

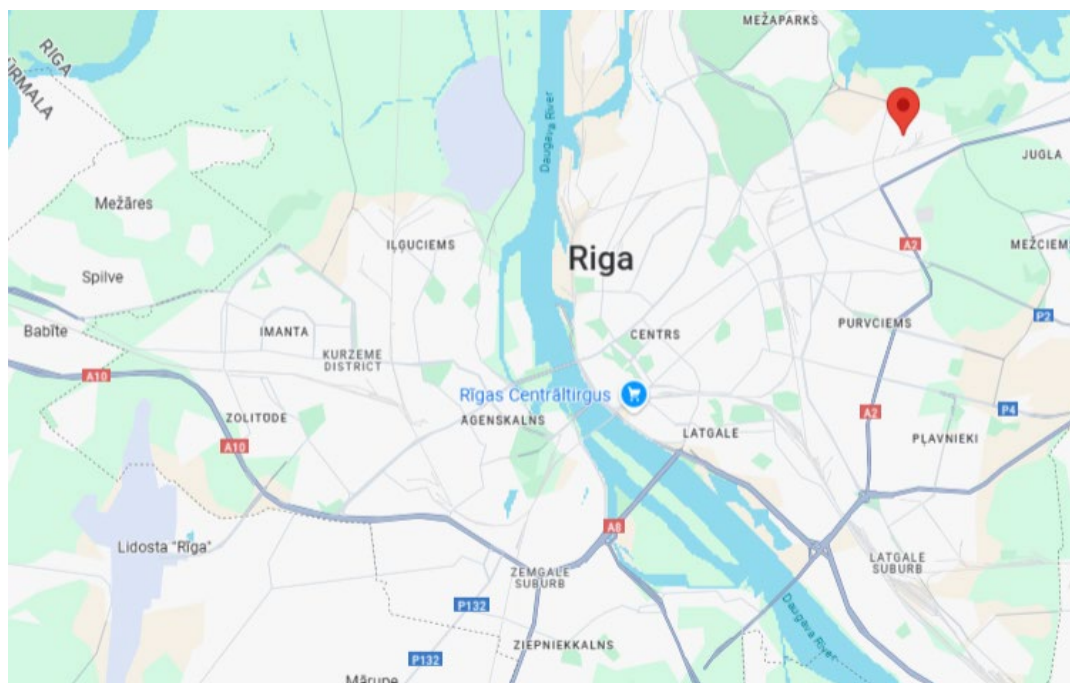
C Co, AFNORTH BN, USANATO BDE

NATO Force Integration Unit – Latvia (NFIU-LVA)

Riga, Latvia

Welcome Packet

(Last Updated May 8, 2025)



Contact

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Welcome

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Charlie Company, Allied Forces North Battalion (AFNORTH), and United States Army North Atlantic Treaty Organization (USANATO) Brigade. We have a unique organization. Our company is located Szczecin, Poland. The Battalion Headquarters is in Mons, Belgium and the Brigade Headquarters is at Sembach, Germany.

Our mission is to enhance the well-being of individual Soldier and Family readiness through human resources, training, and logistical support. C Co HQs delivers support to members assigned to Poland, the Baltics, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

You are further assigned to the NATO Force Integration Unit – Latvia in Riga, Latvia. So we are better prepared to receive you, keep us abreast of changes to your arrival date. Your sponsor's contact information is in your welcome letter. Your sponsor will be assisting to make your transition as seamless as possible. Please inform him or her of any special requirements (i.e., pets, housing or medical needs).

All Family members, of qualifying age and Command Sponsored are required to travel with a no-fee passport. We also highly encourage you to hand-carry your training records, obtain “**copies**” of your medical and dental records, and documents required to in-process (i.e., PCS orders, DA Form 31, marriage certificate, birth certificate(s) for the children, household goods, vehicle shipping documents, and travel expense receipts). Also, it is best to bring at least 90 days of prescribed medication until you are enrolled in the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) Prime Remote.

To financially prepare for this move, it will be important to allocate savings to cover initial PCS expenses upon arrival. These expenses will include housing security deposit, first month rent (potentially additional months), immediate-use household goods, annual insurance premium payment, vehicle inspection, registration and repairs, utility and internet deposits and cellular phone contracts. These initial costs can be in excess of \$10,000. You do not need to bring your \$10K funds in paper cash, but it is important that you can access it via bank transfers or ATM withdrawals immediately upon arrival. Advances for housing security deposit and first month rent are available through the finance office. If you require additional financial information or support, please contact your NSE NCO. After in-processing is complete, submit vouchers for reimbursable expenses, Move-In Allowance, and Dislocation Allowance. Please note, these payments may take several weeks to process.

The information below is not all inclusive and may change over time. It is especially important to check and verify a country's requirement for passport and visa.

Challenges associated with this remote location

Procuring US equivalent standards of medical care, education for school aged dependents, and overall quality of life are three of the foremost challenges that come with being posted at this remote location. Many quality of life services including housing leases, auto services, utility bill management, banking and cellular or internet service require Latvian language translation support.

Routine Admin Support

All admin support such as actions, awards, evaluations, DD Forms 93, SGLV, leave and passes, SRB updates, rating scheme, MEDPROS updates, FVAP, and all other routing HR related actions are handled by the C Co AFNORTH BN National Support Element (NSE) at Szczecin. The NSE supports the company and BN mission by ensuring individual Soldier and Family Readiness through administrative, HR, logistics, operations, and communications support. They receive direct guidance from company leadership. NSE personnel will coordinate with the supporting Company

and BN headquarters for all national support requirements for Army personnel.

In-processing

C Co AFNORTH BN National Support Element (NSE) will issue you an in-processing checklist. Please follow each of the steps in the checklist and work closely with your sponsor and C Co NSE in submitting your required documents to start/stop your overseas entitlements, and establish your network access (in the USAEUR domain). NFIU Latvia has its own in/out-processing requirements with each staff section (J1, J2, J6, etc).

Resources

Garrison Support

US Army Garrison Bavaria – Grafenwoehr Germany Training Area is the closest Army Installation to Eastern European/Baltic countries. Often, C Co personnel will visit the DEERs office, Health and Dental Clinic, Passport Office, Finance, Housing Office, MWR, PX and Commissary. C Co HQ staff will be sending your in-processing documents to these respective offices during your transition. C Co utilizes USAG Bavaria as our servicing installation.

Medical/Dental

The following information comes from our Medical Liaison's office:

Welcome to your new assignment! Medical access and services in remote European locations differ significantly from those in the United States, presenting unique challenges for military families. Key issues include:

- -Healthcare in most locations is good. But there are cultural differences.
- -Limited availability of English-speaking providers.
- -Longer waiting times for appointments, especially for specialty care.
- -Fewer local facilities equipped for advanced medical procedures.
- -Navigating foreign healthcare systems and insurance requirements.
- -Many locations cannot use E-Scripts and SMs must purchase medications and file claims.
- -Decreased services at MTFs forces patients to facilities on the host nation network.

To best prepare, familiarize yourself with International SOS, your primary resource for medical referrals and guidance. They can connect you to English-speaking providers and help coordinate specialty care. It's also helpful to keep copies of medical records, ensure vaccinations are up-to-date, and learn basic phrases in the local language for emergencies.

It is crucial that you also get a PHA within 30 days prior to departing your losing unit.

For assistance, contact International SOS at:

Phone (Europe): +44 20 8762 8133

Toll-Free (U.S.): +1 800 523 6586

Email: onlineassistance@internationalsos.com

Website: www.internationalsos.com

We encourage you to reach out to International SOS early to establish a support plan and streamline your medical care experience.

Schools

As you prepare for your move to remote locations in Europe, please be aware of significant differences in the educational experiences offered by International Baccalaureate (IB) program private schools and Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools. IB program schools emphasize a global, inquiry-based curriculum and are not inferior to DoDEA schools. However, the IB

program may not be advisable for high school students in their final two years, as its rigorous, specialized requirements may not align with students' existing educational goals. The alternatives listed below should be carefully considered.

For those eligible, the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) provides various services to support your children's education, including:

- -Tutoring: Assistance to bridge any educational gaps.
- -Boarding School: Financial support for students in areas without schooling options.
- -Home Schooling: Reimbursement for approved curriculums and materials.
- -Travel funding and more depending on the circumstances.

We strongly encourage you to contact your NDSP representative for tailored advice. These representatives have visited most schools in your area, met personally with parents, and addressed concerns by developing Courses of Action (COAs) to solve them. They are intimately aware of the challenges students and parents face at each location and can guide you to the best educational solution for your family.

Housing

There is no Government Quarters/Housing available. Families must reside in Private Leased Housing. Many of the local quarters may be smaller than what some Americans are accustomed to, but there are suitable housing available. The housing office in Ansbach, Germany will be processing your request to reside on the economy, lease agreement and other documents. Please contact the following personnel and the C Company HQs NSE when you arrive to anticipate their administrative requirements.

NATO/Remote Site Manager
USAG Ansbach Housing
DSN: 314-587-1714
Comm: +49 9641-70-587-1714

You may find housing without closets, yet the overall living quarters are comfortable and accommodating. Having a positive outlook and considering ways to adapt to a completely different culture will enable you to overcome this cultural difference. Many electrical appliances you currently own cannot be plugged directly into European 220 voltage systems. However, most smart devices like cellphones, laptops and tablets can be plugged in to the wall via an adapter. Additionally, other 120v appliances can be used via a step-down transformer, which you can purchase after you arrive. It will be possible to order transformers via amazon and have them delivered to your new DPO. Please see the mail information regarding timeliness and size restrictions. Host nation retailers (online or physical) may be a good option to obtain transformers or compatible electronic devices. Unfortunately, Furniture Management Office (FMO) lending is not available due to the distance from the Ansbach Housing Office.

Passports/Visa

Family members and US Government civilians traveling overseas are required to have passports. "No-fee passports" can be obtained at Government expense. The application process may take 4 to 6 weeks, so, you should begin the passport application process as soon as you receive your travel orders.

Tourist passports are needed for personal travel in Europe. You may apply for tourist passports on arrival, but for convenience it is recommended that you apply for the tourist passport while you're still residing in the United States. You can find more information on tourist passports from your local personnel services detachment, passport office nearest you, or from the U.S. State Departments official website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

Mail

As part of your in-processing, you will be assigned a mailbox at the US Embassy in Riga and will use the Diplomatic Postal Office to send/receive mail. Size restrictions do apply for parcels, which is a combined measurement of 108" (length + 2x width + 2x height). Parcels shipped to or from the DPO cannot weigh more than 70lbs.

Banking

Many internet, cellular and TV providers, utilities, and contract-based services require the ability to pay via a European bank account. Latvia uses the Euro (EUR) currency. Your sponsor may be able to recommend financial institutions that provide convenient branch and ATM locations. It will be important to know your bank's International Bank Account Number (IBAN) or SWIFT number, as this information is almost always required when paying bills, tickets or contract services online. Please remember that conversion fees apply to your transactions when transferring dollars to the local currency or at point of sale (if paying in USD). Many people make the mistake of calculating the equivalent currency when looking at the price of a good or service, but vendors and banks offer different conversion rates that is not equal to a simple conversion. Banks often provide more competitive conversion rates, so it may be best to transfer USD to local currency within your account to avoid excessive transaction fees or conversion rates at the point of sale.

Vehicles

License: Latvia recognizes valid driving licenses of both NFIU members and their dependents, provided that they satisfy the driving age requirement of 18 years. Renting cars within Europe is often made easier by obtaining an international driver's license through AAA.

Registration: Registration is a complicated task and your sponsor will walk you through the process on arrival. European inspections are rigorous. Technicians will complete a bumper-to-bumper, top to bottom, inspection that states any deficiencies. You will then have up to two weeks to correct the deficiencies, i.e. repair it, or you will have to re-start the registration process. Be prepared to pay for repairs or parts replacement if your vehicle is not new or well-maintained. Depending on your specific situation be prepared to provide written permission from your finance company to register in Latvia (translated), a bill of sale (translated), previous registration, customs documents. You will need to purchase Latvian automobile insurance.

Tires: Winter tires (with a certain symbol) are required between 01 December and 01 March. Depending on the time of your arrival, you may need to purchase winter tires to pass the registration-related vehicle inspection.

Fuel: There is a current agreement with the Latvian government to reimburse Value Added Tax for fuel purchases within Latvia. Fuel in Europe can cost up to three times the cost in the U.S. It is beneficial to plan trips to maximize fuel purchases within Latvia and to receive the correct fuel receipts. Please speak with your sponsor about the specifics of how to obtain the correct fuel receipts.

Transportation

The Transportation office located on USAG Bavaria – Grafenwoehr in Building 244. The arrival of Household Goods (HHG) will be coordinated through this office. Your sponsor will assist you in working with transportation personnel to ensure the location of delivery once you find a home. Once your housing contract is complete you can track your move at: <http://www.move.mil/> website. Upon notification of a shipment's arrival, you must schedule a delivery date and be at your quarters on that date to accept delivery. HHG shipments for newcomers to your location should not include Personally Owned Firearms (POF). There is no provision to store POFs at NFIU-LVA.

IT Support

US-system IT support is available at Szczecin. This service is found at the C Co HQ. The company will process NIPR account requests. A VPN-enabled US system is available at NFIU-LVA but most communications will be on NATO-provided unclassified or Secret servers.

Reassignments

When a SM out-processes from C Co their main POC is the C Company HQs NSE in Szczecin, Poland. The Company coordinates issuance of PCS orders from the BN MPD/S1 at Mons, Belgium and coordinates all out-processing requirements such as transportation and housing with the USAGs in Ansbach and Grafenwoehr.

Clearance

The NATO Secret, SF86 renewals, and other clearances are process by the AFNORTH Bn S2 through the NSE at C Co HQ in Szczecin. If fingerprints are required, the Service member must travel to Grafenwoehr on TDY.

Hand Receipts

The property books are controlled by the Company Commander at C Co HQ, Szczecin, Poland.

UCMJ

UCMJ Company Grade is held by the Company Commander at Szczecin Poland C Co HQ.

UCMJ Field Grade is held by the AFNORTH Battalion Commander at Mons, Belgium.

GCMCA is held by the 7th ATC at Grafenwoehr

SCMCA for E1 through E7 will be held by the AFNORTH Battalion Commander at Mons, Belgium.

SCMCA E8 and above will be held at 7th ATC at Grafenwoehr.

Required Documents to Carry With You

- PCS orders.
- Medical, dental, and Immunization Records.
- Marriage Certificates, Divorce Decrees, and Birth Certificates
- Passports (Soldier and family members).
- Social Security Cards.
- Wills and Powers of attorney.
- Education Records.
- Car titles and shipping papers, car registrations, car insurance policies and driver's license.
- Household goods and shipping inventory.
- Employment records and references.
- Pet records.
- Proof of citizenship, if a naturalized citizen.