw euro for other spending.

Understand that checks are essentially not used in Europe, so you'll be using cash, debit and/or credit cards. Most debit and credit cards will charge a "foreign transaction fee" (typically one percent of the purchase amount), but there are cards available that do not.



Unlike the U.S., where many states have a sales tax added onto the purchase price when you buy something, Europe has a Value Added Tax (VAT) that is already included in the price of the item. The VAT or IVA as it is known in Italy is high. 21% in Benelux and 22% in Italy.

There are a variety of items (mostly durable goods such as furniture) that you can get a refund of the VAT, but procedures vary by country. In Belgium, the www.SHAPE2Day.com website has information on VAT and VAT refunds under the “Newcomer” tab.




If you're NOT living in government quarters, be prepared to pay an amount equal to one to three months of rent as a security deposit. This also varies by location, and whether you find the house through the local Housing Office. In some locations you may also be required to pay deposits for the utility service. Also, in addition to generally being more expensive than in the U.S., utility bills are initially a set amount. That amount is adjusted annually based on an annual meter reading. The result is that you'll want to establish a "utilities" savings account to be prepared should you owe money when the meter reading is 'reconciled' with what you've been paying.

Cell phones are costly

If you have pets, be aware that it can VERY expensive to fly them in-out of Europe particularly during the summer months when some airlines will not fly them because of heat considerations. Also, some models of aircraft cannot accommodate pets as their baggage compartments are not sufficiently pressurized during flight, so advance planning is strongly recommended.

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 **Overseas Medical Care**



ONBASE CLINICS AND HOSPITALS

- ✓ Routine & Preventative Medical Care
- ✓ Dental
- ✓ Specialized or Stabilization for medical transport

PRIVATE Fee basis

- ✓ Referrals are common for non-emergency care on the economy
- ✓ Radiology and Maternity Care
- ✓ Translators are not provided for all services
- ✓ Emergency Room and Critical Care

******Please encourage full disclosure on EFMP forms******

28 of 37

****VETERANS healthcare in Europe does not exist.**

Medical care is available, but demand far outweighs the supply. Try to get all routine medical appointment completed before moving.

When filling out the paperwork for your overseas screening, please fully disclosure whether there are any special needs for you or your Family members to ensure they get the quality care they so deserve.

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 **READY FOR A PET ADVENTURE**

MAIN POINTS:

- You must have a European Health Certificate
- International ISO 15 digit microchip **MUST** be given **BEFORE** the rabies is given
- Ensure that pets are properly vaccinated.
- Check with your local Military Vet facility
- Check with your airline for Kennel/Cage requirements
- **CHECK** all legs of flights for requirements.
- Seasonal Pet Travel Requirements
- Landlord Approval

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT
THE VETERINARY CLINIC.**



29 of 37

-You must have a European Health Certificate (this allows you to travel in and around Europe, needed if you are traveling to a European Country), Letter of Acclimation (this allows the pet, if need be, to be placed in the cargo hold), and in some cases an APHIS 7001. These documents **MUST** be done by an accredited USDA Veterinarian. Going to a Veterinarian on a military installation is recommended, if you are able to do so, because all Military Veterinarians are automatically accredited USDA Veterinarians. All of these health certificates are only valid for 10 days, starting on the day you received the document

-International ISO 15 digit microchip **MUST** be given **BEFORE** the rabies is given. (Most Veterinarians know the proper procedure for this, but it is good for the owners to know as this is something they will look for on the Health Certificates)

-- Ensure that their pets are properly vaccinated. Although the **ONLY** required vaccine is Rabies when traveling, it is a good idea to have your pets properly vaccinated against Bordetella (kennel cough) and DA2PP (Distemper). This can prevent sickness from other dogs and ensure an easy transition if they need to be kenneled right away. For additional information, contact the Vet Clinic.

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30 of 37

- Check to see if your pet can be on your orders.

MOST CURRENT INFORMATION FOR BELGIUM:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/animal_belgium.shtml,

MOST CURRENT INFORMATION FOR THE NETHERLANDS:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/animal_netherlands.shtml

Germany

Italy: If you are bringing pets, please be sure to check with your airline carrier on the cost and restrictions for pet travel. Be aware that most carriers during the summer months and winter months do not allow pet travel, especially if that pet is too big to sit under your seat. If your pet does have to ride in the Cargo portion of the plane, be sure to have a pee pad within the carrier case, along with food and water.

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31 of 37

If you leave on the 10th day of your certificate from the States they will not accept the pet through Customs. Please remember flights often arrive on the next day when leaving the States due to the time zone difference.

Longare (Vicenza) Is the location of Veterinary services for VMC pet owners. The Vicenza Vet. Comes monthly to Darby.

All pet fees are paid by member – costs to prepare pets for travel, and transportation of pets on commercial airline & rotator.

Vicenza: The Army Lodging Ederle Inn is located on Caserma Ederle and is walking distance to restaurants, the commissary, offices, schools, shopping and recreation on the installation. The suites have kitchenettes, internet access and laundry facilities. The hotel accepts a limited number of pets. They can refer you to area kennels if they cannot accept your pet.

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- Landlord Approval

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT
THE VETERINARY CLINIC.**

32 of 37

Darby Lodging On-base: Casa Toscana has 4 Pet Friendly rooms. There is \$50.00 initial 1st night fee and \$3.00 per night for the duration of the stay. There is a Kennel on the Base.

Check with Italian pet breed requirements prior to booking flights to ensure that your pet is allowed in Italy. Landlord approval for pets is required prior to moving in or obtaining a pet.



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Repatriation

Lay the ground work for going back

- Talk about your hopes and what you will look forward to
- Think about what you will do first and what will be nice to do and who it will be nice to see
- Plan on how you will keep in touch with those new friends you have made, the army is small you may see them again
- Once you return stay close to family and keep in contact with those you left behind
- Volunteer and get involved



33 of 37



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Repatriation

Lay the ground work for going back

- Talk about your experiences, but remember you don't want to come off as you are bragging
- Assess your experience and how it has changed you for the better
- Try not to compare here to there in a way that is degrading to customs and cultures; different is just different and not wrong



34 of 37



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INFORMATION SOURCES

<http://installation.militaryonesource.mil>

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

<https://grafenwoehr.armymwr.com/europe/grafenwoehr>

<https://www.facebook.com/BavariaMWR>

<http://www.bavaria.army.mil/newcomers/index.html>



35 of 37



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INFORMATION SOURCES (Cont'd)

http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/p600_8_101.pdf



http://www.eur.army.mil/rmv/Documents_PDF/aep190-34.pdf

<https://jkodirect.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/login/Login.jsf>




36 of 37

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**Questions or need additional
resources?
Contact ACS (803) 751-5256**



37 of 37

Please contact us at (803) 751-5256 if you have additional questions or need additional resources (international translator, language books, etc.)

Thank you and have a stress-free move. Enjoy Europe!