



European  
Joint  
Support Unit

# Welcome to

## Brunssum





## WELCOME TO BRUNSSUM

Congratulations on your assignment to The Netherlands. This guide is designed to answer some of the questions that may arise when you first arrive at Brunssum, particularly if it is your first posting to The Netherlands (NL).

## GEOGRAPHY

The town of Brunssum (population 28,103 in 2019) is located at the southernmost extremity of NL in the province of Limburg. South Limburg is adjacent to the Belgian Ardennes and German Eifel mountain ranges. The fertile soils of this softly rolling area are cut by the Valleys of the Maas and its tributaries, the Jeker, Geul and Geleenbeek. Near Vaals on the Eperheide (Eperheath) and in Ubachsberg, the hills reach a height of approximately 300 meters above sea level. The Province of Limburg can boast many historical recreational places. The two major towns in the most southern part of Limburg are Maastricht and Heerlen. Other places of interest in the area are Sittard, Geleen, Valkenburg, Kerkrade, Vijlen, Vaals and Stein. All are within easy reach of Brunssum, the hometown of JFC HQ Brunssum.

## BRUNSSUM

Brunssum is an old town, which at the turn of this century developed from a quiet parish into an internationally-oriented municipality. This was caused by the mining industry that attracted many foreigners who settled here in the period 1918-1966 and from 1967 JFC HQ Brunssum's international community. The International Folklore festivities taking place every four years furthermore underline its international character. Brunssum is well known for its beautiful heath, a favourite place to go jogging. Its heather and woods stretch out over an area of 2,000 hectares. Brunssum offers many indoor and outdoor recreational and sports facilities. One of the most important one is the Brunssum public golf course. Find out more about Brunssum at [www.brunssum.nl](http://www.brunssum.nl)





## **JFC BRUNSSUM**

Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum is one of two NATO Joint Force Headquarters (the other being JFC Naples) in Allied Command Operations; each can deploy in command of a Major Joint Operation supported by Headquarters Land Command (HQ LANDCOM), Headquarters Maritime Command (HQ MARCOM) and Headquarters Air Command (HQ AIRCOM).

Over 1500 people work in the Brunssum HQ and NATO agencies in the area (NCIA, NAPMA and AFNORTH International School) consisting of both military and civilian personnel, drawn from NATO, PfP nations and the local community.

HQ JFC Brunssum is in the heart of Northwest Europe - an area which is often referred to as "the balcony of Europe", or "land without frontiers" because of its easy access to several countries. HQ JFC Brunssum was built upon the former HQ Allied Forces Central Europe's (HQ AFCENT) infrastructure, which has been in use since 1967 and former RHQ AFNORTH.

Two factors led to the establishment of HQ AFCENT here: When France withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966 it became necessary for AFCENT to vacate its headquarters in the French town of Fontainebleau where it had been established since its inception in 1953.

At the same time, the closure of Limburg's coalmines following the discovery of large natural gas reserves in Groningen, led to the Dutch NL government offering NATO the use of the former Hendrik Mine infrastructure in Brunssum. Consequently, AFCENT moved into its new home in 1967. In 2000 HQ AFCENT stood down and the new Regional Headquarters Allied Forces North Europe (RHQ AFNORTH) assumed command. The AFNORTH Area of Responsibility kept its regional focus in Northern Europe.

In 2004 Allied Forces North Europe (AFNORTH) ceased to exist and became Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Headquarters Brunssum and in 2012 Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command (HQ JFC) Brunssum.



## EUROPEAN JOINT SUPPORT UNIT (EJSU) BRUNSSUM

During your tour in NL you will be administered by EJSU Brunssum, a small tri-Service unit located on the HQ JFC site at Brunssum which is commanded by the Head of Location (HoL) – a RAF WO. EJSU Brunssum is a subordinate unit to EJSU HQ which is located at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) site at Mons, Belgium. EJSU is subordinate to the Global Support Organisation (GSO) which is part of UK Strategic Command.

EJSU Brunssum's mission is to provide Real Life Support across the J1-J9 spectrum to all UK Service Personnel and their dependents, and UK Based Civil Servants in NL; this includes HQ JFC Brunssum, Movements Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE) at Eindhoven and the exchange officer diaspora. Due to its geographical proximity, this support is extended to the UK element at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen (GK) in Germany. EJSU Brunssum is in Building H-603.

## COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (CLO)

The CLOs work within EJSU Brunssum to provide a two-way link between the Brunssum and GK military community and HoL. As a point of contact for families and SP, the CLOs can share information and resources to support people throughout their assignment. The CLOs provide feedback to the HoL on the community's perspective, sits on various committees and represent the community by communicating and advertising events and services.

In conjunction with the HIVE, the CLOs ensure up-to date information is distributed throughout the community, manage the community room (where weekly coffee mornings are held), facilitate events to help develop community spirit and assist members of the community to organise their own community events (including funding applications).

The CLO's office is in EJSU Brunssum Building H-603 (ground floor).

**Working Hours:** Mon - Fri 0900-1400hrs

**Tel:** +31 (0) 45 526 2615

**Email:** [gso-ejsu-netherlands-community@mod.gov.uk](mailto:gso-ejsu-netherlands-community@mod.gov.uk)

“*Brunssum and Geilenkirchen British Community*” is a dedicated and secure Facebook page used to communicate news, important information and events. It is the only Facebook page where you will find UK-specific information.



## HIVE

The HIVE is an information centre for the Service community including single and married SP, MOD employees and their dependants. Its aim is to provide a professional information and referral service. It endeavours to answer all your queries and find the information you need or point you in the right direction for the best possible help and support.

The HIVE holds many leaflets and guides (including city guides) containing useful information on things to do in the local area. The HIVE also holds maps as well as walking or cycling routes. Please visit the HIVE to pick up the Local Overview Information Sheet.

The HIVE can assist Foreign and Commonwealth dependents with information on British Citizenship, Families' Visas and entitlement to benefits.

The HIVE office is in EJSU Building H-603 (ground floor).

**Working Hours:** Mon–Thu 0900–1300 hrs and Fri 0900-1200 hrs

**Tel:**+31 (0)45 526 2891

**Email:**[brunssumhive@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:brunssumhive@armymail.mod.uk)

## **HIVE Blogs**

Keep your finger on the pulse and sign up for current local information. Read about health, education, employment, what's on, discounts, charities, welfare, housing and relocation. It's all covered!

[www.brunssumhive.blogspot.com](http://www.brunssumhive.blogspot.com)

[www.ihiveinfo.blogspot.com](http://www.ihiveinfo.blogspot.com)

Go to the top left-hand corner of the Blog and enter your email address in the box (not MODNET).

Respond to the confirmation email which will be sent to you automatically

You will now receive email alerts summarising posts to the Blog. Just click on links to read more!

Other HIVE Blogs can be accessed through the Army website at:

[www.army.mod.uk/personnel-and-welfare/hives/](http://www.army.mod.uk/personnel-and-welfare/hives/)

## **Discounts**

The HIVE publicises both local and national discounts online on the HIVE blog. Occasionally, local businesses will give the HIVE discount vouchers; these are subject to availability. Sign up to the HIVE blog here to find out about discounts available: <http://brunssumhive.blogspot.com/>

## **Walking Tour**

The HIVE offer a walking tour around HQ JFC Brunssum; for more information and to register contact Brunssum HIVE or the CLO.



## LOCAL AREA INFORMATION

### **Public Warning Siren Testing**

In NL public warning sirens are tested at 1200 hrs on the first Monday of every month; it is a test - there is nothing to worry about. The sirens are never tested on national or religious holidays or Remembrance Day.

### **In an emergency, the siren will sound repeatedly**

If the siren sounds repeatedly, it means that there is an emergency of some kind. You may also hear a warning over the PA system or from a loudspeaker van. Follow the instructions and advice of the public authorities.

### **If the siren sounds at another time, what should I do?**

If you hear the siren at another time, go indoors immediately. Close all doors and windows and turn on the radio or TV and find the emergency station.

### **Public Warnings by Text Message**

The Dutch authorities can also issue emergency public warnings by bulk text messages. The text is preceded by a loud warning signal on mobile phones.

### **Recycling in Netherlands**

The Dutch are a very environmentally conscious nation.

Recycling (PMD) bags can be collected from information points in most supermarkets. Compostable food bags can be purchased in supermarkets. Bottle banks are widespread and easily accessible. Empty plastic bottles can be returned to supermarkets through a dedicated machine; this will produce a receipt which when presented at the till, will return the deposit paid on the original full bottle.

For more information on recycling please contact DIO.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

UK dependant employment is predominantly within EJSU Brunssum and AFNORTH International School. Vacancies are advertised as they become open.

### **Trading from Home**

Permission must be gained from CO EJSU and DIO before individuals can trade from home. Guidelines on Trading from Service Families Accommodation (SFA) are in JSP464 which can be downloaded from MODNET.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

Before being assigned, it is worth getting an insider's view on life in NL. HoL's reading recommendation is:

'Why the Dutch are Different: A Journey into the Hidden Heart of the Netherlands: From Amsterdam to Zwarte Piet, the acclaimed guide to travel in Holland' by Ben Coates

If you do not take anything else away from this book, it will at least explain the reason why Dutch household stairs are so steep and why 'Holland' is part of 'The Netherlands'!