



Guide to Hunting in Germany

04 – History of U.S. Forces hunting in Germany

U.S. Forces hunting in Germany started in September 1944 when the first American troops crossed the border into Nazi Germany. Possession of any weapons was prohibited for Germans in occupied areas and the Germans had to turn in their private guns, swords and daggers.

Some of these guns found their way into the hands of GI's, which were happy to add some tasty game to their rations. It was a tough time for game in Germany when captured shotguns, Drillings, M1 rifles, carbines, and even .30cal Browning machine guns were used for hunting.



4th ID Soldiers after a successful hunting day in early 1945

Soon after the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945 things became more organized. The U.S. Forces occupation zone was in the southern part of Germany, in the states of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, and Hessen. Rheinland-Pfalz was occupied by the French Forces, but the Kaiserslautern area was already hosting a large presence from the U.S. Forces. During the occupation era, hunting rights were administered by the occupying force.

As the years went by, US hunters learned that hunting in Germany could be more successful with the help from locals, as they had generations of experience with hunting game and they knew best places for hunting.



U.S. Forces Europe Hunting, Fishing, and Sport Shooting Program

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Within a short time, many of the former German revier owners started a new career being game wardens for the forces. Older German hunters can remember a lot of good stories from these days, when many friendships started between U.S. and German hunters. Even some of the confiscated guns found their way back into the hands of their former owners, tolerated by the local commanders.

In 1951 an agreement was signed between the US Forces in Germany and the German states Bavaria, Hessen and Baden-Württemberg. This "*Länderagreement*" regulated the hunting of the U.S. Forces in Germany.

The main requirements were the U.S. Forces right to have hunting courses and tests in English language, the issuance of hunting licenses to members of the force and the "quota", reserving a guaranteed number of hunting game for U.S. Forces hunters.

This quota included 15% of the male Red Deer, 25% of all other male big game, 20% of all male Roe Deer, 15% of all female big game and Roe Deer, Wild Boar and small game without limitation.

The U.S. Forces paid an annual fee for the game harvested by U.S. Forces hunters. Until the beginning of the year 1985 the German States charged a special, lower conservation fee. In 1985 the US Forces began paying the same fees that were charged to German hunters.

Reunification of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the former East Germany (DDR) during 1990, in connection with the Two Plus Four Agreement (FRG and DDR plus USA, GB, France, and USSR), changed the status of U.S. Forces in Germany.

In 1998 a new authorization for U.S. Forces hunting in Germany was arranged between the German States of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hessen and Rheinland Pfalz. This new authorization abolished the game quota system for US hunters and it established the current procedures for training and testing for the German hunting license.

The new authorization established the role for German state hunting association (*Landesjagdverband*) representatives to oversee and certify hunting instructor training and basic hunter certification to be in compliance with German laws and regulations.

Since 1998 U.S. Forces hunters in Germany and German hunters have had the same rights and responsibilities. They all have access to the same game and hunting areas, and they also pay the same fees for their hunting licenses and the game.

The 1998 authorization is summarized in Appendix D of Army Europe Regulation 215-145.