



## DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

### HEADQUARTERS 4TH AIR SUPPORT OPERATIONS GROUP (USAFE)

Hello and welcome to the 4th Air Support Operations Group! I'm SMSgt Pat Uptmor, one of two First Sergeants assigned to the group. I'm stationed at Heidelberg, and assist the commanders of the group detachments and 1st and 2d Air Support Operations Squadrons with general issues concerning enlisted personnel and their families. SMSgt Jerry Bradley is the other first sergeant, and he is stationed at Mannheim with the 4th Air Support Operations Squadron.

If you are being assigned to our group, you should be receiving a sponsorship package in the mail. Please take the time to review the package as it has some very important information that you should become familiar with prior to making your move. If for some reason you don't get a sponsor package, please feel free to contact either the squadron you'll be assigned, the group sponsor program monitor, or myself. Most of the information you'll need is also accessible through the links under "Newcomers" on our web page. It's very important to keep your sponsor informed of your plans and needs. For example, keep your sponsor aware of your travel plans, when you'll arrive, which flight, how many dependents will accompany you, etc., so they may make necessary arrangements for meeting you and setting up temporary lodging. The key to making a smooth move rests with our sponsor program and your personal involvement.

Once you arrive at your duty location, there will be a number of things you'll want to accomplish as quickly as possible. For instance, you'll want to get your USAREUR driver's license so you can get around without relying on others or public transportation. To ensure you're ready to pass the written test required to obtain it, you can study USAREUR Pamphlet 190-34. A link is provided on our web page to this material. Once you're ready to take the test, you'll need to make an appointment to take it. Since it's possible that it could take a week or longer to get the appointment, you may want to study prior to your arrival and have your sponsor schedule a test date for you.

If you're shipping a vehicle, consider sending it at least 60 days in advance. This should allow enough time for your vehicle to arrive and be ready for pick up once you are properly licensed. If you're not shipping a vehicle and want to purchase one after you've arrived, there are plenty of used cars in the area for sale at reasonable prices. There are also rental agencies who lease economical vehicles by the day, week, and month at fair prices.

Another task you'll want to accomplish as quickly as possible is getting into permanent housing. Since availability of on-post quarters varies day-to-day, you may or may not experience delays in obtaining quarters, and you may or may not have the option to reside on or off-post. The US Army, like the US Air Force, is in the process of renovating the housing units, but it's a lengthy process and won't be completed for years. Another note along the lines of permanent housing—schedule with Deutsch Telecom (our telephone company) installation of phone services. It can take weeks to have phone service established, and that's after you've found a place to live and have made an appointment to have phone service turned on. One nice part of living on post is your school age children won't have far to go to get to school

Speaking of schools, you'll want to get your school-age children registered for school as soon as practical, and may even want to get them involved in extracurricular activities. Check out the DoDDS school website. There's an abundance of information available to parents on a variety of school issues and activities.

Keeping in contact with relatives and friends may be another important factor to consider. While you're waiting to have your phone hooked up, I'd advise you to purchase an international calling card. Calling from your room at the guest house or from one of the many local hotels can be very expensive, while using a calling card costs only a fraction of the prices you'll be charged elsewhere. If you have a need to keep in frequent contact with others in the states, you might want to consider obtaining internet service from either a local provider or the telephone company. Internet service tends to be slightly more expensive than in the United States, but not by much.

We currently have a simple uniform policy. Any combination of authorized uniforms is allowed while in garrison, and battle dress uniform during contingency operations and exercises (officers may wear the Flight Dress Uniform when allowed by the contingency location commander or exercise commander).

All personnel assigned to the 4th Air Support Operations Group, regardless of which squadron or detachment, are stationed at US Army installations. It can cause a little more cultural shock than if you were being stationed overseas at a US Air Force installation. However, the US Army has many of the same programs available to you and your family that you'd find at an Air Force base, but most likely under a different name. For your benefit, I recommend you visit the local Army Community Service (ACS) office at your new installation for an overview of their services.

Lastly, before you depart your previous duty assignment, I'd advise you to let your relatives know what actions they need to take in case an emergency arises and your presence is required. I've found that by giving them a copy of your orders or writing down what unit you'll be assigned and where it's located, can save time and prevent unnecessary stress. If you'd like, you can even pass along my work number in case there is a need for emergency communications and you have no other means to be contacted. My work phone is 49-6221-57-5972.

Take a look at our newcomer's checklist, also on the internet. It may be just what you're looking for—it certainly can't hurt!

The sooner you've accomplished these basic necessities, the sooner you'll start to enjoy your tour in Germany or Italy, and the more productive you'll become to your new work center. I hope you enjoy your stay in Germany and assignment to the 4th Air Support Operations Group. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

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First Sergeant