



## KAISERSLAUTERN LEGAL INFORMER

### **NEW ATTORNEY JOINS LEGAL SERVICES STAFF**



#### **PROFESSIONAL PROFILES...**

*This is the fourth in a series of profiles of members of the award-winning staff of the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center. We're proud of the talented team of attorneys and paralegals who meet the legal services needs of the largest community of Americans overseas. By getting to know our staff better, our readers will know who they can turn to for help with their legal problems.*

***Lauren Pope, who played a leading role in launching the new and improved Mannheim Tax Assistance Center in 2007, has joined the staff of the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center as a legal assistance attorney, focusing primarily on family law, wills & estates, and taxes.***

**by Steve Smith**

Lauren Pope joined the staff of the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center as a civilian attorney-advisor in March. She will be with us through March of 2009, handling the full range of legal assistance issues. She is filling in for Mr. Jim Wiley, who is currently mobilized in his Reserve capacity.

Lauren was a member of the team that inaugurated the new Mannheim Tax Assistance Center during the 2007 tax season and shattered all previous records for returns filed. She won rave reviews from the taxpayers she served, who praised her unique ability to take complicated tax concepts and explain them in a clear, concise, and easy-to-understand manner. When tax season ended she moved on to the US Army Contracting Command, Europe, in Seckenheim, where she served as a procurement technician.

Lauren is a native of Stow, Ohio, and a graduate of John Carroll University and the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. She spent three years clerking for judges at the trial court and appellate level in Ohio. Her hobbies include traveling, baking, scrapbooking, and taekwondo.

We are fortunate to have this bright, resourceful, and accomplished young attorney filling a critical gap in our office staffing. Clients will quickly discover what Lauren's co-workers already know—that the professionalism, dedication, and skill she brings to the table are invaluable, and are reaping big benefits for clients who need a zealous advocate or a competent and compassionate legal counselor.

For a sample of the kind of timely and helpful legal advice Lauren renders, see her article on page 2, entitled "*What do you mean, I can't wear my McCain button to work?!*"



***United States Army  
Judge Advocate  
General's Corps -  
America's Oldest  
Law Firm***

# “What do you mean I can’t wear my McCain button to work?!”

by Lauren Pope

**Keeping yourself out of trouble while supporting your candidate...**

This year’s presidential race is sure to be an interesting and exciting one. But regardless of whether you are an Obama fan, McCain supporter, or Clinton diehard, you may not mix business with politics when you are in the military or a federal employee.

**Why?** While active duty service members and federal civilian employees are encouraged to get involved in political activities and fulfill their obligations as citizens, certain political activities that create a real or apparent conflict of interest with their federal employment are expressly prohibited. The government needs to ensure that every military member and civilian employee is capable of carrying out his/her duties in a fair and impartial way.

**Says Who?** Civilian federal employees must comply with the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. Sec. 7321, *et seq.*). For active duty military, DOD Directive 1334.10 is your main guide. Army members should also see AR 600-20, paragraph 5-3. Air Force members should refer to AFI 51-902.

## What can’t I do?

Basically, you cannot campaign or solicit for a candidate, party, or issue while at work, on base, in uniform, on duty, in a government owned vehicle, using government owned equipment (including computers, phones, & copiers), or using your government rank or authority. The restrictions are greater for military service members than for civilian employees. Please refer to the publications mentioned above for a complete list of prohibited activities.

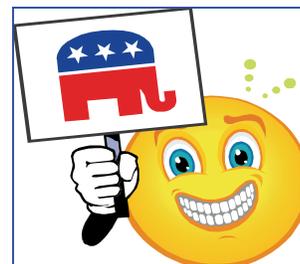
Here are a few examples that you may not have considered: You CANNOT send out emails for or against any candidate or party on your government provided computer or email account. You CANNOT wear political buttons or apparel while working. You CANNOT create, copy, or distribute political materials in conjunction with your employment. This includes stickers and fliers.

## Is there anything I can do?

You may fulfill your private civic obligations. For a full list of allowable activities, please refer to the publications mentioned above. Here are some common examples: You CAN (and should) vote. You CAN express personal opinions on candidates and issues so long as it is clear that you do not speak for your agency or employer. You CAN sign petitions so long as it is in your private capacity. You CAN contribute money to a political party, committee, or candidate. You CAN have a political bumper sticker on your personal vehicle (remembering that decals containing obscenities, vulgar language, or advocating acts of violence, or in support of extremist groups may not be permitted on a military installation).

## What can happen to me if I screw up?

For civilian federal employees, the sanction can range from a 30-day suspension without pay to removal from federal service. Active duty military can find themselves subject to action under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.



## Where can I get more information?

This is a very brief overview. If you need additional information, want to run for office, are retired, or are in the SES or other restricted service, please contact your local Legal Assistance Office for personalized guidance. Alternatively, many resources are available online. For example, civilians can check out <http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm> for examples, advisory opinions, and handbooks.



## ***Tips on How to Have a Successful PCS Move...***

by CPT Desirée Helmick

Moving is a part of life in the military. Unfortunately, moves often involve loss of and/or damage to our household goods during shipment. The Army “personnel” claims system is designed to help service members receive financial reimbursement for such losses, and to ensure that the carrier responsible for the loss or damage is held accountable.

### **Before the Move**

Take a few precautions before the movers pack up your belongings. This is the best time to document what you own. Save receipts, bills, appraisals, high value item inventories, and other proof of ownership. Never ship these documents with your goods. Take pictures or videotape the contents of your home. Make sure that video documentation or the pictures are not packed with your household goods. Carry the documentation with you! Also, before the movers arrive, try to recruit enough help to have one person in each room to monitor the movers. This will help ensure that the movers are packing your belongings properly, and also provide someone to whom the movers can direct any questions they may have.

### **During the Move**

When the movers arrive to pack up your household goods, you should have already decided what items you want packed, what items go in your hold baggage, and what items you will hand-carry. It is imperative to secure valuable or sensitive items where the movers cannot have access to them. Hand-carry small, valuable items with you; however, if you decide to have the movers pack your valuable items, ensure that **each** item is listed separately on the inventory as a high value item. Cash, coin collections, money orders, and “unreasonable” items (*e.g.*, brass knuckles, stun guns) should **never** be shipped in your household goods or hold baggage. You will **not** be paid for these items if they are lost or damaged. If you would like to ship a weapon in your household goods shipment, contact your local transportation or customs office to find out what forms and formalities are required.

When the movers have completed packing and loading your household goods, they will give you an inventory of all your belongings. Check the inventory very carefully to ensure that it is accurate and everything you are shipping is listed on the inventory. The movers should also note preexisting damage to your belongings on the inventory. Check the annotations carefully; if the movers have exaggerated the amount of preexisting damage, you should state your disagreement directly on the inventory in the remarks section. Do not argue with the movers; simply list your disagreement on the inventory form. This will help when it comes time for your claim to be adjudicated.

## ***Tips on How to Have a Successful PCS Move...*** ***(continued)***

When the movers deliver your household goods, make sure they have delivered everything. Have a copy of the inventory on hand and check off the numbers of the boxes as the movers bring them into your new home. If you notice items are missing or damaged, note this on the front of the DD Form 1840 (the so-called “pink form,” which is not always pink), which the movers will give to you. Do **not** leave this form blank if you have missing or damaged items. The claims office uses this form to evaluate whether the carrier did a good job. You can also annotate additional damaged or missing items on the back of the pink form (DD Form 1840R) as you finish unpacking your boxes. Also, if you are unhappy with the results of your move, be sure to say so on the customer comment card furnished by the movers; failure to register your displeasure on the card can complicate your efforts to receive reimbursement and the Government’s efforts to recover from a carrier for loss or damage.

### **After the Move**

You have **70 days after the date of delivery** to turn in your pink form to your local claims office. **This is not filing your claim.** You are simply putting the carrier on notice that you will file a claim. You have **two years from the date of delivery** in which to file your claim against the Government. However, if you miss the 70-day deadline for filing the pink form you will not be paid for your lost or damaged items unless you can show good cause for missing the deadline. Good cause is generally considered to include extended TDY, deployment, emergency leave, or severe illness **and** you do not have a spouse or friend to whom you can give a power of attorney allowing that person to file the pink form on your behalf.

If you decide to file your claim directly against the carrier under the Full Replacement Value program, you have **75 days from the date of delivery** to fax or mail your DD Form 1840/1840R to the carrier listed in block 9 of that form, and **only nine months** to file your claim against the carrier. For more information on the Full Replacement Value program, see the related story on page 5.

### **Conclusion**

The Army personnel claims system is designed to help you; however, you also have a responsibility to protect yourself. If you keep proper records of what you own and promptly document damages that occur during the move, you will improve your chances of obtaining the best possible settlement, whether you decide to file your claim against the Government or go directly against the carrier under the new Full Replacement Value Program. If you have questions, your local claims office can provide the answers.

*The Kaiserslautern Claims Office is located in Building 3210 on Kleber Kaserne. Appointments are required to file claims; however, walk-in appointments are available from 0900-1530 on Wednesdays (closed for lunch 1200-1300). Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 0900-1200 and 1300-1600 and Thursday afternoon 1300-1600. You can also call the Claims Office at DSN 483-8414 or CIV 0631-411-8414. The Claims Office is closed on Federal and Training Holidays.*

## ***FULL REPLACEMENT VALUE PROGRAM***

by CPT Desirée Helmick



You have probably seen the AFN infomercial about Timmy's easy chair and the recently-implemented Full Replacement Value claims program. Is it really that easy to get your broken/lost/damaged items replaced by the carrier? Yes and no.

The Full Replacement Value (FRV) program was created with the best of intentions, but like many new programs, it still has a few glitches that need to be worked out. One of the biggest questions claimants have is which carrier do I file with? The carrier that packed up my goods, or the carrier that transported my goods to the shipment point, or the carrier that delivered my goods to their final destination? Hmmmm...? Well, the good news is that your local claims office can assist you with those questions and more.\* First, before describing what your claims office can do for you, let's talk about some important FRV issues.

If you elect to file directly with the carrier under the FRV program, you must fax or mail your "pink form" (DD Form 1840/1840R) to the carrier within **75 days of the date of delivery**. You'll notice that this information is in bold print because it is very important that you remember to notify the carrier of the loss or damage within that time period. ***Note that submission of a pink form does not constitute the filing of a claim.*** OK, so you've submitted the pink form to the carrier within 75 days of the date of delivery. How do you actually file your claim with the carrier?

You must submit a written demand for a specific amount, listing the items lost or damaged, to the carrier **within nine months** after the date of delivery via certified mail. ***[Note: this is a substantial change from the traditional two-year deadline for filing claims against the Government!]*** At delivery, the carrier should provide information on obtaining the appropriate FRV forms and where to send the completed forms. If the carrier does not provide this information, contact your nearest military claims office (MCO) for assistance. OK, so you've timely submitted the pink form and your written claim demand for a specific amount, listing the lost or damaged items. Now, what are the carrier's obligations?

When the carrier receives your claim, it has up to 60 days to respond. For items that are lost or destroyed, the carrier will either replace the item with a new item, or pay the full, un-depreciated replacement cost. A few large items, such as pianos, organs, ATVs, personal watercraft, vehicles, and motorcycles, as well as firearms and objects of art, are not covered by FRV. Likewise, the carrier cannot replace some missing items with new ones. These are items that have value because of their age, such as collectible figurines, antiques, collectible plates, baseball cards, comic books, and coin and stamp collections. The carrier is responsible for obtaining all estimates of repair or replacement (as long as you filed your claim with the carrier within nine months of the date of delivery). Also, the carrier may inspect damaged items at any time prior to settlement of the claim. The claimant must make reasonable efforts to accommodate the carrier's request to inspect damaged items.

You've timely filed your claim with the carrier and estimates of repair or replacement have been obtained, the carrier has inspected the damaged items and has made you a settlement offer, but you are not satisfied with the carrier's offer. What are your options?

If you file your claim directly with the carrier within nine months of delivery and you are dissatisfied with the carrier's final offer, or if you do not receive a final offer within thirty days, you may transfer your claim to the nearest MCO; for Active Duty Army (and family members) stationed in the KMC, that would be the Kaiserslautern Claims Office. However, the claims office cannot pay you the full replacement value immediately. On transferred FRV claims, the claims office must adjudicate the claim under existing claims regulations. If the claim is payable, the claims office will pay you the depreciated replacement or repair cost (whichever is less) and then transfer your claim to the Army Claims Service for recovery of the full replacement value from the carrier. If the full replacement value has been recovered from the carrier, the Army Claims Service will then pay you the difference between what it recovered from the carrier and the amount it has already paid you.

"Wow, this sounds like a lot of work, do I **have** to file my claim with the carrier?" You may still file your claim directly with the Kaiserslautern Claims Office. If you do, you give up your right to have the carrier settle your claim under the FRV program. The Kaiserslautern Claims Office will adjudicate and settle your claim under the existing claims regulations, which allow payment of depreciated replacement or repair cost, whichever is less. The Kaiserslautern Claims Office is available to assist you with filing your pink form and claim with the carrier, and to answer any claims-related questions you may have. If you miss the nine-month deadline for filing a claim against the carrier, but are still within the traditional two-year window for filing a claim against the Government, we can assist you in that regard, too.

**\* P.S. : The answer is: whichever carrier is listed in block 9 of DD Form 1840.**

## ***HOW TO OBTAIN A SOFA STAMP IN YOUR TOURIST PASSPORT...***

by **Steve Smith**

Many Americans stationed overseas are unfamiliar with the requirements and formalities associated with what is known as a “SOFA stamp.” SOFA stands for “Status of Forces Agreement,” and a “SOFA stamp” is a stamp that goes in a passport which identifies the bearer as one who is exempt from ordinary visa and customs requirements. SOFA stamps are issued to eligible civilian personnel; they are not issued to service members. It is not uncommon for German passport control agents to demand to see a SOFA stamp when American civilians stationed in Germany attempt to re-enter Germany after traveling abroad.

Eligible American civilians stationed in Germany are only entitled to one SOFA stamp. Civilians who received a red official passport or a blue “no-fee” passport from the military should already have a SOFA stamp stamped on one of the visa pages inside the passport.

However, many Americans have tourist passports they paid for out of their own pocket. If you do not have an official or no-fee passport, and you are the family member of a service member, a civilian employee of the Government, or the dependent family member of a civilian employee of the Government, you are required to have a valid SOFA stamp in your tourist passport.

SOFA stamps for tourist passports are printed on a separate page of blue paper and laminated in plastic. This gives the bearer the option of removing the SOFA stamp from the passport while traveling so they cannot be so easily identified with the military.

DOD civilian employees should contact their servicing CPAC to have AE Form 600-77A completed, certifying that they, and their family members, are eligible for a SOFA stamp. Take the completed AE Form 600-77A to the Military Personnel Division in Room 103 of Building 3245 on Kleber Kaserne (located just down the hill behind the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center), and they will generate a SOFA stamp for you on the spot during their afternoon customer service hours (see below).

Family members of military personnel do not need AE Form 600-77A. The Military Personnel Division will verify their command-sponsorship on-line before creating a SOFA stamp for them.

Active duty service members do not need a SOFA stamp in their passports. They should, however, carry their military ID card with them when they travel, as this is accepted in lieu of a SOFA stamp when service members go through passport control upon entering Germany.

**If you have further questions on SOFA stamp eligibility, requirements, or procedures, contact the Military Personnel Division’s Passport Section at DSN 483-8892 or Civilian 0631-411-8892. Their customer service hours for processing SOFA stamps are Monday thru Friday, 1300 to 1530 hours.**

## *What To Do if the IRS Audits Your Tax Return...*

by MAJ DeEtte Loeffler

You just got back from the field and find a fat envelope from the IRS in your mailbox. When you open it, the letter says you owe the government \$13,000 in tax, interest, and penalties for tax year 2006. You had your 2006 return done at a tax assistance center back at Fort Swampy, U.S.A. What do you do now?

### **What is a tax audit and why did I get audited?**

A tax audit is simply a review by the IRS to determine if you have correctly completed your tax return and paid the required amount of income tax. There are basically three ways a tax return gets chosen for an audit. First, the information you reported to the IRS does not match that reported by your employer, bank, stock broker, or other source. Second, your tax return may be unusual in some way – for example, you may report a large number of exemptions, or your income may vary dramatically from one year to the next. The last way is a random selection – basically just bad luck.

Once your tax return is selected for an audit, the IRS reviews the return for simple mistakes, like not reporting interest, dividends, or gain from the sale of a rental house. If the mistake is minor, and the amount not excessive, the IRS will simply send you a notice informing you of the mistake and asking you to send in the correct amount (with interest). This is the most common form of tax audit. If the mistake is large, however, or appears to

be intentional, the government will probably include tax penalties as well as interest in the demand letter.

### **What do I do now?**

First, do not panic. Read the entire letter and see if you can determine why the IRS has re-determined your taxes. Sometimes the IRS has received incorrect information from a broker or a former employer. Another more common problem in the age of identity theft is that someone has used your social security number to get a job, and the IRS is taxing you on that other person's earned income. If you do not understand the letter or the re-assessment, come seek guidance at the legal assistance office.

### **If you agree you owe the money:**

If you agree with the re-assessment, simply sign the letter and mail the IRS a check, and the matter will be closed. If you do not have enough money to pay the entire debt all at once, you can request the right to make payments under an installment agreement. Generally the IRS will look at your current income and debts and will tell you how much you will need to pay each month. They may garnish your wages to ensure payment.

Where you believe you are unable to pay the debt, and probably will never be able to do so, you can make an "Offer in Compromise," which is simply an offer to pay a portion of the debt either immediately or over time. This is a last resort, and should not be done unless there is no

way you will be able to pay the debt in the next five years. You must complete an IRS Form 656 ("Offer in Compromise") and must pay with the offer either 20% of the total amount (if you are offering a lump sum), or the first installment (if you are offering to pay in installments). The IRS will credit your payment toward the debt but can still reject your offer if they believe you can pay more.

### **If you do not agree with the re-assessment:**

If you believe the IRS has made a mistake or has bad information, you should gather your documents together and compare them with what the IRS says you earned and owe. For identity theft cases, you can use evidence such as your military orders to show that you could not have earned the income in question. If your broker has misreported gains or losses on the sale of stocks or other investments, you should contact the broker and provide the IRS with evidence of how much you invested to show your "basis" (the cost to you) of that investment.

The legal assistance office can help you to prepare your response. If the IRS agrees with you, they will dismiss the matter. If they disagree, you will have to decide whether to appeal the matter to an IRS Appeals Officer (a specialist who can hear your case), or to pay the tax assessed. If the IRS denies your appeal, you may file a petition in the U.S.

## **NEWS FLASH...**

***The 21st TSC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate welcomes our new Legal Administrator, CW3 Manny Molina, our new Attorney-Advisor, Lauren Pope (see cover story), and our new Court Reporter, SGT Dawn Davis. We welcome back SSG Everett Wilson and SGT Diane Esparza from their recent deployments. We bid farewell to MAJ Eric Stafford, MAJ Pete Kageliery, CPT Marvin McBurrows, CPT Kevin McCarthy, CPT Desirée Helmick, CPT Jonathan Hoag, SSG Rodney Belt, SSG Derek Tillman, SGT Krista Mette, and SGT James Higgins.***

## What To Do if the IRS Audits Your Tax Return... (continued)

Tax Court challenging the re-assessment, or you can pay the tax assessed.

If you pay the tax but do not agree that the reassessment was correct, you also have the right to file a lawsuit in U.S. District Court to challenge the re-assessment. If you decide to file a petition in the U.S. Tax Court or U.S. District Court, you should hire a lawyer to represent you.

You should be aware that during any case, the amount you owe will keep going up, because interest will continue to accrue (on both the tax owed and on any penalties imposed). The IRS cannot compromise interest, but can abate (waive) penalties imposed.

### How long do I have to respond?

The amount of time you have depends on your situation. The letter will include a date by which you must respond. If you need more time, you can call and ask for an extension. If you are, or have just been, in a combat zone or a "qualified hazardous duty area," you are entitled to an automatic extension of time to respond. Be sure to send all correspondence to the IRS by certified mail so that you can prove when you mailed it (and that you responded). Also, keep a copy of everything you send.

*This is a general overview of the tax controversy process. It is not intended to substitute for talking*

*with a lawyer. You may consult a legal assistance attorney at the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center by calling DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848 to schedule an appointment.*

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*MAJ Loeffler holds a Masters of Laws degree in Tax. She is a Judge Advocate with the 78th Legal Services Organization, who did her annual training at the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center. Every year dozens of Reserve Component Judge Advocates and Paralegals do their "AT" at the KLSC, as part of our Overseas Deployment Training (ODT) program. They add a lot to our practice, greatly enhance our ability to solve legal problems for our clientele, and give our preventive law program a shot in the arm...*

### In other news at this hour...

- *The Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center (KLSC) has won The Judge Advocate General's Award for Excellence in Claims Support for FY 2007.*
- *Attorneys from the KLSC participated in the first annual National Healthcare Decisions Day on April 16th by setting up a booth at Landstuhl and generating living wills and health care powers of attorney on the spot.*
- *Attorneys and paralegals from the KLSC conducted mock trials and a multi-media contest in the KMC schools in recognition of the Law Day theme for 2008: "The Rule of Law: Foundation for Communities of Opportunity and Equity."*
- *To date, the tax assistance centers on Kleber Kaserne and at Landstuhl have generated over 2,500 federal and state tax returns, saving taxpayers over \$330,000 in commercial tax preparation fees and generating a whopping \$3,938,046 in tax refunds!*



**MANY HAPPY RETURNS!** — 21st TSC Chief of Client Services Steve Smith (center) bids farewell to SGT Krista Mette and her husband, Aaron. The Mettes were an important part of the KLSC's 2008 tax team that generated a ton of tax returns.



## Early Termination of Telephone and Internet Contracts...

by Joerg Modellmog

You have entered into a two-year telephone or internet contract. In Germany, all of these contracts come with an automatic renewal clause, providing for annual renewals once the 24-month period is up. What happens if you have to PCS back to the States earlier than expected? Can you get out of the contract?

Regrettably, the legal answer is: no, you cannot get out of the contract. Phone and internet contracts in Germany do not come with a military termination clause. All companies refuse to accept these

clauses. However, if you send a letter in German explaining the circumstances of your move, the company may – simply to foster “good public relations” – agree to an amicable termination of the agreement or simply send you a final bill, charging you for the remaining months under the contract up the next ordinary termination date. The company is more likely to do the latter if you have not yet fulfilled the minimum two-year contractual period, because the company subsidized the hardware that came with the contract or paid a commission to the person who sold the con-

tract to you. So be very skeptical of any seller who tells you there is no penalty for early termination due to an unexpected move, unless you get a written confirmation from the telephone or internet company itself.

*If you need assistance in writing a proper termination letter or in inquiring about an early release from your contractual obligation, contact your legal assistance office, and ask for an appointment with the German attorney.*



### KAISERSLAUTERN LEGAL SERVICES CENTER

Building 3210  
Kleber Kaserne

Legal Assistance 483-8848  
Claims 483-8414  
Tax Assistance 483-7688  
International Affairs 483-8854  
Trial Defense Service 483-8165  
Administrative Law 484-7450  
Criminal Law 484-8311

## TRAVEL TROUBLE: WHAT IF YOUR TRAVEL AGENCY OR TOUR ORGANIZER GOES BANKRUPT?

by Joerg Modellmog

Summertime is vacation time. You'd like to spend your hard-earned money on some well-deserved relaxation at a vacation spot of your choice. But what if your travel agency or tour organizer encounters financial trouble, endangering your holiday plans? Is the party over? How can you avoid finding yourself in a situation like this?



Tour organizers licensed within the European Union are required by law to provide proof of insurance against their own insolvency. This insurance covers clients' transportation expenses from the holiday destination back home. So you should not be left stranded on the beaches of Turkey if the tour organizer

ceases its operations while you are on vacation and fails to pay the airline for your return ticket. However, this law applies to “package deals” only (e.g., a cruise or the booking of a hotel and flight through one tour organizer). Individual separate bookings are not covered. Package deals have one price and contain several services, (e.g., ads like “flight, sightseeing, overnight stay: all for € 299,00!”).

Any payment you make (partial, advance, or full) entitles you to a guarantee certificate called a “Sicherungsschein.” Even when booking last minute, where pick up of travel documents often occurs at the airline counter, a “Sicherungsschein” must be furnished if you booked a package deal.

However, this requirement to purchase insurance does **NOT** apply to travel agencies! If a travel agency goes bankrupt, you will only benefit if it acted as an agent for the tour organizer by collecting the money on behalf of, and with the authorization of, the tour organizer.

Should the travel agency “do you a favor” by accepting your money and

promising to forward it for you to the tour organizer, you will be out of luck if the travel agency does not keep that promise or files for bankruptcy.

**Bottom line:** When booking a package deal, it is advisable not only to safeguard your receipt showing payment but to make the payment only in exchange for a “Sicherungsschein.” Where no package deal has been booked, a direct deposit into the actual creditor's bank account is generally preferred, leaving any middleman out. Then you can relax and enjoy your vacation!

*If you wish to make an appointment to see an attorney regarding “travel trouble,” call DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848.*





***A Dynamic Duo:*** Summer legal interns Megan Mueller (above) and Margaret Brubaker (below) will spend the months of June and July assisting JAG attorneys in all areas of the military practice of law. They have talent to burn...



## ***Legal Interns Add New Talent to the 21st TSC JAG Team...***

*by Steve Smith*

Every summer the Army JAG Corps sends legal interns who are in their first or second summer of law school to JAG offices in the field to give them a taste of how law is practiced in the military. Many of these interns go on to become JAG officers. The 21st TSC OSJA has four interns this year; two of them are working in Kaiserslautern. They bring considerable talent to the table.

Megan Mueller has just finished her first year (“One L”) at George Washington University Law School in Washington, DC, where she is a Presidential Merit Scholar. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Indiana University, where she majored in economics, political science, and Germanic studies, Megan speaks German, and spent the last two summers working for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She plays viola, piano, and guitar.

Margaret Brubaker is also a “One L.” She comes to us from the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University in Salt Lake City, Utah. She graduated from UCLA with a major in cross-cultural relations, and has a Master’s in Conflict, Security, and Development from Kings’s College, London. She speaks French, has done field work in Sierra Leone and Ghana, and worked for an entertainment law firm in Beverly Hills.

Megan finds that “the practice of law in the military is very hands on, and you have an immediate impact on clients you are trying to help.” Margaret likes “the close-knit community in the JAG Corps,” and how “everyone tries to help out their colleagues.”

We are extremely lucky to have this dynamic duo on our team. They are helping the 21st TSC OSJA stay ***“First in Legal Support!”***

**Directions to Kleber Kaserne.** From Vogelweh, Ramstein, or Landstuhl take the A6 direction Mannheim. On your right you will see a large store called Möbel Martin. Make sure you are in the right lane as you take the Kaiserslautern Ost exit/ Ausfahrt. Turn right as you leave the exit ramp and drive downhill until you reach the stop light. Turn right and proceed straight until the next stoplight. Turn left and you will be in front of Kleber. Follow the perimeter until you find an open gate. Once you are on the post, park in the Shoppette parking lot. Bldg. 3210 is directly across from the Shoppette. Enter Bldg. 3210 from the end door, closest to the Shoppette.

