

USCG Activities Europe Welcome Aboard and Sponsorship Program 2015



NEW MEMBER AND SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name

Grade/Rank

Dependent(s)

Relationship

Primary Sponsor

Work Ph _____

Mobile Ph _____

E-mail _____

Secondary Sponsor

Work Ph _____

Mobile Ph _____

E-mail _____

Greetings from the Captain

Welcome Aboard! Assignment to Activities Europe represents an extraordinary opportunity to serve our nation and the international community. The opportunities for personal and professional growth are tremendous. Our marine inspectors and investigators are among the most qualified in the Coast Guard and possess skills necessary to work effectively under unique conditions. Similarly the International Port Security Liaison Officers require well developed diplomatic skills and a solid understanding of port security principles. Perhaps the most vital part of our team is our administration staff, who must be independent duty qualified in order to keep the unit running like a well-oiled machine.

We also face some unusual, but manageable, challenges. At times, travel schedules are hectic and the destinations we frequent throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa are often arduous, requiring adaptability to ever-changing environments and cultures.

It takes a special kind of Coast Guard family to thrive in any overseas assignment. Although living abroad can be an extremely educational and exciting experience, it doesn't come without some unique challenges. Fortunately, most Dutch people speak excellent English, but simple things we take for granted at home, like understanding the local newspaper, television and radio are a bit more complicated. Sometimes, the busy travel schedules of our active duty members leave families a bit lonely. This requires special effort to accomplish everyday challenges in a foreign country. We are very fortunate at Activities Europe to have a tremendously strong unit ombudsman and a fantastic spouses network to help our families thrive.

The Command Checklist for Overseas Screening in Chapter 4.H of the CG Military Assignments and Authorized Absences Manual, COMDTINST M1000.8, is an essential part of the process. I recommend you review it to ensure you have a balanced picture of what to expect. I too am enjoying my first overseas tour and understand first-hand the challenges you will face, but I assure you there are wonderful experiences ahead. The Netherlands has as many paved bicycle paths as they do roads, you can buy your food at the local store and enjoy the sights and sounds of the weekend markets, and in your off time you can hop a ferry to London, a train to Paris, or a plane to Rome, and be on an amazing family vacation in just a few hours.

I invite you to learn more about our unit's unique missions and the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that awaits you here in The Netherlands. I hope you enjoy reading the overview and a more detailed description of our command. Please don't hesitate to contact your sponsor for more information and a personal perspective on their jobs and life overseas.

My kindest regards,



CAPT Tom Kaminski

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ACTIVITIES EUROPE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HISTORY: The U.S. Coast Guard arrived permanently in Europe near the end of World War II at the request of the Department of State in order to handle a large influx of U.S. merchant ships and U.S. merchant seaman. Numerous Merchant Marine Details (MMDs) were established in British and European ports. After the war, the MMD functions declined, eventually leaving only MMDs in London, England; Bremerhaven, Germany; and Rotterdam, The Netherlands. After the completion of Sea-Land's fast SL-7 Type Fast Sealift Ships constructed in Bremen and Rotterdam in the mid-1970s, all remaining MMDs in Europe were closed and a Marine Inspection Office (MIO) was opened in Rotterdam in 1975. That office was the first MIO established outside the United States and its primary mission was to meet the needs of overseas construction of U.S. commercial vessels and Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs), and to provide overseas inspections of existing U.S. flag vessels. Another new Coast Guard command, Activities Europe (ACTEUR), was created in London in the middle 1960s to support the USCG's international mission in Europe and to command and coordinate the many USCG LORAN stations located throughout Europe.

In June of 1982, MIO Rotterdam was closed due to budgetary reasons and the inability to expand its staff under existing treaties. The responsibilities for overseas marine inspection activities were transferred to Marine Inspection Office New York.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT: In the early 1990s, the USCG began to hand over its European LORAN stations to their host countries. With the loss of the LORAN stations there was a diminished need for ACTEUR London. In 1994, the decision was made to close the unit in London and establish a new command in Rotterdam, called Activities/Marine Inspection Office Europe. In June 1995, ACTEUR London was closed and on 11 July 1995, Activities Europe was commissioned in Rotterdam. The unit became a tenant command hosted by the 598th U.S. Army Transportation Brigade.

MOVE FROM ROTTERDAM TO SCHINNEN: Around 2011, DOD facilities throughout Europe began experiencing scheduled as well as unscheduled closures due to budget cuts. In order to operate more efficiently and effectively with available assets, the 598th Army Transportation Brigade announced in April, 2012 that they were moving from Rotterdam, The Netherlands, to the Kaiserslautern Military Community. This relocation was conducted to be closer to their distribution customers at EUCOM and AFRICOM, which are headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. Upon this notification, SILC engaged IMCOM to determine viable options for ACTEUR relocation. Each alternative in Europe was analyzed against predetermined planning factors which focused on operational requirements, cost savings and other intangibles afforded to the military under a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) as opposed to the much

more expensive option associated with operating under the Department of State Chief of Mission. Of the options, Schinnen appeared as operationally ideal, offered the best mission support and was the lowest cost alternative. ACTEUR initiated the transition to Schinnen on 1 December, 2012. The unit is commanded by a Captain (O-6) and is comprised of 32 personnel including commissioned, warrant officer, and civilian duty inspectors; international port security liaisons officers; investigations officers; independent duty enlisted persons for administration, finance and IT support; and an Executive Officer.

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: Activities Europe has the largest Area of Responsibility (AOR) of any operational unit in the USCG, covering all of Europe, Africa and the Middle East to the India/Pakistan border. Our personnel spend as much as 120 days annually out of the office in foreign lands. We typically fly out of Brussels or Dusseldorf Airports, which are located about 45 miles from the office and on occasion out of Amsterdam, which is about 2 hours from the office.

CORE MISSION SET: Inspection of U.S. vessels continues to be one of the unit's cornerstone missions. Inspections focus on the seaworthiness, machinery, lifesaving, firefighting, oil pollution prevention equipment, navigation equipment, crew qualifications and security of these U.S. flag vessels, ensuring that they comply with all applicable U.S. and international laws and regulations. In addition, personnel conduct oversight of manufacturers of USCG approved lifesaving equipment, and the servicing of USCG approved life rafts. Another major aspect of our mission includes the completion of Initial Control Verification Examinations on new foreign flag cruise ships that will enter the U.S. market.

ACTEUR personnel also discharge U.S. law through the investigation of any marine casualty that involves or occurs on a U.S. vessel (i.e. vessel collisions, groundings, injuries to U.S. merchant mariners, etc.), regardless of the location. ACTEUR personnel must use a non-traditional approach when dealing with marine casualty, personnel action, and enforcement cases because of restricted legal authorities, sovereign state requirements and economic, security, logistical, and structural factors faced in an international setting. Personnel must travel throughout ACTEUR's AOR to perform investigations, and develop insights to help prevent such accidents from reoccurring.

ACTEUR's mission portfolio also includes the International Port Security Program which involves working collaboratively with over 80 nations. IPSLOs visit U.S. maritime trading partners to learn about port security processes and practices implemented to prevent terror attacks, decrease stowaways, reduce theft, and to curb illicit traffic in the international maritime transport system. By establishing and strengthening relations with host government port security officials, IPSLOs are able to promote understanding of U.S. policies and to share best practices observed during visits. In addition to visiting countries in this AOR, IPSLOs are instrumental in organizing and leading "reciprocal visits" to the U.S. to promote greater understanding and transparency. Another key mission for the IPLSOs is to advise countries with regard to building port security capacity by providing Coast Guard policy information, sharing experience on conducting drills and exercises, and assist in identifying appropriate training resources.

In addition to the above missions, ACTEUR carries out a wide variety of international engagement activities. ACTEUR personnel are frequently called upon to engage with U.S. embassies, foreign navies and coast guards, international organizations and the international maritime community to advance a broad range of U.S. Coast Guard missions. For example, the unit actively participates with various international marine industry and regulatory organizations to promote U.S. Coast Guard goals and objectives such as improving maritime security and safety and eliminating substandard shipping throughout the world.

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

To ensure a smooth transition to life abroad, Activities Europe has developed a robust sponsorship program. The sponsorship program at ACTEUR will most likely be more important and critical to your success than any other sponsorship program you have participated in during previous tours. Attempts have been made to select the best suited sponsor for you and your family. The command considers sponsorship an important duty/assignment and you should not hesitate to request assistance and help from your sponsor – it's their job to help you and your family (to a reasonable point!) during your transfer to ACTEUR. Because the needs of each service member/family differ, but are common in many aspects we have listed items which you will likely need assistance. This is a recommended list, so if you find that you need help with some things not listed here, you may request additional assistance to make your transition as smooth as possible. Ensure that you keep your sponsor and the chain of command informed through constant communication throughout your arrival process.

It is important to note that the majority of responsibility for transfer falls on the inbound service member. The success and level of stress associated with this PCS is directly proportionate to the level of effort you put into planning and preparing for it. That is why the responsibilities of the inbound service member are listed as well.

Please consider taking notes and writing your comments in this package. When collected, your notes may be helpful toward improving the program for the next assignment season.

Tentative Schedule for Inbound Personnel

Prior to Arrival:

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Initiate contact via email and phone
- Send Welcome Aboard Package & Organization Manual
- Prompt and track overseas screening
- Answer questions and act as a link between service member and the Command
- Prompt tracking of passport acquisition process
- Advise on pack out (using long-term storage), vehicle shipment (vehicle size issues), and pet travel requirements
- Prompt and track DoDDS-Europe Schools Program application for school payment if applicable to ACTEUR (YN/ACS)
- Make reservation at selected hotel for inbound personnel
- Arrange meeting spot for pick up at the airport
- Setup Post Office Box
- Set up appointment with the Housing Officer

Inbound Personnel Responsibilities

- Read Welcome Aboard document & Organization Manual
- Complete overseas medical screening
- Research housing options/prices/rates via internet
- Request and receive passports
- Enroll in DoDDS-Europe School Program
- Research Schinnen area via internet
- Research and decide on hotel
- Ask as many questions as possible!

Day 1:

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Pick up inbound personnel at Dusseldorf or Brussels International Airport
- Bring a unit government cell phone to the airport for service member
- Transport service member to the prearranged hotel
- Pick up in government vehicle or link up and demonstrate how to use public transportation. Help purchase metro ticket.
- Arrange transportation for new arrivals to get to work the next day

Inbound Personnel Responsibilities

- Link up with sponsor at the airport outside of customs or at the meeting point
- Receive government cell phone & learn how to use/dial in
- Settle into the hotel
- Acclimate

Day 2-5:

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Make an appointment for command introductions
- Give thorough tour of the building
- Provide overview and guidance on the in processing procedure
- Get new arrival started with in processing through the Admin department and Army Central Processing Facility
- Maintain availability throughout for questions or assistance

- Make appointment for bank account set up.
- Assist with area familiarization, perhaps by government vehicle (groceries, train, school, etc.)
- Provide a walkthrough of the public transportation system
- Assist with getting OV-Chipkaarts
- Assist in putting money on the OV-Chipkaart
- Walk member through the process of using public transportation
- Assist with contacting Makelaar and making housing appointments
- Ensure new arrival gets to work

Inbound Personnel Responsibilities

- Acclimate
- Meet the command & receive tour of the building
- In process the unit with the YN
- Meet with the Housing Officer
- Set up bank account
- Visit Army ACS Office
- Meet the unit Ombudsman
- Learn about the public transport system, purchase an OV-Chipkaart
- Area familiarization (groceries, train, school, etc.)
- Make contact with a Makelaar and set up housing appointments

Day 5-10:

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Be available for questions and assistance

Inbound Personnel Responsibilities

- House Hunting to include making & attending housing appointments
- Acclimate
- Attend Driver's Training and take driving test to receive permit
- Army ACS Newcomers Brief
- Purchase prepaid/contract cell phone for dependants if necessary
- Apply for Dutch Alien Registration card & Marechausee letter

Days 10-20:

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Be available for questions and assistance
- Be prepared to check on spouse/dependants if service member is required to travel

Inbound personnel Responsibilities

- Have Housing Officer review lease & move into house
- Receive HHG
- Receive/coordinate pick up/drop off of Army loaner furniture
- Set up utilities: water, electricity, phone, internet, cable etc.
- Pick up vehicle

ACTEUR Ombudsman Program

The Ombudsman program was established to enhance the quality of life of the Coast Guard family. The Ombudsman is a vital resource to assist the command with the welfare of unit families. The Ombudsman serves as a volunteer liaison between the command's members, family members, parents and siblings. The email contact for the ACTEUR's Ombudsman at Activities Europe is, acteur.ombudsman@gmail.com. It is highly encouraged you make contact with the unit Ombudsman who will help in your acclimation to Schinnen.

Caveat Emptor: You may be able to purchase reasonable priced home supplies etc. from departing USA & USCG members. You are, however, strongly encouraged to refrain from purchasing items sight unseen prior to your arrival. You will have plenty of time to make educated purchases once you arrive.



[EDENPARK](#) BRUNSSUM
Vijverlaan 10
6443 BB Brunssum (Limburg)
+31 (0) 45 525 8885

Hotel Edenpark has its own specific charm due to its beautiful situation at the town's park in the pleasant centre of Brunssum, yet it is close to the striking nature of South-Limburg. You will be welcomed personally and you will find the comfort that you may expect from a hospitable residential hotel.



HOTEL [HEERLEN](#)
Terworn 10
6411 RV Heerlen
+31 (0) 45 571 9450

The Van der Valk Hotel Heerlen is situated at one of the most beautiful locations of Parkstad Limburg, a region of exceptional natural beauty in the southernmost part of the Netherlands. The hotel features 149 luxury hotel rooms and world-class suites, an inviting hotel bar and lounge, a large indoor swimming pool and modern business centre, and is pet friendly.



GOLF HOTEL BRUNSSUM

Rimburgerweg 52
6445 PA Brunssum
+31 (0) 45 527 0968

In the rolling hills of South Limburg, bordering the Schinveld woods, the Brunssummerheide (Brunssum heath) provides a unique paradise for solitude, lovers of nature, business people, golfers and other sporting enthusiasts. Golf-Residential Brunssummerheide, founded in 1985, offers large, luxurious apartments in close proximity to a variety of restaurants. In addition, the complex offers a 27-hole championship golf course, a challenging compact 9-hole course, (Par 3s/4s), a public 9-hole Par 3 course and a covered driving range. The hotel is located alongside the first tee of the championship course. The 42 luxury apartments and 2 penthouses have outstanding views over the golf course. Each apartment contains a living room, 2 phones, 2 televisions, a large bedroom, a bathroom with bath and/or shower, a separate toilet and a balcony or a terrace. Some apartments have 2 bedrooms and are perfect for families with children.

Commercial Housing

All housing is on the economy with the exception of E-6 members and below who must apply for release from government quarters. Suitable housing is reasonably available with monthly rents within the member's allowances. You should expect to reside in either private leased or government leased Dutch housing. Purchasing a house is not recommended while touring in Schinnen. The easiest way to begin the housing process is to research via the internet prior to your arrival. There are a variety of Web sites you can visit to get an idea of what types of residences are available in what areas of the region. Some factors that you should consider while looking at houses are the proximity to work, public transportation and schools if you have children, as well as whether you prefer city versus country life. **Due to the existing Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), ACTEUR personnel are not allowed to live in Germany or Belgium while assigned to the Netherlands.**

Generally rental houses within Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) limits tend to be row homes or duplexes which are similar to American town houses, while apartments are more common as you get closer to downtown Maastricht. Overall, houses tend to be smaller than what people are used to in the States, which may cause difficulty moving large furniture up narrow, spiral staircases or into small rooms. It is also possible to rent a furnished, partially furnished or

unfurnished home here. If you are not bringing household goods you should look for a furnished apartment and if you are bringing household goods you will most likely want to find a partially furnished apartment. Unfurnished apartments are stripped bare and many do not have finished flooring, lighting fixtures, kitchens etc. If you end up purchasing furniture while you are in country, ensure that you first ask if the store participates in VAT exemption, which allows you to get the taxes you are charged back from the merchant. Tax is set at 21%.

Rental contracts are completely negotiable making nearly anything possible if the landlord/property manager is willing to work with you (examples include landscaping or house cleaning). If you find a furnished house that you are interested in, but you plan on bringing household goods, you may be able to negotiate the removal of the rental furniture in the contract. Conversely, if you find an unfurnished property you may be able to negotiate having the landlord partially or fully furnish the property to your specifications during negotiations. Prices are also negotiable so keep in mind that you may be able to reduce the price of a property by 10% or 15% through negotiation.

It is necessary to make an appointment with the Army's Housing Officer upon your arrival in Schinnen in order to get a thorough explanation of the housing process. It is also possible to make an appointment, or have your sponsor make you an appointment before you arrive. The Housing Office has agreements with a handful of rental agencies (called makelaars in Dutch) which may smooth the process since these companies are used to working with American military personnel. The agreement also ensures that service members are not charged a finder's fee which many rental agencies expect if you rent from them, and it can be as high as one month's rent. You should not feel forced to use only the recommended rental agencies though, as finder's fees are negotiable, and sometimes reimbursable (this is further discussed in the chapter labeled Financial). It is important to note that **in the Netherlands, a verbal agreement is legally binding** so be mindful of what you say during viewings or to Makelaars.

You must be aware that the Army Housing Office will not be involved in finding you a residence. They may be able to recommend some homes and put you in touch with rental agencies, but it is your responsibility to figure out where you would like to live and to set up viewing appointments with rental agencies/landlords. Of the most common ways that incoming personnel find houses is by networking with outbound ACTEUR personnel, so ensure you use your sponsor as your line of communication for this type of information. If you find a house outside of the Army Housing Office support, discuss it with them. They are well versed in Dutch law and can help figure out leases.

It will be necessary to have a Dutch bank account with Euros in it before signing a lease. You will need to pay the first month's rent in addition to a security deposit, which usually equates to one month's rent, either upon signing your lease. OHA will begin when you give your lease to the unit yeomen to be processed.

Real Estate Web sites:

There are a few websites that will assist you in your search for housing. The base housing office works with many makelaars in the area. The housing office lists properties on the automated housing referral network (<http://www.ahrn.com/index.php>), but there are additional websites to

assist the incoming members in their home search. These sites include www.funda.nl and Vesteda (<https://www.vesteda.com>).

Funda.nl is one of the largest and most comprehensive rental Web sites. It is easily accessed despite being in Dutch. Instructions for using rental website, www.funda.nl:

- You begin on the web page listing houses for sale or “Te Koopwoningen.”
- For rental properties select the word “Huurwoningen” on the left side of the screen.
- Type “Schinnen” or whichever city or town you are interested in into the box labeled “Plaats of Postcode.”
- In the box to the right, choose the distance from the city center.
- Under “Prijsklasse” choose the minimum and maximum monthly rent amounts you are willing to pay in Euros.
- Click on the tab “Zoeken”

The web site will display results either as a list or map, and each will have contact information so that you know how to go about setting up a viewing or what number to call for further information.

Living area for homes in the Netherlands is given in square meters. The following is a general estimates table that will assist you in your search:

1 sq meter = 11 sq feet
10 sq meter = 108 sq feet
100 sq meter = 1,076 sq feet
150 sq meter = 1,615 sq feet
200 sq meter = 2,153 sq feet
250 sq meter = 2,691 sq feet
300 sq meter = 3,229 sq feet
350 sq meter = 3,768 sq feet

The following translations may be helpful when searching for a place to live:

Dutch Words	English
Te Huur	For Rent
Huurwoningen	Rental house
Vraagprijs	Asking price
Bouwjaar	Build year (when it was built)
Slaapkamer	Bedroom
Badkamer	Bathroom (this probably does not include toilet)
Keuken	Kitchen
Huiskamer	Livingroom
Oppervlakte	Size of living area (e.g., square meters)
Huisdieren niet toegestaan	Pets not allowed
Gemeubileerd	A rental house with furniture included (furnished)

Army Housing Office

The Army Housing Office is located here at the U.S. Army base in Schinnen.

Primary Housing & Furniture/Appliance Rental Officer

Mr. Alfred Levels: alfred.ln.level@eur.army.mil; +31 46 443 7455

Alternate Housing Officer

Mr. Bert de Vries: bert.devries1@eur.army.mil; +31 46 443 7416

Loaner Appliance Repair/Replacement Officer

Mr. Ed Ramaekers: ed.rameakers@eur.army.mil; +31 46 443 7294

As mentioned earlier, the housing office will not find you a residence or set up viewing appointments, but it is still necessary to schedule an in-processing appointment with them as soon as possible upon arrival. All leasing contracts must be reviewed by the housing office before being signed by service member and this can easily be done via email.

Service members also have the opportunity to borrow certain household items from the Army on either a long or a short-term basis. The Army can provide items such as washers, dryers, refrigerators and freezers if needed. They can also provide beds and other basic living and dining room furniture such as a couches, chairs, dining room table, etc. As these items are government furniture, they may not be as stylish or comfortable as you would like; they are however quite functional. Since many Dutch houses do not have as many closets as Americans are used to, you can also rent wardrobes for storage purposes. Contact Mr. Ed Ramaekers of the Housing Office for more information.

Utilities

When you move into a house, you will have to take meter readings that tell you where your consumption of utilities starts. You will receive a monthly or bi-monthly bill of fixed price. This bill is an estimate based on the last year's consumption in that house. Your meters will be read once a year and about a month later you will receive your bill, which will already account for your advance payments. Depending on your consumption, you may have to pay additional money or receive a refund for the overpayment at the end of the year when the annual bill is reconciled. After the yearly bill is received you can claim taxes back. The Housing Officer can also provide you with forms and procedures for getting the taxes back on your utility bills. Another important consideration for keeping your utility cost low is to take advantage of the lower rates for energy/water during the nights and weekends. The cost is significantly lower after 11:00 pm during the week and all day on weekends. It is especially important to use the reduced rate time periods for doing laundry and running your dishwasher as utility costs can be very high in the Netherlands.

All utilities, which are in your name, can be paid by taking the bill to the nearest TNT (Dutch Post Office) and paying cash. You will pay the bill plus a small service charge to the TNT. Another alternative is to use your local bank account to make the money transfer. The third alternative is to have your bill automatically deducted from your local bank account.

Electricity

Dutch houses are wired for 220 volt/50 cycle electricity. If you want to see if your small electrical equipment will operate in The Netherlands, check the back panel. If it reads 110-240 volts/50-60 cycles, then you will simply need an inexpensive plug adapter (Dutch electrical plugs have two rounded prongs). If it reads 110/60, you may be able to use a transformer to safely reduce the voltage. Computers and computer monitors are generally “dual voltage” and can operate in Europe without a transformer after changing the power setting switch on the back of the computer. Standard U.S. lamps also make the transition easily without a transformer. Simply replace the 120V light bulb with a 220V bulb of the same size and wattage and use an adapter to plug in the lamp. Lamps using bulbs with a smaller E12 base cannot be converted to operate with standard sized E14 European bulbs. Appliances such as electric skillets, crock pots, and irons or anything with a heating element generally operate satisfactorily using a transformer,

Electronics and appliances equipped with motors, magnetrons, or other sensitive electronic innards, will not operate properly or may work but will suffer damage and/or reduced life expectancy with a transformer. The following items may fall into this category:

- TV (Local television systems also use a different signal format (PAL vice NTSC).
- Coffee Maker
- Microwave Oven
- Cordless Telephone (standard non-powered phones work fine with a phone adapter)
- Printers and Fax Machine
- Powered computer speakers
- Stereo equipment
- Electric fan (will work off a transformer but unless it is really a nice fan, it may be cheaper to buy a 220 fan instead of purchasing a transformer for a 110 fan).
- Electric mixer (many people report no problems with the mixers running on a transformer, however a larger transformer is needed)
- Bread machine
- Power tools (many people have not had problems periodically running smaller power tools off a transformer of sufficient capacity. For example, drills, rechargeable tools, sanders, Skil saw, routers, etc.)
- VCR
- CD/DVD Player
- Alarm clock
- Vacuum cleaner (your U.S. vacuum will run fine off a transformer but it becomes rather inconvenient to lug the transformer around a three level house...most people buy a new or used 220 vacuum for the tour)
- DVDs will only work region 1; VHS tapes will not work in local VHS machines.

Transformers and 220V appliances are readily available in Dutch shops or you may be able to acquire some from departing personnel. The AAFES exchanges in Europe also sell dual voltage electronics that will work in Europe and the United States.

COMMUNICATION

Although Dutch is the language spoken most frequently in the Netherlands, most people also speak at least a small amount of English, so face to face communication is not usually a problem. Deciphering written correspondence is trickier, and you may need to rely on a local national to translate bills or other mail items that are in Dutch. Another option is to use an online translator service such as [Google Translate](#).

Another area where language can cause problems is when you reach a recorded telephone tree. This has happened when people have called their cable or utility company for assistance and again, you may need to solicit help from a local national or an online translator.

Phone & Internet

Your location within the Schinnen area will dictate the internet service providers available to you. Your Makelaar or landlord should be able to tell you which service providers are available in your area. Deciding on a package that suits your wants and needs is similar to choosing one in the States. The process of getting your service started may take a bit longer than you are used to because service providers sometimes use the mail system to deliver your affiliated hardware, and switch service on after you receive your hardware. One way to work around this is to offer to come to the store and pick up your hardware if that is an option.

You may consider having a voice over internet (VOIP) phone service account such as Skype, Vonage or MagicJack which will make it possible for your family and friends to call you while you are in the Netherlands at whatever regular U.S. long distance or local rates apply.

Information on Skype may be found at www.Skype.com. You simply download the Skype software, install it and make sure you have all the necessary accessories such as microphone, speakers and headphones. Phone plans vary in type and price.

To arrange for Vonage services, contact Vonage www.vonage.com to set up an account prior to your departure from the U.S. This will include shifting a U.S. phone number (like your house number or a cell phone number) to the account, ordering a Vonage box, and having it mailed to your U.S. address. If you sign up for Vonage after you arrive in NL, you may have to use a third party to mail your Vonage box due to APO mailing restrictions. Once you arrive in the Netherlands, receive your HHG and set up your home computer, your Vonage box can be connected and you are ready to make and receive calls without involving international calling rates. There are a number of plans available.

MagicJack information can be found online at <http://www.magicjack.com/5/index.asp> and the hardware can be purchased at the Army Exchange located on USAG Schinnen. The hardware is a small box the size of a deck of cards that plugs into the USB port of your computer. The other side of the box has a regular phone jack where you can plug a normal phone into it. Once you download the software onto your computer you can make calls for a flat rate of \$40 for the first year (which includes the price of the hardware) and \$20 each additional year.

One of the first things that people tend to do when they arrive in the Netherlands is to purchase a prepaid phone. You can purchase any type of prepaid phone from a number of different stores for any price point.

Comparison shopping for cell phone contract packages can be tricky because there are so many different package options available to you. Each company has its own deals and packages to choose from, and these even vary by which store you visit. It has been noted that the best way to research your choices for service contracts is to actually visit a few different stores. The requirements for getting a service contract will also vary by store- or even by which person within the store you speak with, so be prepared to present your passport, EU driver's license, bank account routing information and lease in order to be able to get a cell phone contract.

VEHICLES

You are authorized two vehicles during your stay in Schinnen, but the military will only pay to ship one. Your vehicle will be shipped to the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) in Schinnen. Upon check in you should contact the VPC and provide them with your name and updated contact information so that you can be notified when your vehicle is available for pickup.

It is possible for service members to ship a second vehicle, but it is rare. This process must be done commercially and all expenses are paid by the service member. There are also many options for purchasing a vehicle during your tour in Schinnen, but most members use either public transportation or a bike as their alternate transportation.

Prior to picking up your vehicle, you will need to get an Armed Forces driving license through the Schinnen drivers testing station. Driving testing is located in building 4, on Schinnen. The drivers testing office provides assistance in obtaining a privately owned vehicle license and government vehicle license. Any members of the military services assigned to Netherlands are required to obtain a POV license.

Members are required to attend a traffic orientation class, pass an exam on Dutch signs and law, and pass an eye-test. Study books are available at the testing station to help people prepare for the class. Study manuals are basically issued for a period of one month. The test on Dutch signs and law consists of 50 questions. Test-takers may miss up to five questions and still pass.

Vehicle Pick-Up

It is required for you make appointments for each of the stops you must make during the vehicle pick up process. Each step is described below, along with a suggested timeline that can be used as a guide for making your appointments. Ensure that you have appointments for all steps of the process. Please be mindful of office hours since some are closed from 1200-1300 for lunch. An interactive map showing the location of Schinnen and Brunssum is available online.

Items you will need for POV Pick-Up
Proof of Insurance
Schinnen Drivers License
Order with Amendments
Power of Attorney, if needed
Shipping Documents
Military ID
Title
Vehicle Registration

Schinnen

Army Garrison Schinnen
Nutherweg 60
6365 ER-Schinnen, The Netherlands
+31 (0)46-443-2818

Drivers Testing Office

Mr. Janssen
Danny.Janssen@EUR.ARMY.MIL
Schinnen Emma Mine Complex- Building 4, Room 110
0730-1600 M-W, F; 0800-1500
+31 (0)46 443 7656/7433
<http://www.usagschinnen.eur.army.mil/sites/directorates/DOL/dtts.asp>

Schinnen MP Station

The Military Police station will issue the Form 162 to register your car, and will issue a temporary gas ration card which will allow you to get up to 50 liters of gas on post. Recommend making an appointment for 0830.

Schinnen Emma Mine Complex- Building 2
On the right as you enter the front gate of the post
0830-1600 M-W, F; 0830-1500
+31 (0)46 443 7322

Vehicle Processing Center

The VPC is where you will actually receive your car. Recommend making an appointment for 0900. Below is the contact information:

Schinnen Emma Mine Complex- Building 2, Room 113
0830-1600 M-W, F; 0830-1500
+31 (0)46 443 7386

Gas Station & PX

You are required to have safety equipment in your vehicle in order to pass the inspection required in Brunssum. Kits that have all required items are sold in the PX (Pack of 3 warning triangles, first aid kit, at least 2 safety vests or one for each passenger). You also need to keep an Accident Sketch Form and a European Accident Statement from in your vehicle at all times.

JFC HQ Brunssum

Rimburgerweg 44
6445 PA Brunssum, The Netherlands
+31 (0)45 526 2114/ 2544

APK Inspection

Ensure that you have all required safety equipment before having vehicle inspected. Recommend making an appointment at 1030, and it will take around 30-45 minutes. You can either be inspected using a local inspection service on the economy or at the Car Craft Center on post.

Car Craft Center
+31 (0)45 526 3173
0800-1600 Drop off service only, 0900-1700 W, 1200-2000 Th,
0830-1630 F & S, Closed Sun & Mon
+31 (0)45 526 3173

Building 102

There are three offices that you will need to visit in Building 102, and all have the same contact information. It is necessary to make one appointment for visiting all offices in this building by calling and asking for an appointment to register the vehicle for the first time. Recommend making appointment at 1100. It is also necessary to have the Form 162 from Schinnen in order to complete the registration process.

Rimburgerweg 30 Building 102
6445 PA Brunssum, The Netherlands
0815-1500 M-F, last appointment at 1415
+31 (0)45 526 2580

The first office you will visit is the Pass & Permits Office, which is the last door on the left. This office will input your information into their computer system.

From here you will visit the Vehicle Registration Office, which is the 5th door on the left. Here you will get a pink NATO/JFC license, and you will register your vehicle with Brunssum. Ensure that you have all of the listed documents as well as your inspection paperwork and the Form 162. You will also pay a registration fee of 16 Euros which must be paid in cash, and receive a form that allows you to get a license made and mounted on your car. They will give you a map and contact information for a nearby shop that will stamp and mount your plates.

The last stop is the Customs Office which is across the hall from the Vehicle Registration Office.

License Stamping/ Mounting

Use the map and contact information from the Vehicle Registration Office to travel to the recommended shop to get your plates stamped and mounted

Maintenance

There are dealerships around the area for nearly all car makers. However, if you need significant repair work done; parts may have to be ordered from the U.S.

Insurance

Automobile insurance is mandatory for all military personnel and is required by Dutch law. You are advised to call your insurance provider to ensure that you have coverage throughout Europe and to request an EU proof of insurance card. If your current insurance agency will not cover you, you may either change your insurer or leave your vehicle in storage. Although most U.S. military personnel retain their U.S. insurance companies, it is possible, and in many instances cheaper to acquire Dutch automobile insurance. Many service members have insurance through USAA, and it is also possible to get insurance through ABN AMRO bank or Meeus once you are here.

Gas Coupons and Rations

As a member of the U.S. Armed Forces in Europe, you are entitled to purchase pre-paid gas coupons for significantly less than retail gas prices, which are over \$6.00 per gallon. Your gas ration card issued by Vehicle Registration Office at JFC HQ Brunssum, allows you to purchase gas coupons from the Army Exchange up to your monthly gas ration limit. Pre-paid gas coupons are then accepted in exchange for gasoline (and diesel fuel) at participating Esso stations in the Netherlands. If you have never been to the station before, it is safest to confirm that the Esso accepts the coupons before tanking the car up. Gas may also be purchased without coupons at the reduced “gas coupon” rate at the Army Exchange in Schinnen.

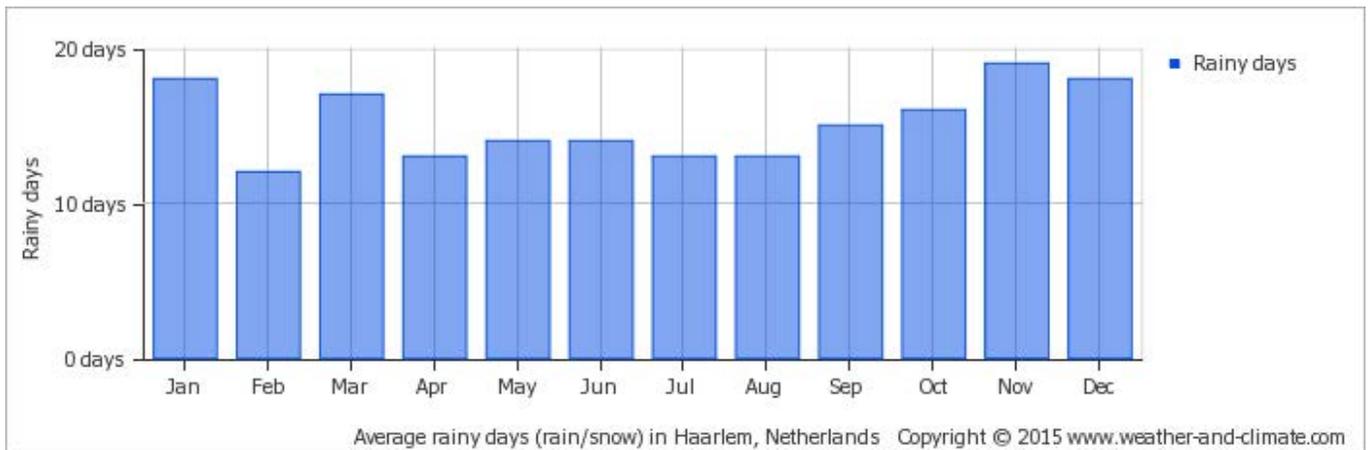
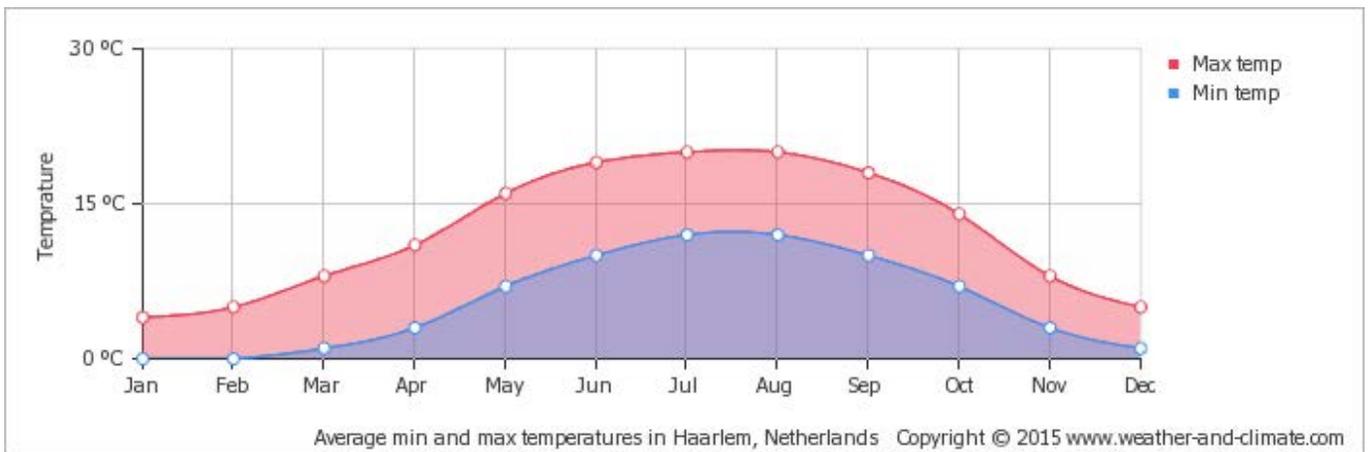
Other Vehicle Requirements

You are required to carry the following documents and safety equipment when driving a vehicle in Europe: an EU Accident Form, your vehicle’s registration documents, proof of insurance and basic safety equipment, such as a danger triangle and first aid kit.

WEATHER

During transfer season in the summer, it is generally warm with daytime highs in the 15-20C (60s-70s), and lows around 10C (50s). Clothing appropriate for these temperatures will need to be hand carried in your luggage for use upon arrival. It is advisable to bring a light sweater, a rain jacket/windbreaker, and an umbrella in your luggage as well.

Fall, winter and spring weather is similar to what one might expect in an area like Seattle: typically chilly and/or wet with limited snowfall. As a rule of thumb, you should always be prepared with a jacket and umbrella during all seasons. Here is a look at average monthly temperatures and rainfall for local area.



UNIFORMS & CLOTHING

The standard USCG ACTEUR uniform of the day, in alignment with the DoD equivalent in the local area, regardless of season is the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU), except when SDB or Tropical Blue Long would be more appropriate for the occasion, or as directed by the Commanding Officer. Coast Guard personnel must present a proud, professional, and consistent appearance that will reflect positively on the individual, the Coast Guard, and the United States. All personnel will comply with these regulations and serve as a positive example for the proper wearing of Coast Guard uniforms. Exemplary military appearance is the norm for uniformed personnel.

You should report into the unit wearing appropriate civilian attire. USCG personnel traveling in or transiting in Europe via commercial means will wear civilian clothing and, when possible, not carry items such as luggage and backpacks that convey an affiliation to the military. Uniform wear off base or on public transportation is also prohibited due to current force protection measures. This prohibition includes convenience related stops at fast food establishments, convenience stores, markets, or other related locations. This policy flexes with local changes to Force Protection.

We strongly recommend that you include military uniforms and Sea Bag items in your express shipment or hand carry it on your flight in case it is needed prior to the arrival of your household goods. Under the provisions of 37 USC 419, military personnel assigned to a permanent duty station outside the United States may be paid a civilian clothing allowance if they are required to wear civilian clothing all or a substantial portion of the time in the performance of their duties. See your unit yeoman prior to transfer for your entitlement and to request your one-time civilian clothing allowance if applicable.

Here are some recommendations for clothes that you may want to include in your household goods shipment:

- Light raincoat/windbreaker
- Warm, waterproof coat for winter
- Gloves & hats
- Umbrellas
- Warm & waterproof shoes/boots
- Clothing that can be layered

The Dutch rarely wear shorts even on warm summer days. If they do wear shorts, they generally prefer knee-length shorts, even for men.

Purchasing clothing in The Netherlands can be difficult and sometimes expensive. Finding specialty sizes such as petite may be difficult. Although the clothing styles in Europe are somewhat different from those in the United States, it is all a matter of taste. You should not feel intimidated by shopping in The Netherlands as salespeople are friendly and usually speak excellent English. Many stores, to include grocery stores, may be closed in the evening, and on the Sunday, so pay attention to store hours.

Internet shopping from US websites and catalogues is quite popular if the retailer can accommodate shipment to an APO address.

FINANCES

Moving to a foreign country can be expensive; costs can be higher than what you would normally associate with an INCONUS permanent change of station. Members are encouraged to have set aside sufficient funds to cover at a minimum, first month's rent, security deposit (1 month rent amount) and makelaar's fee (equal to one month rent) example; OHA=1500 euros, you will need 4500 euros upon signing lease (Over \$6000 depending on the current exchange rate). To assist you in offsetting these costs, the government has several allowances to which you are entitled. The list below provides a short description of your allowances. You are strongly encouraged to discuss each of these allowances with Admin. It is also important to mention that it is the service member's responsibility to ensure that his/her pay is correct, and it is highly recommended that you keep an extra watchful eye on your pay during your time in the Netherlands since there are so many unique allowances to which you are entitled. The link to PPC is; <http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/rates.asp>

Allowances

Dislocation Allowance (DLA): DLA is authorized for all Coast Guard personnel who have been assigned to Activities Europe. You should see your unit yeoman prior to your transfer to ensure you receive this allowance. All inbound personnel, regardless of dependency status, are authorized advance DLA.

Civilian Clothing Allowance: This initial allowance is authorized for all inbound personnel whose job requires them to wear civilian attire over 50% of the time and who are not transferring from a unit at which the member already received this allowance. It amounts is \$1006.20 as of October 2014. You may receive this allowance prior to your departure from your current duty station after all overseas screening is completed and ACTEUR has sent the entry approval message. See COMDTINST M7220.29B for more information.

Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS): Enlisted personnel will receive Enlisted BAS and officers BAS will remain unchanged.

Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA): This allowance will cover most if not all of your hotel costs while you and your family await permanent quarters. Authorized TLA amounts vary greatly and may be difficult to compute. A good rule of thumb is to look for a hotel that accepts the current government rate. TLA is reimbursed in 10 day increments through Admin.

Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA): OHA is comprised of three elements: rental allowance, utility/recurring maintenance allowance, and move-in housing allowance (MIHA). Your rental allowance is use or lose allowing for the inclusion of services such as housekeeping, yard maintenance, etc. to be included in rent up to the OHA limit. Utility/recurring maintenance allowance is a fixed amount that is not use or lose, but you will not receive this payment if your utilities are included in your rent payment.

Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA): MIHA/Miscellaneous is a one-time allowance designed to offset the cost of moving into your permanent residence. Members assigned to ACTEUR may also be authorized MIHA/Rent which would cover one time move in expenses such as realtor fees. Use DD 2556 to claim this allowance. MIHA/Security is not authorized for ACTEUR personnel.

Overseas Cost of Living Allowance (COLA): Overseas COLA is a pay-supplement designed to equalize purchasing power between members overseas and their INCONUS- counterparts. COLA is based on your rate/rank, number of years of service, and your number of dependents. It is paid in 15-day increments and is regularly updated to reflect changes in exchange rates, local prices, and surveys of shopping behavior at each overseas location.



Most EU countries have adopted the Euro with exceptions including Denmark, Sweden, and UK, which are part of the EU, but retain their original currencies. The Euro and the U.S. Dollar have fluctuated against one another significantly. In order to buffer overseas military personnel from these exchange rate fluctuations, most of your allowances are set in Euros and you are then paid based on the latest Euro – Dollar exchange rate. A convenient currency converter can be found at <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>. You will be required to use this site while conducting official travel.

Personal checks are not used in the Netherlands. Instead, the Dutch pay bills, rent, and other large payments through electronic funds transfer. Your Dutch bank can provide you instructions on how to transfer funds from your account to another account, and your Makelaar and/or landlord should be able to assist you in setting up auto bill pay for utilities.

Typical American credit cards are not as widely used in The Netherlands; instead they generally accept payment via a Maestro card which bears a logo similar to the MasterCard logo. This card

Banking

Stateside bank cards are not widely accepted in the Netherlands; However, you can withdraw funds with them at most ATMs. Instead, the Dutch pay bills, rent, and other large payments through electronic funds transfer. Your Dutch bank can provide you instructions on how to transfer funds from your account to another account, and your Makelaar and/or landlord should be able to assist you in setting up auto bill pay for utilities.

Typical American credit cards are not as widely accepted in the Netherlands; instead they are generally accept payment via Maestro card which bears a logo similar to MasterCard logo. This card is a check card so it draws money directly from your checking account, and it can also be used to get cash from ATMs. Your bank card may also be equipped with a small data chip called a “Chip Knip”, onto which you can transfer a small amount of cash. The “Chip Knip” portion of your card can then be used to pay for parking meters and other very small purchases. It may be possible to change the language displayed on the credit card machine when paying with your Maestro card or Chipknip by selecting the “Ja” button when the screen reads “Taal.” From here you can select English as your language of choice. USAA provides credit cards with the chip. They also waive the international fee on purchases.

There are a few different options for Dutch banking. Direct deposit or allotment to a Dutch bank account is not possible, so you will need to continue your direct deposit to your American bank or credit union, making transfers as needed to your Dutch account. Other military personnel have accounts with ING, ABN AMRO, Andrews Federal Credit Union, or Community Bank which is operated by Bank of America.

Community Bank and Andrews Federal Credit Union will transfer and convert money from your American account to your Dutch account electronically, and this process can be set up as an automatic, regular transaction. You can also set up recurring payment of your Dutch bills for free through community bank, but one time payments incur a two dollar fee. Community bank does not issue Maestro cards; they can only offer Visa check cards. For this reason many people use Community Bank as a conduit between their American bank and their Dutch ABN AMRO or ING account so that they have access to a Maestro card which is the preferred method of payment in The Netherlands.

You will need to explore your banking options to determine what will work best for your financial situation. Seek advice from your sponsor and other members of the unit.

MEDICAL



MEDICAL/DENTAL CARE:

Members of the USAG Schinnen are supported by the U.S. Air Force medical and dental clinics in Geilenkirchen, Germany (approximately 15 miles from Schinnen). These facilities are small and provide limited services. Their primary mission is to take care of active duty service Members. Family members and Civilian employees are usually referred to Dutch or German physicians by Tricare, which is also located at the Geilenkirchen Health Clinic. Tricare maintains a list of German and Dutch physicians, including specialists, who speak English and meet strict medical standards of practice. Standards of practice in Germany and Netherlands are as strict as those in the United States, so rest assured that your medical needs will be satisfactorily met when referred to one of these physicians or dentists.

MEDICAL Location: Geilenkirchen NATO AWACS Base, Bldg. 208

CLINIC GK Operating Hours: M-W-F, 0900-1700; Tu, 0900-1600; Thu, 0900-1200

Commercial Phone: in Germany 0049-2451-993200

Bring the following documents:

1. Orders; Medical Records; Family's medical records
2. Tricare enrollment form which can be picked up at the Admin Office
3. Bring SSN for all Family members

Every 3rd Wednesday of the month the GK CLinic offers 'Medical Right Start' meeting for newly reported members. It is from 1425-1600. Your sponsor will help you attend if you desire to.

ARRIVAL IN THE NETHERLANDS

You **must** make travel arrangements to arrive at either Brussels Airport in Brussels, Belgium or Dusseldorf Airpot in Dusseldorf, Germany. Be sure to send your itinerary to your sponsor, along with how many people, pets and bags you will have in tow. Your sponsor will meet you in the arrival hall at the airport after you have cleared Immigration and Customs. Please let your sponsor know if you are traveling with pets for best airpot options.

When you deplane, follow the signs to Baggage Claim. Keep your eyes open for free luggage carts and feel free to use one. On the way to Baggage Claim, you will first go through Immigration where passports will be examined. Service members present orders and military ID and family members should present their passports. If you were already issued an official passport (red), you should present it, as your transfer overseas is Official Business. No visa is necessary for U.S. citizens arriving in The Netherlands. If, however, you have a non-U.S. citizen in your family, contact Activities Europe immediately, as a Netherlands visa may be required!

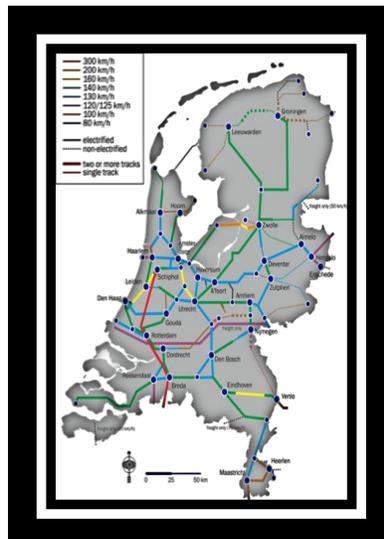
After you collect your baggage, go through the “**NOTHING TO DECLARE**” (green sign) aisle (unless however you have something to declare). In the green aisle, the Customs “Douane” officials randomly stop people, ask where they arrived from and sometimes have them open their bags. Do not be surprised though if you simply walk through Customs without being checked.

After Customs, you pass through an automatic door and enter the Arrivals Hall. Your sponsor will be waiting on the other side of that door. If, after waiting for a long time, you have not met up with your sponsor, find a telephone and call your sponsor on his/her mobile phone or call the offis if during houring hours. Use of the public telephone may require the purchase of a phone card or Euro cents to make the call.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



One of the best things about living in The Netherlands is the exceptional public transportation system, which serves just about anywhere you might need to go, including international destinations. When you first arrive you may not have immediate access to a vehicle, however there are numerous other ways to get around. ACTEUR personnel rely heavily on the public train system to get to and from the airport, and Inspectors and IPSLOs travel very frequently, so this is something you may want to consider when choosing your housing location.



Travel on the metro, trolleys/trams and buses all use the same form of payment which is a public transport debit card called an OV-Chipkaart. These cards can contain your bank info if you want them to automatically refill, or they can be anonymously purchased and preloaded with funds at the RET machines or service counters. Most of the RET machines that recharge OV-Chipkaarts take either coins or Dutch bank cards, but bills can be used if you go to RET service counters.



To use the OV-Chipkaart you simply swipe the card when you get on and off of the metro, bus, or trolley and the proper amount is deducted from the card. Your sponsor will help you purchase the new OV-Chipkaart card and show you how to use it.

Dutch trains are reliable, timely, cheap, and frequent. Trains in The Netherlands are used in the same way that many Americans use subways. Trains may be used locally, or for inter-city travel. An online travel planner for the train system is available in English at <http://www.ns.nl/cs/Satellite/travellers>. An online public transportation planner that includes all forms of public transit can be found at <http://journeyplanner.9292.nl/>. Your sponsor will help you learn the basics of buying tickets and reading the Dutch train schedules.



If you plan to ride the train frequently, you may want to buy a Discount Card, which entitles you to a 40% train fare discount during the summer and during off-peak hours. Touch screen train ticket machines, which offer instructions in English, are located at all major train stations but they do not accept cash or U.S. credit cards. They accept only Dutch PIN/Debit cards or “ChipKnip” cards. There are a few other automated train ticket machines which accept coins, but no paper bills and they are quite difficult to use. Purchasing train tickets at the service window will subject you to a 0.50 Eurocent fee, which is worth it until you have a Dutch bank card of your own. Another way to buy tickets without a Dutch PIN/Debit card is to purchase a pre-paid ChipKnip card. These cards are available at the RET booth and at most convenience stores.

Transport by Bike

Many ACTEUR members use their bike as a primary mode of transportation on a daily basis. Purchasing a bike on the Dutch economy will most likely cost you a few hundred Euros, even for a used bike. The benefit of purchasing a bike in the Netherlands is that it will come with all of the necessary safety equipment such as a bell and lights, as well as equipment that will make your commute easier such as a mud flap and chain cover. Some service members have brought bikes from the States and used them, but be aware that you will need to have them altered in order to meet Dutch bike safety standards. Active duty service members are required to wear helmets while riding and dependents are highly encouraged to do so as well.

SCHOOL

The AFNORTH International School was founded in September 1967 and provides education for about 1400 children of Allied Forces Northern Europe and other NATO personnel serving at the headquarters and nearby commands. Four nationalities sponsor the school: Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. Responsibility for international administration is vested in a director appointed by the Board of Governors. Each of the national sections has its own principal or head teacher who is responsible for his/her section to both the director and to his/her national education authority. The director and the principals are together responsible for fostering the international ethos of the school and for respecting the educational requirements of each nation. For information about student placements in elementary grades call +31-045-527-8251, and for high school students, grades 7 to 12, call +31-045-527-8268.

Special Needs

Prior to accepting a position, the command shall ensure that family members' medical and educational needs can be met at the overseas location. The schools here have limited special education services and unlike public schools in the U.S., they are NOT obligated to accept your child if he or she has special educational needs. It is essential that you submit your child's IEP (Individual Education Plan) to the Department of Defense Dependents Schools program prior to arrival. It is also recommended that you submit the IEP to the command and school as soon as possible.

The purpose of special education is to enable students to successfully develop to their fullest potential by providing a free appropriate public education in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as implemented by DoD Instruction 1342.12, "Provision of Early Intervention and Special Education Services to Eligible DoD Dependents." Be aware that schools outside the U.S. are not required to follow U.S. legislation on any educational issue and DoDDS-Europe does not have any control over local school operations. The Work Life office may also have useful information and resources, and they can be contacted at:

United States Coast Guard
Health, Safety, Work Life Field Office
Donna S. Pass-Otteni, LPN, FRS
Portsmouth (FOD5-POWL)
4000 Coast Guard Boulevard
Portsmouth, Virginia 23703
Office - 757-686-4023
Fax - 757-686-403

RESIDENCE PERMITS & IDS



A residence permit is required for all dependents regardless of age, and for all civilian employees. Military members are exempt because of the SOFA, and they have a different form of identification. Permits are issued by the Royal Koninklijke Marechaussee, or Dutch police who will collect certain information and 2 color European passport photos of your dependents. Please be aware that European passport photos are smaller than American ones. Residence permits come in the form of a wallet-sized ID card with the bearer's name and color photo on the front. It is recommended that dependants ask for a Marechaussee letter since you might be travelling out of the country while your residency permit is being processed through the Dutch system. The Marechaussee office located on the NATO Brunssum base will send your family's documentation to the immigration office in Eindhoven, you will need to call the immigration officer to make sure your information has arrived then make an appointment.

Members of the military will be issued a Marechaussee letter in Dutch that explains their presence in The Netherlands. Passport control will occasionally ask for this letter as verification of your residency as you enter the country. It is standard to receive this letter in a hard copy, but you can also ask for a scanned copy for your records as well.

The type of residence permit issued depends on the dependent's nationality:

- Dependents with U.S. citizenship or citizenship in another "friendly" country are considered privileged aliens, and may simply apply for a Residence Permit after entering The Netherlands.
- Dependents with another nationality who would need a Visa to enter The Netherlands need to apply for a "Machtiging Voorlopig Verblijf" (MVV) at the Dutch Consulate of their country of residence before traveling to The Netherlands.
- Dependents with a nationality of one of the 15 Schengen countries, most of which are EU countries, do not need a Dutch residence permit.

As of 1 January, 2005, Dutch law requires all persons (14 years and older) to carry two forms of ID:

Category	ID Requirement
Uniformed Members	US Military ID card and Movement Order <i>or</i> US Military ID and NATO ID Card
DOD Civilian Employees	US Military Civilian ID Card and Dutch Alien Registration Card
Dependents 14 years and older	US Military Dependent ID Card and Dutch Alien Registration Card
Dependents under 14	No requirement to carry identification

Installation Access Control System (IACS) Registration: All military personnel and their dependents must also be registered in IACS to be authorized to enter U.S. military bases in Europe (to use the exchanges, commissaries, clinics, etc.). To accomplish this, the newer military ID cards, which have a chip implanted on the front and a barcode on the back, must be activated by the IACS system.

Passports

It is required for dependents to have "no-fee" passports in order to travel to ACTEUR. This requires you to apply at your nearest CG admin office for a "no-fee" passport well in advance of your report date. It is highly recommended to have a tourist passport for each member of your family for travel in and around Europe.

Inspectors and IPSLOs need to have 2 official passports prior to arriving. Check with your sponsor and local YN regarding this as it may take multiple months. It is also recommended that you request extra pages for both official passports when you initially apply for them. To do this you need to place a note in your application requesting an extra thick passport book with 52 pages.

Visit the Department of State [website](#) for more information on requesting passports.

DEPENDANT EMPLOYMENT

Working as a U.S. citizen in the Netherlands presents many challenges, and many opportunities. Please note that the command does not expect your sponsor to be responsible for finding employment for your spouse. If spousal employment is absolutely critical to your financial or personal situation, you are strongly encouraged to consider whether or not assignment at ACTEUR is a good choice for you. If you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please call your sponsor, the ACTEUR Executive Officer at +31 (0)62 316 9593, or with the Ombudsman at acteur.ombudsman@gmail.com.

Here are some questions to consider when approaching this subject:

Are you willing to work in Schinnen at the same location as your spouse? While ACTEUR's offices are located with the Army, the building also has employees from other Department of Defense (DOD) branches. Positions may include: Shopette Clerk, Bartender, and Morale, Welfare & Recreation assistant, mailroom attendant, and library assistant. With the relatively large number of people stationed at this building who are married, jobs fill up fast. The other commands and agencies in the building hire through their respective HR offices, and positions are generally set-aside for career employees. If work in the building may be of interest to your spouse, you should check out the [USA Jobs](#) website for any available positions.

Can you work in a different city/country and only be home part-time? Working in Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, or elsewhere in Europe would reduce your time with your loved ones. In many job types, such as consulting, this is standard practice, and some spouses enjoy the challenges such a lifestyle offers.

Can you work from home? These jobs could be whatever you might make of them. You might consider creating a virtual business using the Internet as your selling portal. Note that using the US APO (military postal system) to run a private business is prohibited.

Working on the Dutch economy

There are limited possibilities to find work in the Dutch economy. Individuals who wish to work in the Dutch economy will first need to acquire a Dutch Social Fiscal (SOFI) number, which is similar in nature to a US Social Security Number. The SOFI number establishes you as a taxable entity. Once the SOFI number has been acquired, you will need to find an employer who will sponsor you to get a work permit. If you are able to secure a Work Permit, you will then need to have an endorsement placed on the back of your Residence Permit stating that you are allowed to work on the Dutch economy. It tends to be difficult to find positions on the economy because employers must justify hiring a foreigner over a Dutch resident as per Dutch law.

TRI-BORDER COMMUNITY SERVICES

Army Community Service

Army Community Service is an organization that specializes in assisting service members and their Families. It is the commander's primary resource agency for developing and implementing Family programs that enhance the well being of our community. ACS consists of the following branches: Family Advocacy, which includes the Exceptional Family Member Office, The New Parent Support Program, and Emergency Placement Care; Army Emergency Relief (AER); Financial and Consumer Affairs; Employment Readiness Program; Relocation Program; Information and Referral; Mobilization and Deployment; Army Family Team Building; and, Installation Volunteer Program. ACS provides free assistance to U. S. ID cardholders and their families.

- ◆ Programs, support groups, location and identification of services for exceptional Family members.
- ◆ Newcomer information on Schinnen and other installations.
- ◆ Information and referrals to service agencies both on and off post.
- ◆ Emergency financial assistance through AER, and referral for assistance of emergency supply of food.
- ◆ Financial planning and money management classes.
- ◆ Job search assistance and counseling to include, employment orientation, skills development workshops, and the use of the computer for computerized job bases.
- ◆ A lending closet with basic household items for the temporary use of arriving and departing Families.
- ◆ Information on child and spouse abuse prevention and emergency shelter.
- ◆ Parenting and marriage workshops.
- ◆ Information on Army Family Team Building courses, volunteers and training.
- ◆ The Installation Volunteer Coordinator is always looking for people to help the community with various volunteer positions.

Check Cashing

Checks are accepted for purchases or payment at most retail facilities on post except for concessionaires who are not equipped to handle checks. The PX, PXtra and commissary accept checks for \$20 over the purchase price. The PX can also cash checks for up to \$300 per day per Family, and provide up to \$100 cash back when using a debit card. The JFC HQ Brunssum Finance Office can cash personal checks up to \$745 per week per Family.

Child & Youth Services

CYS programs are open to all NATO ID card holders. Use of programs requires registration at CYS Central Registration Office. Parents or legal guardians must bring their child's current immunization record, health assessment, names and telephone numbers of at least 2 emergency contacts, and current leave and earnings statement for employed parents wanting to use the child care programs. For information, please contact cys.schinnen@eur.army.mil.

Child Development Center

- ◆ Serves children 6 weeks - 5 years
- ◆ Full-day, hourly care and part-day programs
- ◆ DOD certified, NAEYC accredited Operating hours: 0700-1800 Monday– Friday

School Age Services

- ◆ Serves children from 1st through 6th grade
- ◆ Before and after school care, open recreation activities, Boys and Girls Clubs, springs, winter + summer camps, homework help.
- ◆ Operating hours are 0700-0845 and 1545-1800 when school is in session, 0700-1800 when school is not in session

Youth Services

- ◆ Serves youth from 6th grade through 12th grade
- ◆ Open recreation activities
- ◆ Boys and Girls Clubs
- ◆ Youth sponsorship
- ◆ Homework help

Youth Sports

- ◆ Offers soccer, flag football, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, & wrestling
- ◆ Start Smart skill building program from 3-5 year olds
- ◆ Ages 5-18, depending on sport

Commissary

The Schinnen Commissary offers about 14,000 line items for sale. The commissary features a deli, a special lunch display, and fresh produce daily. Commissary users can save more money by using coupons – the commissary accepts coupons that have expired up to six months. Normal hours of operation are Tuesdays through Fridays, 1000 to 1900; Saturdays and Sundays, 1000-1800. The Commissary is closed on Mondays.

Education Center

The Education Center provides a broad academic classroom and online program designed to enhance personal growth and further career development. Programs are available at every academic level from basic education, to certificates, associate, bachelor, master's and doctoral programs. See page 14, 35- 37 and 43 for detailed information.

Law Center

Netherlands Law Center provides U.S. and Dutch legal assistance and claims services for military members from all branches, Family members, and eligible Civilians. The Legal Assistance Office assists community members in matters related to domestic relations and Family law, U.S. and foreign adoption, name changes, consumer rights, civil suits, wills and estate planning, powers of attorney, real estate and personal property laws, and immigration and taxes. The Claims Office assists community members in processing claims for damaged or lost items. For more information call 046-443-7688. The U.S. Army's website, <http://www.jagcnet.army.mil/> Legal also provides valuable information.

Military Police

Military Police have the overall responsibility for installation security, force protection, law enforcement and support of the USAG Schinnen. MP patrol the post day and night in radio equipped patrol vehicles. MP can be easily recognized by the brassards worn on their left arms. Parents are urged to instruct their children that they can always get help or information from a military police person. All incidents, including home break-ins, lost I.D. cards, vehicle accidents and tickets, involving U.S. Forces need to be reported to the MP station. The MP desk can be reached 24-hours a day. Call 046-443-7423 for routing matters or, in an Emergency, call 046-443-7555.

Postal Services

Mail is posted in individual mailboxes five days per week in the community mail room between buildings 22 and 24a (next to the Post Office) and at the JFC HQ Brunssum mailroom. The Schinnen Army Post Office is open for mailing packages and buying stamps and money orders, Mondays thru Wednesdays and Fridays, 1000-1600, and on Thursdays, 1000-1800. The Post Office is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Appointments can be made when mailing five or more parcels by calling DSN 360-7279/7273 or Commercial 046-443-7279/7273.

Red Cross

Red Cross services and programs are available to the community and include communications between service members and their families, reporting service for emergency leave purposes, financial assistance, counseling in personal and family problems, and disaster assistance. Other services include the Nursing and Health Program that offers courses in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and babysitting. Headquartered in Belgium, the Red Cross provides satellite services and programs. For information call 0032-65-44-4008.

Religious Services

Catholic and Protestant services are available. Catholic Mass begins at 11:30. Protestant service begins at 10:00, with child care available. Sunday services are held at JFC HQ Brunssum International Chapel. The Protestant Worship Service offers a Children's church program during the regular worship service each Sunday. A full spectrum of junior and senior high school youth activities are available throughout the week from Club Beyond. Other ministries include marriage and family counseling, financial peace university, Protestant women of the chapel, Protestant men of the chapel, Sunday School, music ministries, Religious education and Confraternity of Christian doctrine. For information call 045-526-2940/2947.

Self-Help Issue Point

The community offers a self-help program in which equipment (lawnmowers, weed-eaters, etc.) are available for sign-out to ID card holders. Additionally, some materials (socket covers, light bulbs, grass seed, etc.) are available for those in government housing to maintain and repair the home. The store is located in Building 24, Schinnen. Call 046-443-7229 for more information.

Theaters

The movie theater in the community presents movies on the weekend. For information on theater showings, call the JFC HQ Brunssum Alliance Theater, Brunssum, at 045-526-2110. Distributed throughout the Tri- Border community, the Tri-Border News Notes also announces coming attractions twice a month.

Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop takes articles and decorative items for sale on consignment with profits assisting projects in the community. Items such as telephones, toasters, transformers, stereos and more can be found here. The shop is located in Building 24, USAG Schinnen. For consignments, the hours are 1130-1430, Wednesdays and Fridays and 1100-1500 every third Saturday of the month. For sales the Thrift Shop is open 1100-1500, Wednesday, Fridays and each third Saturday, and on Thursdays, 1300-1700. Call DSN 360-7436 or commercial 046- 443-7436 before bringing in furniture or large appliances.

Training Support

The Training Support Center, located in the Activity Center (Bldg. 38) at USAG Schinnen, maintains a sizeable and comprehensive inventory of equipment to support the training needs of Tri-Border units. The following equipment and training aids are available for checkout to authorized users: combat training equipment; training videos and films; graphic training aids; audio/visual equipment; short and long term loans; signature authority cards; and new equipment. Call 360-7426/7293 for more information.

Travel Office

The SATO Travel Office is located in Building 4, USAG Schinnen. With 50 years of experience and a host of honors and awards from satisfied clients for outstanding customer service, SATO Travel provides a comprehensive array of services including airline, hotel, and car reservations for business and personal travel, online booking and emergency response. Official leisure travel reservations can be confirmed Monday through Friday. After-hours service is available by calling 0800-228-8036.

There are a multitude of recreational and leisure time facilities providing activities for the Tri-Border military community. Major events include Freedom Fest (4th of July celebration), the Halloween Trunk or Treat, Tree Lighting Ceremony, and touring Armed Forces Entertainment/United Service Organization entertainment shows. The USAG Schinnen also sponsors annual sporting events, concerts, craft bazaars, tours and more.

Auto Crafts Shop

An Auto Crafts Shop, located at JFC HQ Brunssum, provides bays, tools and computerized equipment for patron's use in the repair and maintenance of privately owned vehicles. For information call 045-526-3173.

Clubs

A variety of Tri-Border community clubs inform and entertain club members. Established clubs include: JFC HQ Brunssum International Club, , American Spouses Club, Geilenkerchen Officer Wives Club, and Sentry and Frisbee Clubs at Geilenkerchen.

Informal clubs also operate, many on a seasonal basis, such as bicycling and motorcycle clubs, antique collectors club, and hiking and walking clubs. Because points of contact change often, the best way to find club organizers is to read the local installation newsletters or newspaper for upcoming activities.

Fitness Center

The Fitness Center is located on USAG Schinnen and offers a well balanced fitness training program with aerobic, anaerobic, Nautilus, Life Fitness and free-weight options. Cardiovascular conditioning can be improved with the use of two racquetball courts, indoor/out-door basketball and volleyball courts, and the wide variety of Life Fitness Cardio equipment. The weight training area is equipped for the beginner to the advanced. Relax in the men and women's saunas to relieve muscle tension and stress . Those who love the outdoors will enjoy beach volleyball, basketball and flag football in areas located near the Outdoor Recreation Picnic Pavilion. Those looking for a real challenge, try the climbing wall or indoor tennis court at the Sports Center where there's also a variety of recreational equipment on hand. USAG Schinnen also participates in intramural softball, volleyball, basketball and flag football leagues within the Tri-Border community. For more information call 046-443-7561.

Library

The library located at JFC HQ Brunssum, has an extensive collection of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines and newspapers in Dutch, French, German and English, along with DVDs, audio books, videocassettes and recordings. Special materials are provided to support various training and educational programs in the community. The library has a comprehensive reference section and periodical back files are available through online databases. A children's annex is collocated and provides books, cassettes and reading programs for children of all ages. A computer lab with several Internet capable computers is also available. Call 045-526-2669 for more information or go on the web, [www. JFCbrunssumlibrary.eur.army.mil](http://www.JFCbrunssumlibrary.eur.army.mil).

Mult-Crafts Center

The Multi-Crafts Center, located at JFC HQ Brunssum, offers work areas, equipment and an array of instructional programs in fine arts, pottery, ceramics, woodworking and a variety of other classes. Qualification classes are required for use of the equipment. The woodworking shop features over 13 separate pieces of equipment to handle projects for the beginner or expert woodworker. The ceramics shop features slip casting, pottery, sculpture, three dimensional design and over 1,600 theme molds. The general craft shop has equipment and supplies for leatherwork, book binding, arts, an area for matting, mounting and framing, and other handicrafts. The fine arts area offers drawing and painting activities. For information on programs and classes, call 045-526-2454.

Recreation Equipment

The Recreation Equipment Center offers a limited selection of outdoor and indoor recreational equipment for rent at daily, weekend, or weekly rates. A complete listing of checkout items and prices are available at the Fitness Center. Call 046-443-7560 for more information.

Recreation Plaza

Recreation Plaza is located on USAG Schinnen and offers a bowling center, Memories Lane Lounge, a children's play center, a café and an adult recreation room. The 12-lane house offers Cosmic Bowling, bowling leagues, open bowling, and a youth bowling program is also offered on Saturdays. Along with a nice variety of amusement games, a separate enclosed recreation area has slot machines for adults. For more information call 046-443-7207 or the Café at 046-443-7527.

Swimming Pool

The Swimming Pool at JFC HQ Brunssum offers indoor swimming, a variety of instructional classes, specific times for lap swimming, and opportunities for swimmers of all ages. The pool also caters parties and special events for a nominal fee. Call 045-526-3172 for more information. The same types of things are offered at the Geilenkerchen, call 0049 2451 63 4955 for more information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What are my sponsor's duties to facilitate a smooth transition to ACTEUR?

A. Your sponsor here at Activities Europe has a list of basic duties. Please refer to Sponsorship Program section for the complete list. Ultimately, the member is responsible for their PCS.

Q. What is the telephone number to call in The Netherlands in case of Emergency (e.g., police, medical, or fire)?

A. Call 112 for Emergency.

Q. Can my spouse work out of the house selling Tupperware, Avon, etc.?

A. No- this is against U.S. Army Post Office (APO) regulations.

Q. Are the hotels set up for families with small children?

A. There are a limited number of suites available so you should try to book reservations early. If a suite is unavailable, your Temporary Lodging Allowance may be sufficient to pay for multiple rooms for families.

Q. Is it easy to bring pets?

A. Yes – However, there are several issues that you must take care of ahead of time to be sure you and your pets arrive easily:

Vaccinations and Health Certificate: There is no pet quarantine in the Netherlands. The Royal Netherlands Embassy has a standard Veterinary Certificate for Domestic Dogs, cats and ferrets entering the European Community for non commercial movements on their [webpage](#), and it is included as Annex # in this document. The health certificate must be signed within 7 days of arriving in The Netherlands so keep that in mind if your flight happens to be an overnight red eye as many are from the east coast. The two main issues for the certificate are identification of the animal and rabies vaccination. Your pet must be identifiable by either a micro-chip or tattoo, with the micro-chip being the preferred method. The micro-chip must meet ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards, and more information can be found at their website www.iso.ch. For your information, the Home Again microchip from AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AVID-Euro chip, are manufactured in compliance. If your micro-chip is not in compliance, you must bring your own reader for it. Ensure your pet is up to date with their rabies vaccination, and ensure this is annotated on the health certificate. The rabies shot will have to be repeated either annually or every two years in accordance with the type of vaccine used. Make sure that the health certificate includes the manufacturer and name of vaccine, batch number, date of the vaccination, and expiration date of the vaccine. In addition, the vet needs to declare on the certificate that the animal is free of disease. This all can be stated in English. Some vets issue rabies tags that you can hang on your animal's travel cage.

Airline Transportation: Transport requirements are generally the same, but each airline has some variations on rules for animal transport. Find out what these requirements are before you travel! It is recommended that you carry on smaller pets if possible, or check them as baggage if necessary. If you check your pet as baggage, be sure to confirm that the airline will place the pet

in a pressurized, climate-controlled compartment. Be sure also to check cage requirements with your airline, prior to your travel date. Airlines may also have additional health related requirements, so be sure to get that information as soon as possible. It may be best to arrive at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, if flying with pets.

We have found that the most pet friendly airline is United, as they allow pick up of pets in the oversize luggage area of the airport and do not charge any arrival fees. Most other airlines require passengers to pick up pets in a different area of the airport that requires driving around the terminals, and they also charge extra fees upon arrival.

Temporary lodging: Be sure to confirm that your hotel allows pets. This varies by hotel and sometimes even by animal size, but the Netherlands is a very pet friendly place.

Q. How long before I move should I ship my vehicle?

A. Overseas vehicle shipment takes approximately 60 days from the date you dropped it off in the United States. Although you may wish to have your vehicle overseas as soon as possible, having your vehicle before you have moved into a permanent residence limits its usefulness. It is often difficult to find parking for a vehicle while living downtown in temporary housing.

Q. I don't speak Dutch. Is this a big problem?

A. English is a widely spoken second language in The Netherlands, and you will find that nearly everyone over 18 and under 50 are fairly fluent. Most people here are friendly and will readily engage in conversation. What can initially come as a shock is that the majority of daily non-personal communications (casual conversation, radio, newspapers, contracts, bills, correspondence, etc.) are done exclusively in Dutch. Initially though, your only real difficulty will be reading signs, understanding traffic reports and information in public, such as the grocery stores. There are language courses for Dutch, German, and French available.

Q. Will my lamps work in the Netherlands?

A. Yes – transformers aren't really necessary for lamps. All that is needed is to change out the light bulbs with 220V bulbs and install adapters on the plugs (see the Housing section for more information on electrical equipment).

Q. What is the best way to relieve jet-lag?

A. Stay up the first day as long as possible (at least until 2100) and only take a short nap if needed. Sleep as much as you can on your flight.

Q. How is mail service provided?

A. Each member is assigned an Air force Post Office (APO) box number at the post office in the building. The APO is an extension of the U.S. Postal Service, allowing you to send and receive U.S. mail just as if you do at home using regular, domestic postage rates. All packages require a customs declaration form. You should allow an extra week for mail delivery either direction. Please note that some mail order and Internet vendors will not ship to APO boxes, and there are size and weight limits on what can be delivered. You should double check to ensure that vendors will ship to APO addresses. UPS, FedEx and other courier services cannot deliver to your APO address.

Q. What is the food like?

A. You can generally find any kind of food that you like in The Netherlands as the culinary scene is diverse. Some Dutch delicacies include: fresh, raw or pickled herring (seasonal, and usually “halped” on the spot at the herring stand), ollie ballen (fresh cooked donuts made around New Years) and a huge variety of cheese and dairy products.

Q. Is the unit helpful to spouses while I am on the road?

A. It is the command’s sincere intention to be as supportive to our families as possible. All members of the command are available to provide assistance or information to family members while the members are traveling. Due to our location/environment we have to be very supportive of each other at all times.

Q. Can I use my American credit or debit card in Dutch ATMs?

A. Yes - there are ATMs (called “Geldautomaten” or GWK) everywhere. They usually give you a good exchange rate, but your U.S. bank may charge an international exchange fee. Some banks will limit the daily ATM withdrawal to \$400 in Euros per day per card. So you’ll need to plan ahead for larger purchases or rent payment if this is your primary means for obtaining Euros.

Q. Can I mail certain items to myself prior to my departure?

A. Yes - mail them to your sponsor and we will hold the items for you in the office.

Q. Do I need a lawnmower?

A. It depends. Dutch houses typically have small yards that are often converted into patios. If you prefer city or townhouse living, you may be better off leaving your lawnmower in storage. It is also possible to negotiate yard maintenance service into your rental contract.

Q. Can I bring my king size bed?

A. Not recommended, but possible. Most houses are too small to accommodate king sized beds. Stairs are often too narrow and steep to accept large furniture and box springs. You often have to move furniture through upper floor windows. A queen size bed can usually be put onto the first floor (with zero being the ground floor) but normally it is difficult to get it up to the second (or top floor) without having to cut the box spring frame and then connect it back together with screws or nails.

Q. In what ways does driving in The Netherlands differ from the USA?

A. Highway driving is about the same, except that you will find that motorists generally follow driving rules such as passing only on the left, merging only when markings permit, faithful use of turn signals, etc. better than in the U.S. Some Dutch drivers do exceed speed limits, tailgate, etc., and motorcycles are allowed to split lanes during traffic jams. City driving is a different story. Unless otherwise marked, traffic approaching from the right has the right of way, there are no STOP signs, roundabouts can be tricky, and the different road markings require attention. Also learning to be on the constant lookout for cyclists is a critical skill all drivers must develop!

Q. Can I use my telephone in the Netherlands?

A. Yes - but do not bring your cordless phone as the voltage is different. Most U.S. cell phones will not work in Europe. Getting a Dutch prepaid mobile phone is the easiest initial replacement

for your U.S. cell phone. Your usage will determine whether a prepaid cell phone or contract cell phone will be least expensive for you.

Q. Will my TV work in the Netherlands?

A. It is possible to use your U.S. TV in the Netherlands, but it will require a transformer and a converter to enable Dutch cable to work with it. In addition, your U.S. TV will allow you to play U.S. format videos with a U.S. type video player, but you will still need to use a transformer for each device, which has the potential to damage units.

Another option is to purchase a dual (or multi) system, multi-voltage TV when you arrive. If you recently purchased a TV, it may be already “multi” system - just check the back of the unit. Region 1 (American) DVD’s do not play on European Region 2 players. The same is true for some game console (i.e., Game Cube) games which are also regionally encoded.

Basic cable TV which includes a mix of European channels, BBC, CNN International, Discovery Europe and National Geographic Europe is included as part of your basic cable service package. Expanded broadband cable services such as digital TV, pay per view, and premium channels are available through local cable providers for an extra fee similar to the U.S., but the amount of English language programming can be limited.

The Armed Forces Network (AFN) satellite network is available at no cost to military families and carries a variety of U.S.-originated network and cable programming. Members need to have a compatible satellite receiver and antenna (available for free on GK). Used systems are also available from personnel rotating out.

Q. What is crime like in The Netherlands?

A. If you ask someone from the Netherlands, you will hear that crime is on the increase. But compared to the U.S., this is probably one of the safer places you could live. There is crime, but it seldom involves weapons. Most crime involves stealing property such as bicycles, wallets and cars. Over the past several years, unit members have had their homes and vehicles broken into.

Q. Can I bring my computer?

A. Yes – CPUs and monitors are normally 110/220V capable. Check your machine to confirm. Most laptop computer power supplies are dual voltage, as are some printers. You will, however, need to buy plug adapters when you arrive. Internet connections are available through both the telephone company (ADSL) and cable television (cable modem) companies. Europe is very Internet savvy, and similar to the U.S., a wide variety of information, shopping and services are available on The Net.

Q. How do I bank and pay bills in the Netherlands?

A. You will need to set up a bank account in the Netherlands to pay most of your housing related bills (rent, phone, power, water, cable), which can only be paid via automatic transfers or drafting from your Netherlands bank account. Your sponsor will assist you in setting up your bank account. It is necessary to obtain your Dutch bank's equivalent of a debit card, which will make it easy to pay for daily purchases and getting ATM cash without foreign transaction fees.

At least one Dutch bank, ABN-AMRO, offers the option of English language online banking and statements. Getting money into your Dutch bank account is relatively easy. First, however, you need to know that you cannot get Coast Guard pay or allotments directly deposited or deducted from your Dutch account. Many unit members transfer funds into their Dutch bank via arrangement made with the American Embassy in The Hague. The member presents a personal check at the Embassy, who then cashes the check, converts the dollars to Euros at a good exchange rate, and deposits the funds electronically into their Dutch bank account. Another option is to open an account with the DoD Community Bank which is operated by the Bank of America (<http://www.dodcommunitybank.com>) or Andrews Federal Credit Union, which provides banking services to military families overseas. Federal Direct Deposit or Allotment to Community Bank and Andrews is possible, and they will do regular (monthly first day of the month) or one-time transfers of Euros into Dutch bank accounts. This service is quick and convenient, but exchanges are performed at an exchange rate 1-2% lower than cash transaction rates. The closest branch is located on USAG Schinnen at the 254th Base Support Battalion in Schinnen, The Netherlands, about two hours away.

Q. What will I need to travel?

A. You will need both your tourist and official passports to travel outside of The Netherlands. You will also need a good/durable set of luggage. It is highly recommended that you have a good set of carry-on luggage.

Q. What surprised you the most after you arrived in the Netherlands?

A. Just about everybody speaks English and many businesses are not as customer/service oriented as you might find in the U.S. Also, although English is widely spoken in The Netherlands, most daily communication occurs in Dutch. Something else that surprised most service members is how much patience you must have to get things done here. While things aren't difficult, almost everything is a process that takes longer than you are probably used to.

Q. What would you tell someone inbound to purchase before leaving the United States? What would you tell them to leave in storage in the states?

A. The following were the most popular answers:

Purchase/Bring Along

- Plug converter travel pack
- Winter Clothes
- GPS with Europe updates
- Good Camera
- Pet Needs
- Medical Supplies
- Eyeglasses, contacts

Leave Behind

- Major electrical appliances
- Small kitchen appliances
- Oversized furniture

Useful telephone numbers

When dialing from the US, replace the '+' with a '011'. For example, dialing +31-10-443-7630 would be 011-31-10-443-7630. However, when you are in Europe and wish to dial between countries, you can replace the '+' with '00'. For example, dialing +31-10-443-7630 (a Netherlands number) from Germany would be 0031-10-443-7630. In many cases below, you will see a '0' before the number. This is required when dialing in the same country code. You may see this written as: +31-(0)46-443-7649.

CG Activities Europe

+31-(0)46-443-7649

+31-(0)46-443-7286 (fax)

CG Activities Europe XO

+31-(0)62-316-9593

Erin.E.Williams@uscg.mil

CG Activities Europe ADMIN

+31-(0)46-443-7652/7649

Pasitalia.Solofa@uscg.mil

Amaury.Aguiar@uscg.mil

American Embassy (The Hague)

+31-70-310-2209

ircetheague@state.gov

Schinnen, the Netherlands (+31)

Fire & Emergency Services - 046-443-7230

Law Center - 046-443-7688

Military Police - 046-443-7228

Army Community Services - 046-443-7500

Army Emergency Relief - 046-443-7450

Army Family Action Plan - 046-443-7289

Army Family Team Building - 046-443-7482

Andrews FCU - 046-443-7507

Community Bank - 046-443-4350

Car Care - 046-443-7383

Car Rental - 046-443-8214

Car Sales - 046-443-3937

Driver's Testing - 046-443-7433

Employment Readiness - 046-443-7269

Equal Employment (EEO) - 046-443-7445

Education Center - 046-443-7641

Education & Development Intervention Services -
046-443-7686

Exceptional Family Member Program –
046-443-7500

Family Advocacy - 046-443-7453

Volunteer Coordinator - 046-443-7451

New Parent Support - 046-443-7335

Housing Office - 046-443-7340

Transportation Office - 046-443-7604

VAT Tax Relief Office - 046-443-7178

Work Orders - 046-443-7215

Post Office - 046-443-7279

Commissary - 046-443-7513

MWR - 0443-7492

Trips and Tours - 046-443-7561

Bowling Center - 046-443-7207

Fitness Center - 046-443-7561

SATO Travel - 046-443-4373

Beauty/Barber Shop - 046-443-7312

Dry Cleaners/Alterations - 046-443-7258

Self Help Store - 046-443-7229

Pin Point Café - 046-443-7527

AAFES Main Store - 046-443-7587

American Thrift Shop - 046-443-7436

Gift Cottage - 046-443-1174

JFC Brunssum, the Netherlands (+31)

Military Police - 045-526-2616
Auto Hobby Shop - 045-526-3173
Customs Office - 045-526-2681
Chapel - 045-526-2940
Child and Youth Services - 045-526-4191
AFNorth Elementary School - 045-527-8251
AFNorth Middle School - 045-527-8261
AFNorth High School - 045-527-8261
AFNorth School Liaison - 045-526-2023
Finance Office - 045-526-2829
ID Cards - 045-526-2216
Youth Services - 045-527-3008
Mail Room - +31-045-526-2107
Gym - 045-526-3171
Alliance Movie Theater - 045-526-2110
Pool - 045-443-3172
Barber/Beauty Shop - 045-526-2957
Dry Cleaners - 045-564-2227
Library - 045-526-2469

NATO Geilenkirchen, Germany (+49)

Auto Service Center/Car Rental –
02451-484-1853
Chapel – 02451-63-2229
Child Development Center – 02451-63-2216
Education Center – 02451-63-2244
Youth Activities – 02451-63-4954/4955
Barber/Beauty Shop – 02451-63-4087
Dry Cleaners/ Bookstore – 02451-66365
Gym – 02451-63-4946
Dining Hall – 02451-63-4935
Library – 02451-63-4956
MWR Activities – 02451-63-4940
Sauna – 02451-63-4947
Swimming Pool – 02451-63-4948
Thrift Shop – 02451-63-4919

Important Links and Websites

Facebook Page- www.facebook.com/USCGActivitiesEurope

Purchasing European Items- www.gkswap.org

Schinnen Available Housing- www.ahrn.com

Belgium Board of Tourism: <http://www.visitbelgium.com>

Germany Board of Tourism: <http://www.germany-tourism.de>

Netherlands Board of Tourism: <http://www2.holland.com>

U. S. Army Europe: <http://www.hqusareur.army.mil>

Military Homefront: <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

AFNORTH International School: <http://www.afnorth-is.com/index-1.html>

JFC HQ Brunssum Regional Headquarters: <http://www.jfcbs.nato.int>

U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen: <http://www.usagbeblux.eur.army.mil>

USCG ACTIVITIES EUROPE**CHECK-IN/OUT SHEET**

RANK/NAME:

ARRIVAL DATE:

DEPARTURE DATE:

TitleCheck-InCheck-Out

Commanding Officer - CAPT Kaminski

Executive Officer - CDR Williams

Admin Check-in/YN'S

Department Head

Collateral Duty - Civil Rights Officer

Safety/Health Coordinator

Gear Issue - ADMIN - Unit SK

System Manager

ISOPrep

Command Security Officer

Training Officer

Morale Officer

OMSEP Coordinator

Unit CDAR

Housing Office

Unit Health Promotion Coordinator

Victim Advocate

<u>Other Agencies</u>	<u>Check-In</u>	<u>Check-Out</u>
Schinnen		
Army Community Services	_____	_____
Housing	_____	_____
Vehicle Processing Center	_____	_____
DPW/Self Help	_____	_____
VAT Office/Tax Relief	_____	_____
Transportation/HHG	_____	_____
Post Office	_____	_____
JFC Brunssum	<u>Check-In</u>	<u>Check-Out</u>
Dutch Marechaussee	_____	_____
Benelux Vehicle Reg/IDs	_____	_____
Benelux DEERS Office	_____	_____
Child Development Center	_____	_____
International School	_____	_____
International Housing	_____	_____
Geilenkirchen	<u>Check-In</u>	<u>Check-Out</u>
Medical, Dental, Tricare	_____	_____
CDC	_____	_____

*Every 3rd Wednesday of the month Geilenkirchen Medical center offers 'Medical Right Start' at 1400.