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## Kurzinformation

### Involvement of People with Disabilities in National Defence

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The **German Armed Forces** (Bundeswehr) which suspended compulsory military service on 1 July 2011 **can be joined by people with disabilities**.<sup>1</sup> The integration of people with disabilities into training and work – also in the military area of the Bundeswehr – is an essential expression of and at the same time a prerequisite for the equal and self-determined participation of severely disabled people in their professional and social lives. On 31 December 2017, a **total of 1,408 disabled soldiers** served in the Bundeswehr. With a total of 179,562 soldiers serving in the German armed forces at this time, this is a proportion of 0.8 percent.

Taking into account their limitations and their capabilities, **disabled Bundeswehr soldiers are deployed in all areas of the German Armed Forces**. Their tasks and activities differ from those of the soldiers without handicaps in the following areas:

- Disabled Bundeswehr soldiers are exempted from field service and from arms service.
- They are not obliged to fulfil the physical fitness requirements which are defined in the military sport provisions.
- They are not obliged to maintain and improve their individual military basic skills as prescribed in the directive on training and maintenance of individual basic skills.

Mostly, disabled soldiers fulfil indoor activities. Therefore, particular importance is placed to a disabled-friendly work environment.

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<sup>1</sup> „The Bundeswehr employs a considerable number of people with disabilities. These employees perform indispensable work in the military as well as in the civil area.“

Federal Ministry of Defence (2017): „*We are about progress. Not just about standing still. Do what really matters. - Career with the Bundeswehr*“, brochure ed. by MOD Press and Information Staff – Commissioner for Communicating the Employer Brand Bundeswehr, p. 30. Retrievable in German language from <https://www.bundeswehrkarriere.de/blob/28148/30c559253a51332a538525b.1a2b4d510/broschuere-arbeitgeber-bundeswehr-data.pdf> (last retrieved: 15 February 2018).

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If a soldier suffers from **serious health damage during operations**, s/he is being **offered to continue her/his service** in the Bundeswehr. The opportunity to continue her/his further service in the armed forces after having suffered from serious health damage on operations is regulated by the act "***Gesetz zur Regelung der Weiterverwendung nach Einsatzunfällen***"<sup>2</sup>.

Around **1,100 servicemen and women** who suffered from a serious physical or mental damage on operations could initially be **employed in their previous jobs** as professional soldiers or temporary servicemen and women after health rehabilitation. No information exists to what extent soldiers from this group may later have been assigned to a different, more suitable military job in connection with their health damage, since no statistics of their own are kept for this purpose.

Currently, around **500 soldiers** who suffered from health damage on operations are **within a so-called protection period for medical treatment and/or professional qualification**. The **aim is to assign these soldiers on their previous positions** after recovery.

As of 31 January 2018, **69 soldiers** who were severely injured during an operation were **employed as a professional soldier on other, more suitable military posts** in accordance with para. 7 EinsatzWVG. Another three temporary soldiers who suffered from a serious physical or mental damage on operations are in a six-month probationary period for receiving the status of a professional soldier.

According to para. 6 (5) EinsatzWVG, a total of **321 mission-injured former Bundeswehr soldiers were transferred into a special military service status** for medical treatment and/or professional qualification. **Of these, 33 received the status of a professional soldier** in accordance with para. 7 EinsatzWVG; their postings took into account the damage suffered. **Another six soldiers are in the six-month probationary period for receiving the status of a professional soldier. 70 of these former soldiers have left the Bundeswehr** after health rehabilitation and professional qualification. The remaining **212 soldiers are still undergoing medical treatment** and / or vocational training.

According to para. 8 EinsatzWVG, **six servicemen and women** who suffered from a serious damage on operations **changed their status and continued to work within the Bundeswehr as civil servants**. **Another six soldiers** are currently still **in the career training for civil servants**.

**People with disabilities are also part of the civilian workforce** of the Bundeswehr. Of the 84,133 civilian workers in the Bundeswehr (including trainees and contenders), **11,166 are disabled**. This results in a share of **13.3 percent** (as of 31 December 2017). With regard to the civilian workforce, the Bundeswehr applies the principle to employ its disabled personnel – according to their disability – in all areas of the Bundeswehr. The trend of increasing numbers of disabled Bundeswehr civilians that could be observed in recent years continues.

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<sup>2</sup> *Gesetz zur Regelung der Weiterverwendung nach Einsatzunfällen (Einsatz-Weiterverwendungsgesetz - EinsatzWVG)* of 12 December 2007 in the version of the announcement of 4 September 2012 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2070), which was last amended by Article 30 of the Act of 29 March 2017 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 626). Retrievable in German language from <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/einsatzwvg/BJNR286100007.html> (last retrieved: 15 February 2018).

Security and defence of the Federal Republic of Germany are ensured in a networked approach. This means that **various actors contribute to Germany's security and defence**. Examples include other federal ministries and agencies as well as institutions in the federal states and municipalities, non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions. **Interested disabled persons can get involved there for the security and defence of Germany**, if they seek an opportunity outside the Bundeswehr.

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