

BE-01
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
BELGIAN LAND COMPONENT
(Last Updated 2023)

Support Organization
HHC BDE, AFNORTH BN, USANATO BDE

Co Commander	Com: +49-(0)6111-43-549-5430
1st Sergeant	Com: +49-(0)6111-43-549-5420
Admin Support	Com: +49-(0)6111-43-549-5304
DSN: 312-549-XXXX	

STAFF DUTY NCO/ AFTER DUTY HOURS
Cell: +49-(0)172-291-5836

To our newest members of the US ARMY NATO Brigade

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family. We are excited to add you to the USANATO Brigade team.

Our mission is to conduct individual training, logistics, human resources, and service-specific support at 38 locations in 21 countries in order to provide ready & resilient Soldiers to NATO, maintain our joint and multinational partnerships, and enhance the Alliance. The inclusion of administrative control for the MPEP and SON personnel expands our current mission to support the security cooperation among allied nations to one additional country and 43 new locations. USANATO Brigade will conduct Routine Admin Support and UCMJ actions such awards, DD Forms 93, SGLV, leave and passes, SRB updates, MEDPROS updates, FVAP, and all other HR related actions through the G5 IOD section. Their mission is to ensure individual Soldier and Family Readiness through administrative, HR, logistics, operations, and communications support. They receive direct guidance from Brigade leadership.

You can find out more about us and our team at <https://www.usanato.army.mil/About-Us/Leadership/>. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact us at +49-(0) 611-143-549-5302

Although USANATO Brigade manages the support for the MPEP and SON population, the program is run from USAREUR-AF. The USAREUR-AF Program Manager exercises the responsibility of establishing and closing positions, coordinates agreements with DOS and partner nations units, accepts nominations for replacements, makes decisions on extensions and curtailments of tours, sets rating schemes, approves duty descriptions, and conducts program assessment.

For questions about the program please email USAREUR's PM at lee.s.fennema.civ@army.mil

Again, welcome to the Brigade and we look forward to supporting you and your operations with our partner nations.

Warm Regards

1. QUICK HISTORY OF THE UNIT AND MISSION:

The Belgian Land Component is the ground force of the Belgian Armed Forces. The Land Component consists of one staff (COMOPSLAND), one Motorized Brigade, and one Special Operations Regiment. It is supported by an artillery battalion, two engineer battalions a reconnaissance (ISTAR) battalion, three logistical units, three telecommunication units, four training camps, and a center for the training of ground troops. The Land Component has roughly 9,500 troops (as of 2022) and is trained for operations in support of NATO and the EU as well as national defense.

<https://www.mil.be/fr/a-propos-de-la-defense/composante-terre/>

2. PARTNER NATION UNIT'S POC:

See respective sponsor information as the assigned unit can change.

3. MPEP DUTY DESCRIPTION (THIS DEPENDS ON SPECIFIC PLACEMENT BY THE LAND COMPONENT COMMANDER):

Serves as the United States Army Exchange Officer within the Belgian Land Component's Motorized Brigade. Serves as the Brigade Evaluations Officer responsible for advising and assisting the Commander and Staff in the planning and execution of all training events, Certification Exercises, and Combat Readiness Evaluations spanning all Warfighting Functions for thirteen battalions and the Brigade Staff. Responsible for observing, coaching, and training all units within the Brigade from platoon level to brigade staff in order to improve unit readiness for worldwide deployment in National, NATO, or European Union operations. Responsible for codifying doctrinal training and evaluation standards across the Brigade. Supervises Evaluation Teams of up to 20 Belgian officers and NCOs. Responsible for planning, organizing, and executing reciprocal unit exchanges with US Army units. Works to further USAREUR-AF International Operations Division interoperability goals as directed by the USAREUR-AF G3 and G5. Assists the DAO and ODC, US Embassy - Brussels as requested.

4. CASUALTY:

Provide the staff duty number to your supervisor to contact us if you were to be seriously injured, hospitalized, or become a fatal casualty. Also provide your supervisor with the phone number of the Defense Attaché Operations Officer, US Embassy-Brussels.

5. IN-PROCESSING:

USANATO Brigade will help you in-process. Most of the in-processing actions will be done virtually. DO NOT go on TDY for in-processing without the explicit approval of the USANATO Brigade regardless of what your PCS orders state. For information on in-processing action contact the USANATO Brigade G5 at usarmy.sembach.hq-usanato-bde.list.mpep-sons@army.mil.

Send your travel plans to G5 IOD USANATO Brigade POCs. You will report directly to your Partner Nation duty station. Once you arrive at your Partner Nation unit, you will contact the G5 IOD USANATO Brigade. We will send a memo to your resourcing unit asking them to arrive you in the system. We do not have access to arrive you.

6. FINANCE:

Travel reimbursement for MPEPs takes longer than it should. In some cases it can take from 60 to 90 days. Make sure your GTCC is put in VIP status by your current S8 and that your limit is increased to at least \$10,000. Ensure to stop your BAH/OHA before departing your current unit to avoid incurring a debt for overpayment. Three (3) months advanced pay is highly recommended, to be paid by the losing finance office IAW DOD Pay Manual, Table 4-1-1, Rule 7.

7. GARRISON SUPPORT:

US Army Garrison Brussels is the closest Army Installation for the DEERS/RAPIDS office, Health and Dental Clinics, Passport Office, Finance, and Housing Office. The closest PX and Commissary are located at Chièvres Air Force Base. If you are assigned in the vicinity of Brussels, you can utilize the USAG Brussels Health Clinic as well as the USAG Army Post Office (APO). If you are assigned outside of the greater Brussels area, the closest APO might be at Chièvres Air Force Base and your health services will be on the local economy by utilizing TRICARE Prime Remote.

8. MEDICAL/DENTAL:

You are required to complete all PHA and dental requirements 30 days prior to arriving to the unit.

During your MPEP tour, family members will receive dental care through enrollment in the TRICARE Overseas Dental Program managed by United Concordia.

For Medical care you will enroll in TRICARE Overseas Program Prime Remote which provides health care through International SOS.

Website: <http://www.tricare.mil/PLANS/HealthPlans/TPRO.aspx>

Phone number: +44-20-8762-8384

Soldiers and family members will be referred to local health care providers by International SOS. International SOS maintains a list of local hospitals, clinics, and providers who speak English. However, once you arrive at your scheduled appointment, it is not guaranteed that you will be speaking to an English-speaking receptionist or nurse. ISOS can provide live translations during your appointment, via telephone, if coordinated prior to your visit.

When required, PHA can be accomplished online and over the phone using the VIPRR clinic. Once you call ISOS and discuss the available options for care or by directly requesting VH thru ISOS, care can be arranged. For more information contact Virtual Health Care Coordinators (+49 (0)6371-9464-4600) for assistance.

In certain instances when specialty care is not found in the local community, ISOS will refer Soldiers and Family Members to the most appropriate Military Treatment Facility where the needed specialty care can best be provided; which could be Landstuhl Military Medical Center, Germany.

9. EFMP:

Health care for exceptional family members is difficult to obtain, and potentially unavailable or substandard. EFMP issues can result in the Service Member being required to perform an unaccompanied tour and/or termination of the assignment.

10. SCHOOLS:

Outside of Brussels, there are no DoDEA Schools in the local community, but there are many international or "immersion" schools. Immersion schools offer a multicultural international learning community using both French/Dutch and English language instruction. Unfortunately, no other options exist for English-language schools in the country. Please work with your sponsor and the US Embassy-Brussels Community Liaison Office to set up your NDSP (non-DoDEA) packet to process tuition costs. The full cost of these private schools may be covered by DoDEA.

If Service Member has school-aged children, he/she must inform the USAREUR MPEP Coordinator in order to receive guidance concerning dependent schooling options and registration instructions.

Prior to arrival, Service Members with dependent school-aged children must register with DoDEA@NDSP.Admin.Europe@hq.dodea.edu and obtain pre-authorization before seeking schools for their children. Service Members will be financially liable for any school fees, tuitions, and other costs not authorized by DoDEA or call CIV 571-372-5863/1897 DSN 312-372-5863/1897.

10. HOUSING:

Outside of Brussels, there are no options for Government Quarters/Housing. Families must reside in private housing. Many of the local quarters may be smaller than to what most Americans are accustomed; however, there is suitable housing available. Finding private housing outside of Brussels will most likely be difficult as the standard Belgian rental contracts are between 3-9 years, not 1-2 years as in the US – so start searching early! The housing office at USAG Brussels will process your request to reside on the economy, lease agreement, realtor fee and other documents.

You will 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 these cultural differences. Many electrical appliances you currently own cannot be used on the European 220 voltage systems without power converters/transformers. However, most smart devices like cellphones, laptops, and tablets can be plugged into the wall via an adapter. It will be possible to order transformers via Amazon and have them delivered to your new APO. Please see the mail information regarding timeliness and size restrictions. Other host nation online retailers or the PX may be a good option to obtain compatible electronic devices or transformers. Unfortunately, Furniture Management Office (FMO) lending is typically not available outside of the Brussels area.

Service Members will only be paid Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) based on the duty location with locality code specified in this order. Duty locations not listed will be paid at the “Other Rate” locality code specified in the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO). For more information regarding entitlements, visit: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/index.cfm>.

11. PASSPORTS/VISA:

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

You must obtain a No-fee official (red) passport. Your dependents require a "No-Fee" (blue) passport. VISAs are not required for entry into Belgium.

-- No-fee official (red) passport. Unless otherwise specified in your orders, applications for “No-fee” Passport, DD Form 1056, will include the following information for official passport: BLOCK 11: Belgium; BLOCK 12, MPEP participant; BLOCK 17: Traveler is a MPEP in PCS status and the traveler will visit: Afghanistan, Brunei, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco and Kenya during their tour of duty. Traveler requires a no-fee (red) passport.

-- Dependents "No-Fee" (blue) passport. The application will include the following information: BLOCK 11: Belgium; BLOCK 12: MPEP participant; Block 17; Visa not required.

-- It is the Service Member’s responsibility to process the passport at his/her current duty station prior to PCS. DO NOT PCS to Belgium without a US no-fee passport. Service Members will comply with requirements for the country as set forth in the DoD Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG). AR 1-40 and 630-5 implement the FCG and furnish supplemental U.S. Army requirements. Check the passport and visa website to obtain updated information for passport and/or visa requirements: www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm.

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>.

12. POSTAL SERVICES:

If you are assigned in the vicinity of Brussels, you can utilize the USAG Brussels Army Post Office (APO). If you are assigned outside of the greater Brussels area, the closest APO might be at Chièvres Air Force Base. Size restrictions do apply for parcels, which is often 18" by 18". However, we have seen larger items be delivered, but it is not guaranteed.

13. BANKING:

USANATO Brigade can send you the form you need to do a direct deposit to a foreign bank. This is highly recommended in order to enter into your rental contract. However, a Belgian bank account cannot be obtained until you receive a Belgian resident ID card. To receive your Belgian ID card, you will need a local residence address, which you cannot obtain without a Belgian bank account. It is circular reasoning, but the Joint Administrative Support office at US Embassy-Brussels will assist you in the process.

Internet, cellular and TV providers, utilities and contract-based services require a host nation bank account for payment. The local currency is Euro (EUR). Your sponsor may be able to recommend financial institutions that provide convenient branch and ATM locations. 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. It will be important to know your bank's International Bank Account Number (IBAN) or SWIFT number, as this information will almost always be needed when paying bills, tickets or contract services online.

14. VEHICLES:

If shipping a POV from the US, the local Vehicle Processing Center is at Chièvres Air Force Base. Some older US vehicles might need to undergo changes or additions to the vehicle lights, specifically the headlights, turn signals, white front park lights, and rear fog lights. Recommend contacting the Chièvres VPC at +32 68 331980 or Chievres.VPC@ialpov.us about the light conversion prior to shipping vehicle.

Registration: Registration will be completed through the US Embassy-Brussels. As the MPEP in Belgium, you are authorized one (1) "Corps of Diplomats" (CD) registration. Registering a 2nd vehicle in Belgium will require you to obtain a regular, local Belgian registration. NOTE: the cost of registrations in Belgium is dependent upon the tax category of the vehicle. So, the best approach is to register the "nicer" or more expensive vehicle as the CD-plated vehicle and the less expensive vehicle as the local registration. Mr. Cedric Belvaux at the Embassy will assist you with both registrations. (+32 2 811 4171, belvauxcm@state.gov)

Fuel: Through the Embassy, you will receive diplomatic fuel cards for use only in Belgium. Fuel in Europe can be up to four times more expensive than in the US. Mr. Cedric Belvaux at the Embassy will assist you with this as well.

15. DRIVER'S LICENSE:

To legally operate your POV in Belgium, all you will need is your valid US license and your military ID. *There is NO requirement for an International license OR a USAREUR-AF license. This is different than many other places in Europe.* This is due to your specific status within Belgium as a member of the Embassy. It is recommended to purchase an international driver's license for potential use in other countries. You can accomplish this through AAA.

16. VEHICLE PROCESSING CENTER - VPC:

The local Vehicle Processing Center is at Chièvres Air Force Base. Some US vehicles might need to undergo changes or additions to the vehicle lights, specifically the headlights, turn signals, white front park lights, and rear fog lights. Recommend contacting the Chièvres VPC at +32 68 331980 or Chievres.VPC@ialpov.us about the light conversion prior to shipping vehicle.

17. TRANSPORTATION:

The Transportation office located at USAG Brussels. 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 delivery of your HHGs after 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). Host nation law is to absolutely minimize the import of weapons. The need to have a weapon must be proven by the local authorities and there is no guarantee request will be approved. Newcomers will not have the option to store POFs in the unit arms room due to the limited available space or prohibition of POFs in your orders.

18. IT SUPPORT:

US Government Computers are not always available and are not normally required to conduct day-to-day work activities; they are, however, useful to access certain government sites. The Belgian unit will issue you a work computer. The USANATO Brigade G5 in coordination with the G6 will process NIPR account requests and issue (as availability allows) NIPR computers. In some cases, you may get a special CAC reader that allows you to use your personal tablet or phone to read encrypted emails. VPN access can also be requested if needed.

19. REASSIGNMENTS:

MPEP/SON program funding only DIRECTLY supports requirements to enable the exchange program. This is a centralized Army funding for program management of worldwide exchanges and Schools of Other Nations program. In general – mandatory admin requirements, medical TDY, program management, MPEP conference, etc.

What is not funded by HQDA is the following (exceptions may apply on case-by-case basis):

-- TDY trips for conference, training, exercises, site visits, and other travel conducted for the benefit of the partner nation (should be covered by the partner nation).

-- DA PHOTOS:

MILPER MSG 20-209 announces the elimination of Department of Army (DA) Photos, and race, ethnicity and gender identification data for officer, warrant officer, and enlisted DA Centralized Selection Boards and DA 640-30 states: Soldiers assigned to areas where photographic facilities are not available or conditions prevent them from being photographed are temporarily exempt from the requirements of this paragraph. These Soldiers will be photographed within 90 days after reassignment to an area where photographic facilities are available.

MITIGATION STRATEGY: You can obtain a DA Photo from the DA Photo Lab located on Chièvres Air Force Base.

-- MEDICAL READINESS - AR-40-502 Ch 4-17 b.

b. Soldiers in isolated areas. The commander concerned for those Soldiers stationed in isolated areas may delay PHAs; for example, Army attachés, military missions, and military assistance advisory groups, where medical facilities are not available.

MITIGATION STRATEGY: Delayed PHAs will be accomplished at the earliest opportunity in conjunction Conferences, with leave, temporary duty, or when the individual concerned is assigned or attached to a military installation with a medical facility. Medical examination of such individuals for retirement purposes may not be delayed AND medical TDY is allow.

-- WEAPONS EXEMPTION - AR 350-1 para F-7 (7) (d):

Exemptions from weapons qualifications are as follows: Individuals in duty positions not assigned individual weapons.

MITIGATION STRATEGY: None needed.

-- SENIOR RATER VISITS: This will not justify TDY funding.

MITIGATION STRATEGY: During the upcoming Conferences you will be able to meet your Senior Rater depending on their availability. In the meantime, the use of 365 TEAMS is encouraged where possible.

18. CLEARANCE:

The NATO Secret, SF86 renewals, and other clearances are process by USANATO Bde G2. If fingerprints are required and embassy does not provide this service, the Service member may have to travel on TDY.

19. LEAVE REQUESTS:

You will need the certificates below IOT request leave. Recommend you complete these training before departing current PDS. You may not have the connectivity needed once you arrive to new PDS.

AT level Certificate

SERE Certificate

STEP (proof of enrollment)

Information about STEP:

Even if SMs are going back to CONUS, they must enroll in STEP for the country that they are assigned to. This allows for them to receive current events/updates (i.e. Do Not travel update / COVID information / demonstration / places to avoid, etc.) from the US embassy of that particular country while they are in the USA.

<https://step.state.gov/STEP/Index.aspx>

Information about SERE:

Got to course catalog: Course Number: A-US1329 SERE 100.2 Level A SERE Education and Training in Support of the Code of Conduct

<https://jkodirect.jten.mil/Atlas2/page/desktop/DesktopHome.jsf>

20. WHICH PATCH WILL I WEAR?

You will wear the patch of your resourcing unit (3rd Infantry Division). You are not authorized to wear a foreign patch.

21. WHO IS MY RATER AND SENIOR RATER?

Recommend that you contact the MPEP Program Manager in U'R G5. They manage the Rating Scheme. The PM is Mr. Lee S. Fennema and his emails address is lee.s.fennema.civ@army.mil

22. HOW DO I SELF-NOMINATE FOR MY JOINT EXPERIENCE CREDIT?

To self-nominate for a joint experience, submit your request through the MilConnect website at the following link: <https://milconnect.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>

Once you are fully logged in, you will click on the "Correspondence/Documentation" tab and then on the JQS (Joint Qualification System) link from the drop-down menu.

After you submit your joint experience summary, you must go back in and attach the required supporting documents. All experiences require supporting documentation. We will not action your request until we receive the required documents. Be sure to put a valid email address that you check REGULARLY after submitting an experience. HRC will send you an email with the status of your packet and if it is missing any documentation. There is a limited amount of time for you to submit corrections, so do not delay and get your information together to give you the best chance for an approved experience.

When should I self-nominate for my joint experience credit? Is there a deadline? An officer performing a joint experience in a non-JDAL assignment must submit their joint experience via the self-nomination web site within 12 months (365 days) of completing that joint experience. Submissions received after this deadline are not eligible for consideration by the joint panel. You must be complete with your joint experience before submitting a request. Submissions while still serving in the experience are not authorized.

23. CIVILIAN CLOTHING ALLOWANCE & REQUIRED MILITARY UNIFORMS:

IAW AR 700-84, Service members not directed to dress in civilian clothing more than half the time when performing duty are NOT eligible for civilian clothing allowance. Service Member should bring all sets of Army Service Uniform (ASU), Army Combat Uniform (ACU), Mess Dress, and Army Physical Fitness Uniform(s) (APFU).

24. UCMJ:

UCMJ authority falls under USANATO Brigade.

25. THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE ARRIVING:

- First and foremost, the term “alone and unafraid” is never more à propos than in this assignment, especially if you work and live outside of Brussels. Be comfortable being uncomfortable. If you have a family, ensure they are also comfortable being uncomfortable. Belgium is a fantastic place with incredible people; but this assignment will be unlike any other you have previously had from an administrative and real life support standpoint.

- Be familiar with and comply with provisions of AR 614-10, U.S. Army Personnel Exchange Program with Armies of Other Nations and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Army and the Belgian Land Component.

- Just go ahead and re-do/complete all required online annual training prior to departing your current duty station. You will need to turn in these certificates when you arrive and it will be easier in the long run if they are all completed at the same time. Same goes for the ACFT.

- Administratively, Belgium is a very complicated country. There are more than a dozen political parties and most government systems are predicated on the population density between the Flemish (northern, Dutch-speaking) region and the Wallonia (southern, French-speaking) region. As a comparison: if Germany is a brick wall (a very neat and orderly—but inflexible—system), Belgium is a bowl of Korean ramen noodles (an amalgamation of many different, seemingly unrelated ingredients that somehow still tastes delicious). Get used to hearing “bienvenue en Belgique” (“welcome to Belgium”) when things seem to make no sense at all. At the end of the day, things will get worked out and this will be one of the best assignments of your career!

- As previously mentioned, housing outside of Brussels will be a more difficult process than normal. Ensure you communicate early and often with your sponsor for help. Keep in mind that the Belgian Land Component Commander (their “CSA”) can assign you to anywhere he wants within the Land Component (Brussels, Marche-en-Famenne, Leopoldsburg, etc). This can significantly affect where you live. While Belgium is not a large country, traffic in/around the larger cities can be quite extensive. This can be mitigated by the excellent train and bus systems.

- TRICARE Prime Remote (ISOS) is a poorly run system that will be more of a hindrance to your healthcare than a help. If you have to use ISOS, you will need to follow-up routinely and “force” them to do the things that they are contractually obligated to do for you.

- Most importantly, this has been the single best assignment of my career. Belgium is an incredible place that is full of rich history, culture, architecture, food, and the world’s best beers. Its geographic location makes it extremely convenient to travel nearly everywhere in Europe very easily. Your Belgian colleagues as well as those from other BENELUX countries will be some of the best with whom you have ever worked. The camaraderie and trust you will receive from them will be unmatched. The pace of life (and work) is much slower than in the US and in the US Army, which allows for a lot of family time and extended travel. Make the most of this opportunity!