

German Military -- Federal Defense Force Or Bundeswehr

The modern German military was set up in 1955 after having gone through various tumultuous periods in history, mainly the world wars. After the re-unification of the west and east in 1990, the forces of the Federal Republic of Germany and the East German armed forces comprising the National People's Army were merged in a historic unification process known as the *Armee der Einheit* or Army of Unity.

The Bundeswehr is made up of the military component which is the armed forces, and a civil component that is administrative. There is also the Federal Bureau of procurement and the Federal Bureau for Information Management and Information Technology.

The Army (German: *Heer*), which is the land component of the German military, comes under the command of the Inspector of the Army of the Federal Ministry of Defense and includes 24 combat brigades. The headquarters of the German Army is located in [Koblenz](#). The German Navy (*Marine*) operates mainly in the [Baltic Sea](#) and [North Sea](#) with a Fleet Command in [Glücksburg](#) on the Baltic Sea and the Naval Office at [Rostock](#). The Air Force (*Luftwaffe*) has its operational headquarters in [Cologne](#).

The primary role of the Bundeswehr is envisaged to be one of defense only. The term "defense" is to be read as being applicable to protection of not only the physical borders of Germany, but also the interests and security of Germany anywhere in the world. Its main active role has been in the area of disaster control and management, normally after natural disasters, and peace-keeping efforts in troubled regions as part of UN or NATO forces.

Recently German military presence has been deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Lebanon. In addition to peace-keeping efforts the German military is also involved in training Iraqi forces to speed up the stabilization process.

As per existing rules, all males aged 18 to 23 are expected to undergo a nine-month military training. There are about 200,000 professional soldiers and around 300,000 reserve soldiers available at any given time. Civilian employees are not included in these statistics and their numbers have been brought down in recent years.

Women have been recruited in the German military since 1975. Due to various ruling by the European Court of Justice, women now have more access to military roles than before, but they are not bound by forced conscription. There are presently about 15,000 women in active and reserve roles.

The German military has been on a reduction drive according to which the Ministry of Defense has embarked on reducing the strength of army eliminating one division headquarters and two brigade headquarters. The army inventory boasted an impressive range after the unification in 1990, but as

of 1995 the German military has retained very little. Huge caches were destroyed or given away to countries such as Finland and Indonesia.

The German military has one of the highest rates of disarmament and is second only to Russia. They are also top of the honor list where nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons are concerned, for they do not manufacture, stock, or proliferate any.