

Bavarian News

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U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

November 12, 2008

GARMISCH

FACE LIFE

Artist brings world wonders to library

PAGE 10

HOHENFELS

OPENING DOORS

Program helps wounded warriors with disabilities

PAGE 12

ANSBACH

HIGH ADVENTURE

Soldiers transition with skiing excursion

PAGE 20

SCHWEINFURT

GOOD ADVICE

Army-experienced spouses offer tips as deployment looms

PAGE 23

LEGAL

ON THE MOVE

Know the importance of claims deadlines

PAGE 6



REDEPLOYMENT SERIES
Dealing with guilt is a fact of life. Find out when guilt is not healthy.

PAGE 4

What you're looking for

Command Messages	2
Deployment Series	4
What's Happening	14-15
News	4, 6
Around the Force	18
Retiree Corner	8
Sports	24
AAFES	26-31
Movies	30

Locate previous articles by visiting the Bavarian News archive at www.milcom.de

BIGGER & BETTER

Graf continuing its transformation



Army photo

The garrison's 830-home military housing area, Netzberg, was built for some of the thousands of troops that will arrive at Grafenwoehr. It features 11 designs with floor plans ranging from 1,300 to 1,900 square feet.

\$1.3 billion, population boom alters rural 'city'

by KIM GILLESPIE & ANDY SPENDLOVE
U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr is quickly becoming the premier Army base in Europe in virtually every respect.

The transformation that began in 2002 with a modest \$25-million appropriation from Congress, has expanded to more than \$1.3 billion as a result of additional congressional appropriations, and funding from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, Department of Defense Schools, host-nation reimbursement, and private investment in housing areas.

"USAG Grafenwoehr has truly been 'transformed' with the investments that have been made in its infrastructure," said Col. Brian Boyle, former commander of USAG Grafenwoehr and now the deputy director of Installation Management Command-Europe. "Grafenwoehr is no longer one of the Army's best kept secrets with its rural lifestyle. Rather the infrastructure has grown to support close to three full brigades of Soldiers, all in less than five years. We certainly aren't a quiet area anymore," he added.

Originally, under the 100th Area Support Group, the Grafen-

See INSTALLATION Page 25

NEW AND IMPROVED

Netzberg Housing and a newly built state-of-the-art gymnasium



Photo by Susanne Bartsch



Army photo

Army chief of staff visits Graf, discusses deployment, dwell time, transformation



by DAVE MELANCON
U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

Soldiers and their Families can expect to spend more time together between deployments thanks to continuing success in Iraq and the steady growth of the Army's ranks, the Army's top officer told Soldiers and Family members of U.S. Army Europe's 172nd Infantry Brigade here Oct. 29.

During a series of three roundtable discussions and a lunchtime meeting with the brigade's officers, noncommissioned officers, Soldiers and Family Readiness Group leaders, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. said dwell time -- the amount of time a Soldier or unit remains at home

See CASEY Page 25

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey Jr. discusses trends for future deployments with 172nd Infantry Brigade officers and NCOs at Graf Oct. 29.

MILITARY ETIQUETTE

Troops not in uniform, veterans can now salute flag

American Forces Press Service

A change to federal law allows U.S. veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem.

The law took effect earlier this month, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs news release.

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. James B. Peake said. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The provision builds on a change that went into effect last year. That change authorized veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag.

Traditionally, veterans' service organizations rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's headgear. Otherwise, as with all other Americans, the etiquette is to place the right hand over the heart.

The most recent change was part of the 2009 Defense Authorization Act, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army veteran, sponsored both pieces of legislation.

See FEDERAL LAW Page 25

ARTICLE 32 HEARING

Local Soldier charged in Iraqi deaths

JMTC news release

The Article 32 hearing for Sgt. Michael P. Leahy, Jr., 26, a Soldier formerly assigned to 1st Batt., 18th Inf. Regt., is scheduled to take place today, at 9 a.m. at the Rose Barracks Court-house in Vilseck, Germany.

The following charges were preferred on Sept. 16, 2008, at Grafenwoehr, Germany.

The accused was charged with one specification of a violation of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice Article 118, premeditated murder; one specification of Article 81, conspiracy to commit premeditated murder; and one specification of Article 134, obstruction of justice.

These charges relate to an incident that occurred during March/April 2007 at or near Baghdad, Iraq.

Leahy is also charged with crimes stemming from a separate incident that occurred in early Jan. 2007 at or near Baghdad, Iraq. Based on this incident, he is charged with a specification of Article 134, obstruction of justice.

See LEAHY Page 25

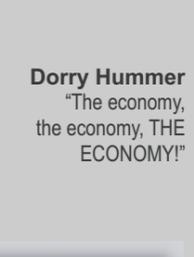
Q&A

What's the No. 1 challenge facing the new president?

(Responses from Hohenfels personnel)



Junia Fitzgerald
"The biggest challenge will be bringing the U.S. economy back to life."



Dorry Hummer
"The economy, the economy, THE ECONOMY!"



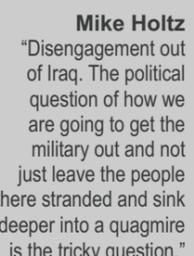
Shanda Lonkhurst
"Our economy!"



Marla Adaryukog
"The environment, absolutely—climate change."



Allison Carter
"Definitely the economy. It's been in the news everywhere."



Mike Holtz
"Disengagement out of Iraq. The political question of how we are going to get the military out and not just leave the people there stranded and sink deeper into a quagmire is the tricky question."



Emily Paterson
"The economy, and not knowing if the economy will go down or up."



Erica Hansen
"Education, in that we need to get rid of some of the existing policies we have."



Our garrison is improving, one feedback at a time

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Several community members attended Grafenwoehr's Oct. 29 town hall to get updates on what's going on in our community and to voice their concerns.



Our entire staff appreciates the participation. I have discussed on several occasions and in several forums how important it is to receive feedback from the community.

How are we doing?

You are the shareholders in this community and I depend on you to let me know how well we are providing in all service and quality of life areas.

Our directorates need your comments to evaluate our effectiveness. And if you're receiving the services you need, are you getting them in a timely and top-quality manner?

Last month's town hall, was one of many outlets for you to provide this crucial input. I thank each person for attending and assure you that we are working the issues that were addressed.

What is refreshing is how our community leads itself to find-

ing solution, truly self-starting as was demonstrated by one of our valued Netzaberg residents and the School Advisory Committee representatives who addressed a critical school bus issue.

Anyone who would like to view the slides presented during the Oct. 29 meeting can visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil and click on "Town Hall Meeting."

What the slides can't capture is the energy of the meeting itself, and I look forward to having you experience that during our next town hall Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. in our new Vilseck Multi-Purpose Center (Bldg. 134, where we reintegrated 2SCR).

Army Family Covenant

The Department of the Army recognized the sacrifices and hardships that military families are undergoing during this historic phase in U.S. history.

Their answer was then, and remains now, the Army Family Covenant (AFC), a plan to funnel \$40 billion dollars over six years to Army garrisons to create new and improve existing programs and services.

Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army General George Casey commented on the AFC during his 172nd FRG roundtable at Grafenwoehr on Oct. 29. In this forum he stated that "FY'09 [this year] is the year of delivery for the Army Family

Covenant."

AFC covers everything from increasing the accessibility and quality of health care and school, child care, and youth services to improving housing and creating new jobs at Army garrisons throughout the U.S. and abroad. At U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr, AFC has:

- increased the number of Exceptional Family Member Program employees,

- funded the Soldier and Family Assistance Center in Vilseck,

- provided more than \$58,000 worth of free and reduced child care per month in Grafenwoehr and Vilseck, and
- provided more than \$100,000 in Child and Youth Services sports equipment, transportation, and services.

But these are just a few of the improvements. Be sure to read the Nov. 26 issue for a full listing of AFC upgrades made at USAG Grafenwoehr.

The Army Family Covenant states:

We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day.

We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families.

We are committed to provid-

ing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life that is commensurate with their service.

We are committed to providing our Families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

We are committed to building a partnership with Army Families that enhances their strength and resilience. We are committed to improving Family readiness by:

- Standardizing and funding existing Family programs and services
- Increasing accessibility and quality of healthcare
- Improving Soldier and Family housing
- Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care
- Expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members

We believe in the covenant. And your attendance at town hall meetings, through surveys, and other feedback outlets lets us know you do too!

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER

Know where to go this winter for weather notifications, closures

The 2008 Fall Clean-Up was a success, and I'd like to thank everyone for their participation.

The extra mile

As I walked through the housing areas last week, I observed spouses, and even 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers who had redeployed only days before, raking their yards.

Considering our optempo as we reintegrate 2SCR and prepare to deploy the 172d, I am proud of our community's effort.

That being said, let us not forget that the leaves will continue to fall throughout Autumn and we should continue to take care of our work and personal areas.

The city of Eschenbach had returned the grass clipping receptacles to the Netzaberg Housing Area for two additional weeks.

These receptacles should be used for grass clippings only. Clippings should be placed directly in the receptacles, not in trash bags in the receptacles.

Weather notification

In my last two columns, I talked about preparing your cars for winter weather. You should also know what sources are available for around-the-clock weather notifications.

Visit the AFN Bavaria Web site (<http://ba->

www.aria.afneurope.net/) and hover your pointer over "Weather/Road Conditions."

The drop-down menu will give you a choice between a 5-Day Outlook, Regional Weather, Road Conditions (current conditions and an explanation of the terms) School Closures, and Traffic Conditions.

We will also publish an in-depth explanation of the actions the community should take during inclement weather and where they can go for more information.

The garrison plans to publish this information on the Command Information Channel, in the Bavarian News, and on the garrison homepage.

For up-to-the-minute weather news, tune in to AFN radio, the aforementioned Web site or the Weather link on the garrison homepage www.grafenwoehr.army.mil, or call our Weather Hotline numbers at DSN 475-ROAD / CIV 09641-83-7623.

Holiday mail

And while weather may not delay the mail, procrastination might.

U.S. postal officials are urging mailers to pay close attention to holiday shipping guidelines.

Parcel airlift packages that you want delivered to the U.S. before Christmas Day should be mailed no later than Dec. 4.

Priority mail and all first class letters and cards should be mailed no later than Dec. 11.

Express mail must be shipped out by Dec. 20.

And it takes an average of one and a half to two weeks for packages to arrive to deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan during the holiday season.

Don't be late!

CFC

Grafenwoehr has passed the halfway mark of its Combined Federal Campaign with \$120,517. CFC runs through Dec. 3, and we've still got time to reach our \$200,000 goal.

If you would like to donate, contact your unit CFC rep today.

Our aim is not to pressure anyone to donate, but present an informed opportunity for those who wish to give.

There is a young Soldier who had never donated because he said he didn't know what CFC had to do with him ... until his grandfather died of cancer.

Now this Soldier donates annually to a cancer related charity. CFC gives military members and civilian employees a chance to support the charities that mean the most to them.

The minimum single donation is \$1. The minimum payroll deduction is \$1, which totals \$12 for those who receive monthly pay and

See BERRIOS Page 3

*Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Bamberg, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

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Op-Ed page

Gates highlights Warrior Care this Veterans Day

American Forces Press Service

In his 2008 Veterans Day message, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates underscores the Defense Department's commitment to the nation's wounded warriors and their families.

Here is the secretary's message:

"On Veterans Day we pay tribute to those who have fought for our country from its earliest days to the present. This day reminds us of how important it is that the men and women who wear this country's uniform know how grateful their fellow Americans are for that service.

"The holiday's birthplace is my home state of Kansas. Over half a century ago, a shoe store owner in Emporia named Al King promoted the idea of changing what had been Armistice Day – honoring veterans of the First World War – into a celebration of veterans of every conflict, and every era.

"What started in Emporia went national in 1954, when Congress passed and President

Eisenhower signed a bill making the November 11 holiday the one we know today.

"As important as it is to publicly recognize the service of our troops returned from the battlefield, it is more important – indeed a sacred obligation – that we make sure they receive the care, benefits, and compensation they've so courageously earned.

This is one of the pre-eminent challenges facing our nation. Aside from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I have had no higher leadership priority.

"Since reports of sub-standard recovery facilities emerged last year, the Department of Defense has launched major reforms and improvements in outpatient care.

Each of the services provides a multi-faceted approach to care. The Army, for example,

gives each soldier a case manager, squad leader, and a primary care provider. Coordinators have been assigned to help guide troops and their families through what can be a bewildering system during a difficult period in their lives.

"The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are expanding a pilot program to streamline the Disability Evaluation System into a single process producing one disability rating.

We must also continue to improve coordination and information-sharing between these two departments so that wounded warriors making the transition out of the military health system are not burdened by excessive delay or duplicate processes.

"To draw attention to the service and

sacrifice of these extraordinary Americans, to take stock of what has been achieved, and to reflect on how much more needs to be done, I have designated November as 'Warrior Care Month.'

The Department of Defense has launched a one-stop website at www.warriorcare.mil, where service members and their families will be able to find out about the full range of resources available to them.

"On this Veterans Day, let us redouble efforts to see our men and women get the care and the recognition that are their due.

"And if there are veterans in your family, in your community – or even if you see them walking down the hall or down the street – take a moment to say 'thank you' for all they have done for us. They deserve no less."

Robert M. Gates

Secretary of Defense

Letter to the Editor

VFW seeking Christmas support for orphan program

Members of VFW Post 9334 conduct a toy and clothing drive for the Orphans in the Czech Republic each year and are assisted by the Torch Club Dragons and the Keystone Tigers from the Netzaberg Youth Center. Persons who are interested in contributing to our Annual Christmas Program can sign for cards, purchase a present, and return it to the Netzaberg Youth Center or the Vilseck Commissary beginning Nov. 8.

Our youth clubs will wrap the present for you if it is not gift wrapped. Once the card and gift is returned, you may keep the picture as a memento.

We support the Detsky Domov Orphanage and the Most Baby Clinic. There will be two collec-

tion points. Persons residing in the Vilseck community may make donations at the Vilseck Commissary during normal operating hours and the Netzaberg Youth Center Bldg. 9080 Monday through Saturday from 2-6 p.m.

If you have any questions concerning the program, please contact Jim Dicks at DSN 475-9393 or CIV 0171 710 6647.

Both communities have responded well to this program for the last six years.

Please assist our organization with making children happy for Christmas because they have no one else to count on except you.

James Dicks



Anniversary of fall of Berlin Wall celebrated on World Freedom Day

On World Freedom Day, we celebrate the anniversary of the historic fall of the Berlin Wall and honor the brave citizens of East and West Germany who helped secure freedom and liberty for future generations.

The Berlin Wall stood as a barrier that isolated the victims of imperial Communism and totalitarian power from the promise of the free world. Standing in the presence of the wall, with an unshakable belief in the power of liberty, President Ronald Reagan issued a resounding challenge on behalf of the free and the unfree alike: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

On Nov. 9, 1989, the citizens of East Germany finally triumphed over their Communist oppressors, and the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. As the hope of freedom spread, the Soviet empire collapsed, the Iron Curtain was lifted, and Eastern and Central Europe were liberated from decades

of cruel tyranny.

The Cold War demonstrated once again that freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted, that evil is real and must be confronted, and that if they are allowed to do so, harsh rulers will subjugate others in the name of hateful ideologies.

History has also proven that the transformative power of liberty overcomes this oppression. Today, many former Communist countries are using their sovereignty to aid the rise of other young democracies and to shine the light of conscience on human rights abuses.

Our belief in the universality of freedom is challenged time and again, but we continue to go forward with confidence that free nations will always prevail over the enemies of liberty, peace, and justice.

On World Freedom Day, we are reminded that injustice overseas can threaten our way of life at home, and we renew our commitment to helping

those who suffer under the weight of oppression.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Nov. 9, 2008, as World Freedom Day.

I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, reaffirming our dedication to freedom and democracy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

George W. Bush

U. S. President

No matter where in the world you go...

beauty follows

Commentary by
Pfc. CHRISTOPHER GAYLORD
13th Public Affairs Detachment

For many us, home is where the heart is and nothing compares. Anyone who knows me knows I'm a huge proponent of that, and though cliché, the saying still stands true for most.

Our individual concepts of beauty, often times, are influenced by what we knew first; by the things we learned early on were good. After all, familiarity breeds contentment, and whether raised in the Pacific Northwest or the deserts of the Middle East, we grow to embrace our surroundings.

Sometimes it's the simple beauties that catch us off guard. Just when the world seems it's falling apart around us, a savior of thought steps in, and we realize that those simple beauties are all around us, if we're willing to search for them.

Upon my arrival to Iraq, I was a bit displeased. I didn't expect much to begin with, but nonetheless, I was unimpressed. It's a far cry from the thick woods and mystic mountains

of the Northwest that I'm used to. Much to my surprise, however, it didn't take long to find my own simple beauty.

Leaving the broadcast studio at Al Faw Palace late one afternoon, I caught the sun setting over the lake at what must have been the perfect time of day. The sight was so amazing that all worries and concerns I'd had about the next year of my life seemed to float painlessly away.

The realization that beauty remains around us despite war just seemed to comfort me.

Although mortar and rocket attacks have shown to be relatively frequent here, life goes on in its breathtaking and sometimes funny little ways.

Even the simplest of things can reassure us that life is beautiful. As a child, I always enjoyed feeding the ducks and geese at the lakes and ponds near home. It seems nothing has changed. My fellow journalists recently re-introduced me to the act. I guess I had forgotten how much fun I could have just watching birds gobble down food like crazy men.

In the strangest of places, I

was reminded of home. I instantly remembered when my grandfather and I would throw bread to the birds while up in the mountains of Oregon, or on walks, generally in the lush spring and summer months, just bonding in the sun as grandfather and grandson; the new and the old sharing a moment.

I always enjoyed the time I spent with my grandparents, and the moment really took me back. I

It was then that I realized those memories really do go with you no matter where you go. They're kind of like AAFES. And even here in Iraq, similarities to home can be found.

Though my example is far from the best, it gives me the hope to always look for those things that can counter my worry and concern; my fear and my sadness. It's so reassuring that the smallest things in life can lift our spirits.

It's just like the other day when I passed by a street near the palace and happened to see two geese bolting down it, side by side. I mean, they were seriously tearing up pavement.

I'd like to think that at the other

end they agreed to race for some sort of prize, or some food some journalist had thrown them earlier. Maybe it was a bet between the two geese, just like humans often do. For some reason, though, it was absolutely hysterical to me. Perhaps it's because geese don't have arms, so it's funny seeing them waddle so speedily from side to side. Either way, it put an ear-to-ear smile across my face. Laughter is a wonderful medicine.

Being far from home, away from familiarity and loved ones, isn't easy for anyone. Feelings of loneliness and depression generally ensue, but no matter where you are, even if in the midst of war, beauty can be found. You have only to search for it.

So if you see increasing amounts of food floating in the waters around the palace, just know that's all the food the birds wouldn't eat. Still, I'll now make it my personal duty to see that the geese of Camp Victory are properly nourished, even if that means wasting a few green apple and carrot cake energy bars. And so I say, "to each his own therapy."

This column was originally published April 10, 2008.

Berrios congratulates troops for electing new commander in chief

continued from Page 2

\$26 for employees who received bimonthly pay.

For this amount of money, children can be fed, cancer research and youth ministries can be funded. For this relatively small amount of money, we can change the world!

Election

And finally, congratulations to everyone who voted!

I congratulate you not on whether or not your candidate won, but because you exercised an important constitutional power and a most solemn trust by casting your ballot and voicing your choice for the leader of our great nation!

The guilt of survival: Working through conflicting emotions

by MARY MARKOS
Bavarian News

Note: This article is the fourth of a four-part series on helping military families cope with redeployment issues.

As Soldiers kick sand from their boots and prepare for redeployment, many will reflect on their time in combat and the memories they made with their brothers in arms.

They bring back memories of long sleepless nights, frightening firefights and close calls that they'd rather not remember but somehow forged lifelong bonds between themselves and their comrades.

War veterans also return from the battlefield with lingering feelings of guilt for actions out of their control.

Left unchecked, this self-imposed blame wages as great an internal war as the one they've just left behind.

"Guilt is a common reaction following deployment," said 1st Lt. Gina Wright, a social worker at the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Health Clinic. "It is an emotion individuals experience when they feel conflicted about something they have done; they might question themselves, asking if what they did was right or wrong."

Sgt. Stephen Morgan, formerly of the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment, has deployed to Iraq twice in the last four years, and said guilt is an emotion that, like their rifles, Soldiers carry for the length of the deployment.

"When you first get there, you feel guilty that ... you're away from (your family). You feel you are not there for (them)," said Morgan. "Towards the end, you are excited to come home. But once you get home, you feel guilty that you made it back."

Two of Morgan's battle buddies lost their legs during his first deployment. Those external wounds, he said, left him with an internal struggle.

"I saw them after I got back... That was pretty hard because I came back and I was fine. I had all my fingers and toes," said Morgan. "I could play with my son, and he couldn't do that. It takes everything he has just to stand up, never mind interacting with his family and doing stuff with his kids."

Morgan also escorted a fallen Soldier home. "We had the funeral on his twenty-first birthday," he said.

Morgan felt the death was partially his fault. "I know if I was there, then it wouldn't have been him, because it would have been me," he said. "I blame myself now. I couldn't deal with it if his whole family blamed me as well. In my mindset, I think that they should... if I blame myself, then they should as well," he said.

That reaction is common, said Wright.

"Survivor's guilt is a deep feeling often experienced by those who have survived when other(s) did not. It derives in part from a feeling that they did not do enough to save the other(s) who perished, and in part from feelings of being unworthy, relative to those who died," she said.

2SCR Chaplain (Col.) Glenn Woodson agreed that it is not unusual for Soldiers to question their survival.

"It is not uncommon that they feel guilty, or at least question why they have survived and the other person had not. They may have been in close proximity, in the same blast, same ve-

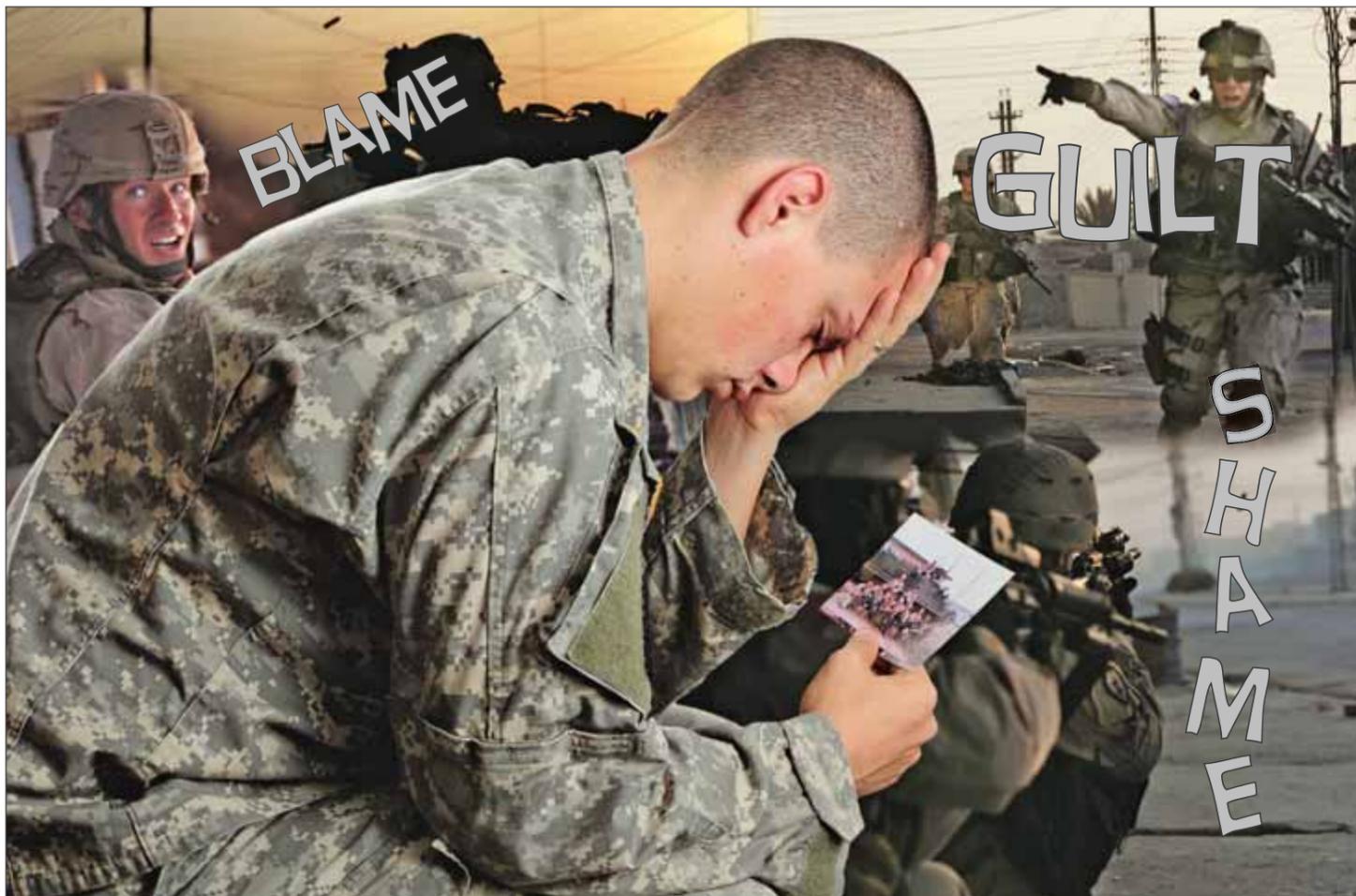


Photo illustration by Sgt. Stephen Morgan

While "good" guilt serves as a moral compass and helps keep an individual balanced, a negative non-productive guilt can be emotionally damaging. Individuals who are experiencing feelings of guilt and shame can speak to a military chaplain who, by regulation, cannot disclose Soldier conversations. Service members can also contact Mental Health or the 24-hour Army Once Source hotline.

hicle, and they just don't understand why they survived," he said.

"You prepare yourself for what could happen to you," suggested Morgan, "but you don't think about it happening to your friends because you feel that you can protect them... You can make sure nothing happens to them."

No amount of preparation, however, may help a Soldier who returns home early due to an injury, or those Soldiers who must stay behind to serve with the rear detachment.

Woodson worked extensively with wounded Soldiers recuperating at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in 2005 and 2006. He said many of them were plagued with shame for what they felt was "abandoning" their buddies on the battlefield.

"They felt tremendous guilt," he said. "They just felt really bad that they had to be evacuated."

And telling a Soldier that he simply can't return to war with a broken leg or serious back injury does little to comfort him.

"They still feel terrible," said Woodson. "If you're close to your guys, then no matter what," Morgan said, "you want to be with them, especially if they're going through anything hard... You always think you can make a difference."

This intense desire to be with comrades, however, is not necessarily a negative, said

USAG Grafenwoehr Family Life Chaplain (Maj.) Darin Nielsen.

"That is part of being a Soldier," he said. "That's the reason Soldiers are willing to put their life on the line. It's what drives them to do a great job as Soldiers, and to stay committed to each other, and to support each other, and keep each other alive."

An infantry man, Morgan led a team of through the Iraqi streets looking for weapon caches and clearing buildings. He, like many combat veterans, has struggled with the guilt of taking lives in the line of duty.

"I've learned that the people that talk about killing other people," said Morgan, "they're the ones who haven't killed somebody. Once you kill somebody and you see them face-to-face... you can see where the bullet went in, where they dragged themselves across the floor. If you can hear the last breaths they take, it haunts you."

"Any distressful emotion or symptom a Soldier is experiencing after deployment should be treated like pain," Wright said. "It is a signal that should not be ignored... If these experiences are not spoken about, or these memories are not confronted, the individual often displays symptoms that affect not only their lives, but their family's lives."

Morgan agrees. "Everybody goes through

it, everybody! And everybody is scared that if they go talk to somebody that it will affect (their career). In the long run, you have to look out for yourself. (You) need to talk to somebody, and (you) can't just talk to the guys that were there," he said.

According to Woodson, Soldiers need not fear that speaking to a chaplain or other professional will damage their career.

"I cannot... share anything (Soldiers) tell me unless (they) give me a written statement of release," he said.

Woodson said regulations created in the last year even prohibit chaplains from disclosing a conversation in which a Soldier admits he may hurt himself or others.

One thing to remember, stressed Woodson, is that guilt can be positive.

"There is a difference between good guilt and bad guilt, productive guilt and nonproductive guilt," Woodson said. "It is a legitimate and good emotion."

"Guilt is our body's way of keeping our lives in balance," explained Wright. "It is one way of reminding one's self that they are not living up to their (personal) standards."

Soldiers can seek confidential help through Vilseck Mental Health by calling DSN 476-2995/2100, CIV 09662-83-2995/2100. Twenty-four support and advice is available by calling Army One Source at 001-800-464-81077.

"If I was there, it wouldn't have been him because it would have happened to me... You think you can make a difference."

Sgt. Stephen Morgan
Two-time Iraq war veteran

"Any distressful emotion or symptom a Soldier is experiencing after deployment should be treated like pain."

1st Lt. Gina Wright
Social Worker, Grafenwoehr Health Clinic

70 to 100 Hours! Volunteers Wanted at Netzaberg Elementary School!!!

There's So Much to Do:

Re-shelve books
Read to children
Straighten shelves
Listen to children read
Stamp books 32,000 times
Inventory books
Cross out old school names 96,000 times
Decorate library

Check in books
Check out books
Sort books
Sew covers for cushions
Label shelves
Label books for reading tests and reading levels.
Delete old titles
Make book displays
Put barcodes on books 21,000 times

Clean video cases
Help students find books.
Arrange books alphabetically
Make new spine labels
Share your hobbies

The NES library needs you!

Can you do any of these jobs listed above?

Are you willing to sign up for two hours a week for a few weeks or a few months?

Right now the NES Library could use 35-50 volunteers at two hours a week.

Come and help out! Let's make our school library A SUPER PLACE TO BE!

Also wanted: Plants for library, colorful pillows or cushions, large colorful carpet, Kleenex, bean bag chairs, stuffed animals or book character dolls such as Clifford, Cat in the Hat, etc.

Armed Forces Inaugural Committee preparing to welcome new president

by GERRY J. GILMORE
American Forces Press Service

Members of the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee are preparing to welcome President-elect Barack Obama when the nation's 44th chief executive takes the oath of office Jan. 20.

AFIC is a joint-service organization that coordinates all military ceremonial support for presidential inaugurations, according to the committee's Web site.

The committee falls under Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region, commanded by Army Maj. Gen. Richard J. Rowe Jr., who wears a dual hat as the committee's chairman. The committee, he said, will grow to about 700 members prior to Inauguration Day.

Inauguration Day will mark the 56th time the U.S. military has welcomed the incoming commander in chief with fanfare, music and parades, Rowe said, a tradition that goes back to the first U.S. chief executive, George Washington.

"We're very excited about it," Rowe said. AFIC works with the Joint Congressional Committee on Inauguration Ceremonies and the Presidential Inaugural Committee, said Marine Corps Col. Tim Cole, AFIC's chief of staff.

The JCCIC is made up of key congressional

leaders and is responsible for the swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol and the congressional luncheon.

The PIC is a nonprofit organization representing the president-elect that's responsible for organizing and funding many inaugural events.

Supporting the inaugural "is quite an honor," Cole said, citing the historical importance of yesterday's election, which selected America's first African-American president as the nation remains at war with global terrorism.

Cole saluted America's servicemen and women, including the half-million troops stationed overseas — many of whom are serving in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq — as well as military retirees and veterans.

"We in uniform today represent them at this nation's inauguration," Cole said.

AFIC's military composition "is purple all the way," said Navy Capt. Benjamin Yates, the committee's director of personnel. The color purple, he explained, signifies the blending of the different-hued uniforms worn by members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard who serve on the AFIC.

Yates is a retired Navy officer who was recalled to active duty to serve on the committee. "It's a major operation," Yates said of AFIC's

mission. "No matter what inauguration you're going through, it's a piece of history." Following the inaugural, he said, the committee should finish closing up shop sometime in April.

On Nov. 5, the day after Election Day, about 70 servicemembers reporting to the AFIC were involved in various in-processing actions at the committee's offices in downtown Washington.

AFIC members Army Capt. Sam Kieffer, Coast Guard Lt. Kishia Mills and Air Force Staff Sgt. Olayinka Olatunji issued building and other credentials to the new arrivals.

"It's great to be in a joint environment and working with the other services," said Mills, 27, who hails from New York City.

Working on the AFIC is an "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Lancaster, Pa., native Kieffer, citing the significance of U.S. presidential inaugurations. "It is history in the making, and obviously this one is special," Kieffer said of Obama's upcoming inauguration.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Andrew Serafico, a 34-year-old administration specialist from Reno, Nev., said he is inspired to be part of the AFIC.

"It's truly an honor and a privilege to be here to be taking part in this very historical event. ... To just be part of history is truly amazing and something I'll truly remember," Serafico said.

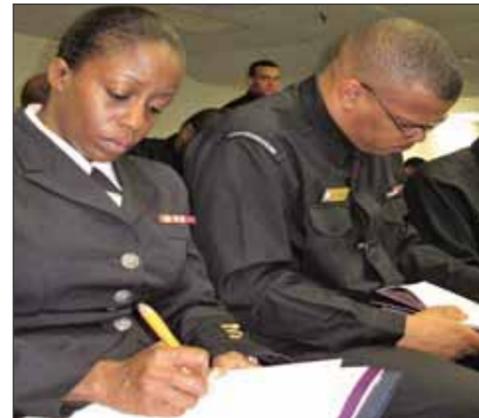
Navy Reserve Petty Officer 2nd Class Lisa Daniels, 42, heard about the opportunity to join AFIC months ago during a duty tour in Bahrain. "I applied for the program, ... and fortunately I got selected," said Daniels, who hails from Warren, Ark. "I am glad to be here."

Daniels, who will serve with the committee as a duty driver, said she recognizes that Obama's journey to the White House is a notable event in U.S. history.

"I support any president," she said. "It's all about the support of our government and sticking together as a team and forming unity for our nation."

It's all about the support of our government and sticking together as a team and forming unity for our nation.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Lisa Daniels
Navy Reserve



DoD photo by Gerry J. Gilmore

Navy Reserve Petty Officer 2nd Class Lisa Daniels and Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Vincent Robinson fill out forms during a briefing of new Armed Forces Inaugural Committee members in Washington, D.C., Nov. 5. Daniels heard about the opportunity to join the AFIC during a duty tour in Bahrain.

Know the rules for timely notice of loss, damage for claims shipments



It's the Law

JMTC Legal Center

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, JMTC With the end of the summer PCS cycle, all service members and civilian personnel who have arrived recently should note these important deadlines for filing claims for property damaged, destroyed, or lost during moves.

The new Full Replacement Value program

Under the new Full Replacement Value program, you can choose to file your claim either through an Army claims office or directly with the carrier.

With the FRV program, if you file your claim directly upon the carrier within nine months of delivery, the carrier will settle the claim by repairing or paying to repair damaged items.

For items that are lost or destroyed, the carrier will either replace the item with a new item, or pay the full, undepreciated replacement cost.

A few large items like pianos, organs, motorcycles, and vehicles, as well as firearms and objects of art, are not covered by FRV. In some cases, 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.

On a full replacement value claim, the carrier is liable for the greater of \$5,000 per shipment or \$4 times the net weight of the shipment (in pounds), up to a maximum limit of \$50,000.

If you believe the full replacement value of your property is more than \$50,000, you may be able to obtain additional FRV coverage at your own expense from a private insurance company or from the carrier, if the carrier offers additional coverage.

In addition, if you file your claims directly with the carrier within nine months of delivery, the carrier will be responsible for obtaining all repair cost from reputable repair firms or replacement estimates when not repairable.

If you file your claim directly with the carrier more than nine months after delivery, the carrier will only pay the depreciated replacement cost or repair cost, whichever is less.

If you file your claim directly with the carrier by mail, you should send claims to the carrier by certified mail so that you have a record of the date on which you submitted the claim.

When the carrier receives your claim, it will have up to 60 days to pay, deny or make a final written offer. Once you have settled the claim, the carrier will have 30 days to make the payment.

Army Claims Office

If you decide to file your claim directly with an Army claims office, you will give up your right to have the carrier settle your claim on the basis of full replacement value.

The Army claims office will settle your claim by paying the depreciated replacement or repair cost, whichever is less. You must submit Form 1840R to the claims office within 70 days of the date your property was delivered.

DD Form 1840R (the pink form captioned "Notice of Loss or Damage") is the reverse of the DD Form 1840 that was filled out when the movers delivered your belongings. Be sure to unpack and inspect everything in plenty of time to file notice.

Completing the form properly and filing it timely are critical to preserving your claim for two reasons.

First, the claims office cannot pay claimants for items that are not listed on Form 1840R.

Second, if the Form 1840R is not filed within 70 days, the claims office must deduct the amount that the government could have recovered from the carrier from any amount payable to you on your claim.

This deduction for lost potential carrier recovery will almost always equal or exceed the value of the items being claimed, resulting in no payment for those items of which the government received tardy notice.

Be mindful that the armed services' claims programs are funded mostly by recovering money from private carriers who break and lose things, not by tax dollars!

Filing the DD Form 1840R is only the first step in perfecting your claim.

You must submit your completed claim on DD Form 1842, Claim For Loss or Damage To Personal Property Incident To Service, and DD Form 1844, List Of Property And Claim Analysis Chart, within two years of the date your property was delivered. This two-year period was established by act of Congress and cannot be waived.

The claims office must also have your inventory, estimates, certificate of non-insurance, government bill of lading, orders, and attendant documents before it can adjudicate your claim.

You must file separate claims for each shipment (household goods, hold baggage, and POV).

If you suffer damage to property that may be compensable by the Army, contact your local claims office promptly.

For assistance with claims, call **Ansbach Law Center**, 467-2104/civilian (09802) 832104; **Bamberg Law Center**, DSN 469-8411/civilian (0951) 3008411; **Grafenwoehr Law Center**, DSN 475-8428/civilian (09641) 838428; **Hohenfels Law Center**, DSN 466-2401/civilian (09472) 832401; **Schweinfurt Law Center**, DSN 353-8809/civilian (09721) 968809; **Vilseck Law Center**, DSN 476-2240/civilian (09662) 832240.

Postal service sets holiday guidelines for 2008 season

by SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY
American Forces Press Service

As the holidays approach and military families start thinking about what they're going to send loved ones serving overseas, there are a few dates to keep in mind.

"The earliest deadline is for troops that are serving in the Iraq [and] Afghanistan area," said Al DeSarro, spokesman for the western region of the U.S. Postal Service. "You want to send all your holiday mail and packages [to those areas] by Dec. 4."

Holiday mail, including packages and cards, going to military bases in other parts of the world should be shipped by Dec. 11, he said.

"We do encourage people to closely follow these deadlines," DeSarro said.

"Of course, we make every attempt, even if you miss the deadline, to deliver the mail to our troops."

Pseudo-Santas who can't beat those dates have another option to get holiday goodies to their destinations in time: Express Mail. But it will cost a bit more and it's not available for servicemembers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Priority Mail Flat-Rate boxes are the best value when shipping to military members serving at home or anywhere overseas, DeSarro said. The largest flat-rate box costs \$10.95 to ship to an APO or FPO address. That's a \$2 discount, and the boxes

are free.

The flat-rate boxes come with another bonus. If it will fit in the box, and weighs 70 pounds or less, it ships at the established rate.

"We also offer a special military package kit, and this applies even if you want to send to our troops here in the U.S.," DeSarro said. "If you call 1-800-610-8734, they'll send you a free kit of packaging materials -- priority mail boxes, tape, labels and stuff that can make your holiday packing much easier."

When shipping any holiday package, there are some basic guidelines to take into consideration, he added. If a USPS-provided box isn't being used, senders should make sure the box they're using is sturdy. Don't use wrapping paper or string on the outside, and print both the shipping and return addresses clearly. Contents should be packaged securely and in leak-proof containers, and consider the customs of the country to ensure the items are appropriate and acceptable.

USPS also suggests including the mailing address, return address and the contents of the box on a slip of paper with the other contents, just in case something out of the ordinary should happen.

Following not only the shipping date guidelines, but also the general packing guidelines can help the USPS get packages where they're going during their busiest time of the year.

DeSarro urges people to mail as much as they want and as early as they can, noting that officials expect 20 million pounds of mail will be sent U.S. troops this holiday season.



2SCR redeploys, tackles reintegration

Story and photo by
SpC. FABIAN ORTEGA
USAREUR Public Affairs

Months of preparation go into a unit's deployment, and the same can be said of its deployment back home.

With about 4,000 Soldiers of U.S. Army Europe's 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment currently returning here from deployment, the "Dragoons" have been easing back into the community while being saluted at welcome home celebrations and digging into a seven-day reintegration program.

It took four months of planning to put that reintegration program in place for 2nd SCR Soldiers, Vilseck officials said.

The proof of that planning begins when Soldiers step off the plane. From that moment, seven days are blocked off for the transition back into life outside a combat zone, said Maj. Robert J. Hellner, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr officer in charge of reintegration.

During those seven days, Soldiers and their families take part in classes, undergo post-deployment medical screening, complete administrative processing, and absorb a wide range of information designed to effectively assimilate them back into the families and community they left 15 months earlier.

The process begins on "zero day." Soldiers arrive, turn in their weapons, and are quickly released to spend the rest of the day with family, friends or colleagues. But reintegration begins in earnest on the second day, said Capt. Angela Jefferson, 2nd SCR rear detachment human resource officer.

The reintegration program is broken down in seven half-day modules,



2SCR Soldiers who just returned from deployment to Iraq in-process in the reintegration center in Vilseck Oct. 31. During their seven-day reintegration program the Soldiers take part in classes, medical screening, and administrative processing to integrate them back into their families and the community following deployment.

beginning with a welcome briefing and ending with a unit day.

In between are visits to medics and a dentist, Soldier and Family reunion sessions, administrative processing, and Army Career and Alumni Program and reassignment briefings.

Hundreds of 2SCR Soldiers spent their first day of reintegration filling out travel vouchers, renewing ID cards, updating personnel records and attending safety briefings.

"I've cleared (the community mail room), vehicle registration, the education center, and driver's testing," said SpC. Lamarkus K. Harris, Fires Squadron field artillery meteorological crewmember, during his first day of

reintegration.

Soldiers arrive at the reintegration center at 7 a.m. and complete their assigned modules for the day by noon.

As daily flights come in bringing more of the Dragoons home, a reintegration staff of 50 to 80 works to get Soldiers processed and on their way.

"We're operating this reintegration program seven days a week. It's part of the U.S. Army Europe reintegration standard," said Hellner. "We have groups as big as 400 coming in almost daily."

Days two, three and four require Soldiers to update medical records,

attend Soldier and Family reunion briefings and finish up administrative processing.

Single and married Soldiers attend separate briefings on day three.

Married Soldiers attend Family reunion briefings, while their unmarried comrades meet with Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers representatives, take part in drug and alcohol awareness training and complete a Battlemind training session with a chaplain.

Battlemind training teaches them how to spot the symptoms of post-deployment stress, encourages them to communicate about their experiences while deployed, and provides information about where to go for post-deployment assistance if they need it, said Vicky Cunningham, USAG Grafenwoehr Army Community Service volunteer coordinator.

"Married couples get different Battlemind training," Cunningham said. "We try to get (single Soldiers) to talk a little bit and ask about some of the challenges they had while they were deployed. We let them know that there is help available if they should have any difficulties or problems."

Capt. Willie Mashack, chaplain for the 2nd SCR's 3rd Squadron, said the reintegration process is an important part of a successful deployment.

"Reintegration is a must," he said. "There is such a lapse in time between husband, wife and kids, that there must be some type of transition to become more familiar and acquainted with one another. Even for single Soldiers (deployed) away from the community, there has to be some bridge to bring them together, and reintegration training does that."

UMUC fund aids troops, family

UMUC news release

University of Maryland University College announced Nov. 3 a new scholarship fund earmarked to assist active-duty, enlisted service members and their families.

The \$200,000 fund will provide financial assistance to UMUC's military students and their spouses in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, as well as stateside.

It will cover the cost of textbooks for enlisted, active-duty members of the U.S. armed forces, as well as tuition assistance in the form of scholarships to spouses of enlisted, active-duty service members. All awards will be need-based, renewable, and contingent upon the student maintaining satisfactory academic standing. The initial endowment will be disbursed over four years, but the fund will remain open to additional contributions.

"Given UMUC's long history of service to members of the military and their families, we are especially proud to announce this new military scholarship fund," said Dr. Susan C. Aldridge, president of UMUC.

"It promises to lessen the financial burden on our brave women and men in uniform—and their families—and bring them one step closer to earning a valuable UMUC degree that will open doors and broaden horizons for years to come," she said.

Currently, UMUC enrolls an estimated 60,000 military service members, dependents and veterans each year. Under contract with the U.S. Department of Defense, the university is currently positioned to be among the first institutions to offer classes face-to-face to service members stationed on the ground in Iraq.

For more information, e-mail eroy@ed.umuc.edu.

Want to shut up your buddies who jokingly call you genius?

European Stars & Stripes

American Mensa, the high IQ society whose members are bona fide geniuses, is providing all current or past military members an opportunity to qualify for Mensa for free.

In honor of Veterans Day, American Mensa is waiving the \$40 test results review fee for those who submit a copy

of their previous test scores, completed application (<http://www.us.mensa.org/application>) and a copy of their current military ID or DD214 form.

American Mensa currently accepts more than 200 tests for prior test score review, including several tests administered by the military, and the free offer is good through Nov. 30, according to a news release.

"Many of our friends and family are currently serving overseas, or know someone that has been active military in the past," Pam Donahoo, executive director of American Mensa, said in the press release. "These men and women put a lot on the line for this country and their citizens, show tremendous character and are extremely bright, and that can only

add even more value to a social and service organization like American Mensa."

Once approved for membership, a person will pay the annual dues, which are \$52.

For more information about Mensa, or to apply for membership, visit www.us.mensa.org or call 800-66-MENSA.

RETIREE CORNER

Vets travel far and wide for annual Retiree Appreciation Day

by DAVE STEWART

Graf Retiree Council president

A resounding success" summed up the comments and critiques from many of the close to 200 retirees and surviving spouses attending the 3d Annual Retirement Appreciation day held at the Garrison in late October.

Participants came from as far as Brandenburg in the north to Passau and Garmisch in the south. The Berlin Retiree Council chartered a bus to bring 57 Berlin retirees and widows to the event.

Garrison Commander Colonel Nils "Chris" Sorenson welcomed the participants and stated, "I want you to know that the garrison deeply appreciates the service that each of you have given to our country."

"I make a promise to you that I will always keep your interests in mind when making decisions at the garrison level," said Sorenson. "That is not to say decisions will always be in the interest of the retired community because our top priority must always go with the active duty force, especially in time of war."

Col. (Ret.) Robert Mentell, the Army Europe Retiree Council president, gave an update and explained what the AERC does to support retirees.

He described ongoing initiatives being worked by senior Department of the Army and Office of the Secretary of Defense retiree councils and cited recent successes including the approval by the Veterans Administration for International Direct Deposit.

Mentell also cited unresolved issues that are still being worked, including: Lifting or increasing the unpopular 16-ounce limit of APO/FPO mail; funding for a permanent full-service VA counselor in Europe; tying TRICARE fee increases to retired pay increases rather than charging retirees with a whopping "catch-up" charge; and establishing DFAS representation at the Frankfurt Consulate.

"Colonel Mentell's remarks showed the participants that there are senior level organizations advocating for retiree concerns," said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Doug Kramer, the local garrison retiree council vice president.

The medical and dental services that are usually offered at RAD events were challenged on this weekend with the return of the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment from duty in Iraq.

Regardless, the clinics provided preventive medical and dental services to the retirees, and did their best to treat as many as they could.

"We understand the clinics' priorities to the active force" said Larry Simank, a retired warrant officer and retiree council member "but many retirees were disappointed that they could not speak to a physician or get blood work."

The medical staff did provide preventive services with flu, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines as well as diabetic screening and audiometer testing.

Medical and dental services are the most popular service offered at RAD events, and retirees lined up at the clinic doors shortly after 6 a.m., to improve their chances of being seen.

The dental clinic performed exams and teeth cleaning and even continued this service the

following week to catch a good number of the overflow.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Office updated finance records on the spot and the American Benefit Unit of the Frankfurt Consulate provide consulting services on Social Security, Medicare and other U.S. Citizen services.

Garrison agencies helped retirees with religious and legal services, ID card updates, customs and general information.

Bus tours showed the retirees the sprawling training area and results of the expansion efforts across the post. Refreshments were provided by the Grafenwoehr Chapter of the Warrant Officer's Association and the local chapter of the VFW provided a cake and lunch services.

"We think we accomplished what we set out to do" said Retirement Services Officer John Currie, who was responsible for organizing

the annual event, "but we will study the critiques" to see where we can improve.

"It was well worth the trip here" said, Mike Meckler, a retired chief master sergeant who drove 200 kilometers from Eckersfelden in Southern Bavaria to attend the event. "My wife and I learned a lot, and we were comforted to learn that there are folks looking out for our interests."

Sorenson appealed to retirees to volunteer their spare time to supporting agencies such as the Army Post Office at Christmas, Army Community Services, The Wounded Warrior Program, and the Dependent Youth Activities. He said retirees should visit the ACS office for more information.

Next year's RAD is set for Sept. 15 to coincide with AAFES Retirement Appreciation Days.



Retiree John Cooper consults with a Defense Finance and Accounting Office representative Oct. 25.

Photo by Eva Creel

Newlyweds find romance, adventure, MWR auto skills shop in Garmisch

Story and photo by
JOHN REESE
Garmisch PAO

A honeymoon is one of those events couples remember for the rest of their lives.

Being stranded, however, with a broken axel and sleeping two frigid October nights in their Volkswagen instead of a newlywed suite, drinking water instead of champagne, and dining on canned goods warmed with MRE heaters instead of room service isn't what Spc. Benjamin N. Baker and his bride Nadine had planned.

The newlyweds met more than three years ago while being serenaded at a karaoke club and gradually developed their relationship. Baker recently reenlisted and decided Nadine was to be his bride. They tied the knot and set off to explore Bavaria.

Baker, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, serving with the 302nd Headquarters & Headquarters Support Company, Military Intelligence in Wiesbaden, was driving when the motor tour became an ordeal.

"We were touring the mountains of Bavaria when the car just broke down," said Baker. "I couldn't drive it any more. I knew it was the transmission area, but I just didn't know exactly what was wrong with it."

Fortunately the couple carried communications and supplies.

"I called my parents on my cell phone and they helped us out from Mainz," said Nadine. "They sent us

money."

They would need it, too. The tow truck bill came to a whopping €495!

The resourceful Soldier had stocked the car with blankets, sleeping bags, canned food, an entrenching tool and water "just in case."

"I came prepared," said Baker. "We had some heaters from MREs."

The temperature at night hovered just above freezing at 1 degree Celsius, said Baker.

"The engine started, thank God, and we could still keep warm," said Baker. "We slept in the car for two nights."

Eventually the couple arrived at Artillery Kaserne's Auto Skills Shop hours before it was scheduled to open.

"We were in Subway, and I was talking with the guy behind the counter, telling him what had happened. He offered us some free cookies," said Baker.

Right then Jessica Roberson from FMWR Outdoor Recreation walked in and overheard the conversation. Roberson said she might be able to help them find a place to stay.

The couple was able to get a small cabin at the AFRC campground on Artillery Kaserne at a low cost.

Roberson went a step further suggested the Bakers try the garrison's new Army Community Service Center.

"I said I don't mind raking leaves—I thought maybe I'd be doing some service or something," said Baker.

"We met (ACS Director) Doris Tyler, and she said she'd be able to help us with an Army Emergency Relief loan. I'd forgotten about AER. I'd already used it once to fly back to the States when my grandfather passed away."

AER loans are issued on a case-by-case basis, said Tyler.

"We provided an AER zero interest loan to help him with his car repairs. AER is Soldiers helping Soldiers," said Tyler. "When we called his unit to explain what happened, his commander said 'he is a good Soldier and I trust him.'"

While Tyler went to work cutting a check, the Bakers returned to their car waiting outside of the garrison Auto Crafts Shop. They didn't have to wait for long. Manager Bob Laird came early to work that day. His shop normally doesn't open until 2 p.m. Baker told Laird about the breakdown and how they were from out of town.

"Where do you work?" Laird asked.

"The motor pool," replied Baker. "What are you, the operations clerk?"

"No," said Baker. "I work on cars, too."

An instant bond was formed between Laird, a retired Army mechanic, and Baker, a 63J (Quartermaster Chemical Equipment Repair.)

"Then let's push it on in," said Laird, opening the shop early.

Together they rolled the car into the bay, jacked it up, and the two mechanics began the diagnosis. Baker told Laird about how the car was making a noise and that he thought the transmission was out.

Laird fired-up the engine and listened to it, and his experience reckoned that the problem wasn't inside the transmission. He put the car in gear to check the axels and saw that only one side of the front wheel



Auto Crafts Shop manager Bob Laird (left) holds the shiny new CV joint while Spc. Benjamin Baker holds the broken one, as the two mechanics realize the auto parts store sent them the wrong size replacement joint.

drive was spinning.

"The good news was that the problem wasn't in his transmission, but the bad news was that the spindle on the constant velocity joint was broken," said Laird.

The Auto Craft Shop has a mixed collection of older equipment handed-down from other garrisons, and somehow Laird keeps the aging hydraulic lifts operating safely and solves mechanical problems for travelers like the Bakers.

By then it was almost 2 pm, the deadline to order the parts from a local supplier for pickup the following morning. They removed the faulty CV joint and Laird's assistant Bobby Vick drove it into Garmisch just in time to place the order.

When the auto parts store opened at 9 a.m. the next morning, they retrieved the part and added a thick coating

of axel grease, only to discover that despite bringing the exact part needed to the store, the replacement CV joint was the wrong size, adding an extra day of delay.

"We joke around here in the crafts shop," said Laird, wiping grease off of his hands before calling the parts store again.

"We have fun, joke, and we get you on the road again—that's our motto. We can't fix everybody's problem, but we try," he said.

The Bakers took it in stride, staying an extra night in their honeymoon cabin.

The next day the correct part was installed and they were ready to return to Wiesbaden, but first they stopped by ACS to thank Tyler, who gave them two little bottles of champagne to celebrate their nuptials after they safely returned home.

“We were touring the mountains of Bavaria when the car just broke down.”

Spc. Benjamin Baker
Recently married and stranded in Garmisch



Photo by John Reese

Astraea Roberts, a fifth grader and "voting assistance officer" for Garmisch American School, casts her ballot for Barack Obama.

The students held their own presidential election Nov. 3, complete with a registrar who checked off names and issued ballots, voting booths, and poll workers.

The students accurately forecast the election with 52 votes for Sen. Obama, 42 votes for Sen. McCain, and one invalid hanging chad ballot.

Meet the Muralist: Peter Brown zaps community library with color

Story and photo by **JESSICA ROBERSON**
Garmisch FMWR

The Garmisch Library staff celebrated the completion of artist Peter Brown's mural in the library's Teen Corner October 24 by inviting Garmisch youth over for a "Meet the Muralist" afternoon session of questions and answers.

The special event with homemade cookies and brownies was the finish line of 50-plus long hours of work. The labor of love was completed with the goal of giving the teens a special place to relax and read with a unique, fun atmosphere that celebrated the arts and the local environment.

The mural reflects the local landscape, with the summit of the Zugspitze in the foreground and man-made wonders: the Great Wall of China weaves its way across the 'canvas' between the pyramids of Egypt and the Statue of Liberty, all surrounded by a glowing Wetterstein sunrise.

It is a long journey from the hills of South Dakota to the mountains of Bavaria. Still, it is a journey that Brown was happy to make, bringing with him his lifelong enthusiasm for painting.

With his parents' permission, Brown's first mural was painted inside the walls of the family barn. He told the kids that he quickly learned the importance of scale. Most importantly he learned the importance of ventilation when working with spray paint.

"I learned pretty quickly I had to keep the barn doors open!" he said.

From there, Brown soon found himself volunteering to paint a mural at his local library in his home town.

At the end of last year's ski season, he approached library manager Ailien Patail and offered to paint a mural. Week after week, the Garmisch kids wondered what the final product would look like. The kids asked Brown for advice on how to start painting.

"Find someplace legal," he laughed, explaining that his

painting "career" began with graffiti. As a teenager in South Dakota, he had visions of painting on large canvasses on the scale of Michelangelo but had no space to experiment.

The teens pressed Brown about what inspired him, asking how kids who were interested in painting should begin practicing.

"I really admire Leonardo daVinci because he wasn't just a painter. He sculpted and was an inventor as well," Brown said. "And if I was going to suggest anything, I would say get yourself

a sketch book and just draw your day; whatever you see that in the world that inspires you. Go home and put it on paper. After a while you'll find yourself building a portfolio."

This is interesting advice from a man who teaches snowboarding for his day job at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort. Servicemembers and their families on R&R in Garmisch are surrounded by the same mountain vista now splashed across the library wall.

The completed mural is, quite simply, fabulous.

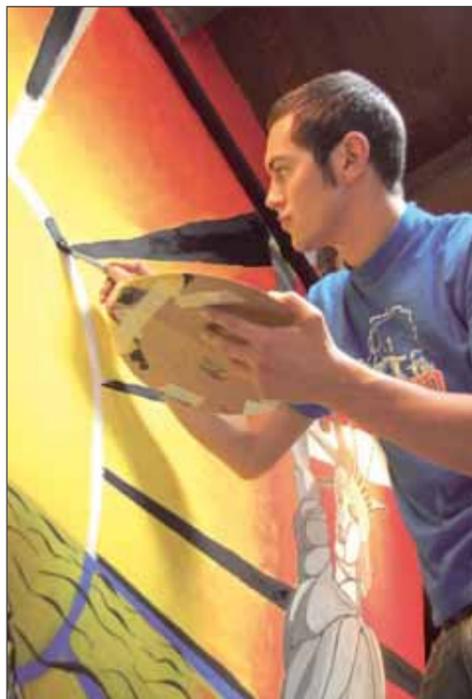
"I see the Zugspitze!" said local teen Calvin McGrail as he admired the mural.

Brown asked McGrail if he knew that the astronauts could see the Great Wall of China from the moon.

The library staff, a small team of three including Patail, Shellie Hanson, and Jamie Davis, voiced their thanks to Brown for his contribution. Brown modestly suggested he would love to extend the mural around the corner. The kids liked that idea and started offering him ideas on what to paint next.

There is more art to look forward to in what the Garmisch community and IMCOM call the Army's "Best Small Installation Library Recreation" for four years in a row. In addition to Brown's

mural, different mediums of art by local artists are on display. The volunteer spirit is alive and well on the Artillery Kaserne in Garmisch. Nowhere has that been more evident than at the Garmisch Community Library.



Artist Peter Brown adds the final touches to a mural in the Garmisch Community Library teen center.

Hohenfels bazaar brings holiday spirit

By JESSICA HILL

Hohenfels Community and Spouses Club

As the holiday season draws near, the Hohenfels community is preparing for the 2008 Holiday Bazaar.

Patrons can browse the bazaar's quality selection of goods, and shop "till you drop" Nov. 14-16.

The event, sponsored by U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation staff, is conducted with the assistance of the Hohenfels Community and Spouses Club.

HCSC uses the proceeds from the bazaar to provide welfare grants and scholarships for the Hohenfels community.

Last year, HCSC gave out more than \$40,000 in scholarships and grants to the garrison's private organizations, Family Readiness Groups, schools, and youth groups.

The event will be held in the Community Activities Center and the post gym.

Mary Fitter, HCSC bazaar chair, said she anticipates an outcome even greater than in past years.

"We hope to bring forth a new location and have the biggest and best Bavarian holiday bazaar ever. There will be excellent food booths, an indoor beer garden, an amusement ride for

kids, and the best vendors," said Fitter, adding that the bazaar is a baby stroller-friendly event.

There is no better way to stock up on unique, genuine gifts from various European regions all in one location, according to Morrisa Booker, HCSC vendor chair.

"A diverse group of vendors will be in attendance to share with you the finest in wine, crystal, Polish and Italian pottery, pewter, jewelry, antique furniture, artwork, decorative eggs, linens and lace, aged cheese and Belgium chocolates, tapestries, rugs, and the list goes on," she said.

Paired with holiday music, decorations, and the wide selection of food and beverages from the many vendors, patrons will ease into the holiday spirit.

The bazaar is also a place where many community members can volunteer their time and efforts.

Whether checking identification upon entrance, helping to decorate, cleaning up after the event, or helping with hospitality, volunteers will be greatly appreciated.

Anyone that would like to volunteer at the 2008 Hohenfels Holiday Bazaar may contact hscinfo@yahoo.com or visit www.hohenfelscsc.com.

The event is open to all DoD ID cardholders.



File photo

Vendors will offer a variety of Bavarian and European specialties in time for the holidays at the Hohenfels Holiday Bazaar Nov. 14-16.

Federal programs help wounded warriors, people with disabilities

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

George W. Bush's first visit to the Pentagon as president was in June 2001 when he visited the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program Technology Evaluation Center with CAP Director Dinah Cohen.

His second visit was on Sept. 12, 2001.

When he toured the CAP center in June, Cohen showed him technology such as alternative keyboards, assistive listening devices, and other accommodations the government provides for its disabled employees.

The reason for his second visit, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, changed things throughout the nation, including how Cohen and her staff now do their job of assisting Americans with disabilities.

Surprise Twist

"No one thought when he was looking at the equipment [in June] that it would be used more for returning service members than for federal employees [as it was originally intended]," said Cohen during a presentation Oct. 22 at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels for October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month and November's Warrior Care Month.

Established in 1990 as DoD's centrally funded program to provide accommodations for employees with disabilities, CAP has now provided more than 71,000 accommodations for the employees of 65 federal agencies.

Accommodations include technology and assistance that help disabled workers do their job, such as voice recognition software that allowed a young accountant to keep her job working with computers after she lost her hands, feet, and ears on Sept. 11, 2001—her second day at her new job at the Pentagon.

After active duty

In the past year, Cohen has developed a program to extend this assistance to wounded service members and allows them to retain their assistive technology once they separate from active service.

Cohen and her staff provided more than 4,500 accommodations to service members in fiscal year 2008, 75 percent of which went to Soldiers. They also educate military liaisons and federal agencies about hiring initiatives designed specifically for veterans with disabilities.

Veterans can take advantage of the programs designed just for them, like Hire Heroes and the Wounded Warrior Project, but they can also use programs that apply to all people with disabilities.

Cohen explained to the many garrison and post leaders in attendance how these programs work and the advantages they offer for hiring managers.

Unbelievable

"It is unbelievable the talent you can find in this wonderful pool," she said, while citing statistics that show the percentage of employees with disabilities in the federal workforce has been declining since 1993.

"Seventy-one percent of people

with a disability are unemployed or underemployed," she said.

Federal employees with authority over the hiring process can help remedy that while simultaneously benefitting their agencies by taking advantage of programs like Schedule A and the Workforce Recruitment Program.

Schedule A is a hiring authority that allows federal officials to non-competitively hire candidates who have disabilities.

Non-competitive

While non-competitive hiring means officials may extend a job offer without first posting the job and going through a lengthy interview process, Cohen insists that does not diminish the qualifications of an employee hired under Schedule A.

"I would never advocate for hiring people with disabilities who are not the most qualified for the job," she said. "You still interview and screen; you don't reduce the standards. Any smart manager knows what's out there, what you can and can't find, and what kind of person is qualified."

"I came in under Schedule A and I think I'm pretty damn good," she said, demonstrating her point.

Cohen stressed that Schedule A can benefit the employer by dramatically reducing the time between when a job vacancy is identified and when it can be filled.

WRP is a recruitment program developed to connect post-secondary students and recent graduates with disabilities to federal agencies for summer, temporary, or permanent positions.



Dinah Cohen, director of the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program, speaks at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Oct. 22 about accommodations, services, and hiring programs available for federal employees with disabilities.

Cohen suggested these programs can also be used to support wounded service members.

"If they separate, use Schedule A to bring them back as federal employees," she said. "If they separate and go back to school, use WRP to bring them back in."

Alma Molina, garrison Equal

Employment Opportunity program manager for USAG Hohenfels, said she hopes to bring three WRP hires to the garrison, as well as working to further assist Hohenfels wounded Soldiers.

"My job is to help civilians, yes, but I want to make sure the Soldiers are taken care of always," she said.

Resources to help personnel with disabilities gain federal employment or excel in a current position

www.tricare.mil/cap

The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program provides assistive technology and services to people with disabilities, federal managers, supervisors, information technology professionals, and wounded service members.

CAP increases access to information and works to remove barriers to employment opportunities by eliminating the costs of assistive technology and accommodation solutions.

www.wrp.gov

The Workforce Recruitment Program connects post-secondary students and recent graduates with disabilities to federal agencies for summer, temporary, or permanent positions.

WRP recruiters from federal agencies conduct interviews with interested students on college and university campuses across the country.

Information from these student interviews is compiled in a searchable database that is available through this Web site to federal human resources specialists, equal

employment opportunity specialists, and other hiring officials in federal agencies.

www.dol.gov/vets/welcome.html

The Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, through cooperative efforts with, and grants to, each state, offers employment and training services to eligible veterans through the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program and the Local Veterans' Employment Representatives Program.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists develop job and training opportunities for veterans, with special emphasis on veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives are state employees located in state employment service local offices to provide assistance to veterans looking for work.

www.hireheroesusa.org

Hire Heroes USA is a nonprofit organization that matches the career interests and skills of America's heroes

to the needs of companies who partnering with them to fill job openings, specializing in the career placement of those wounded or with any level of disability.

Services are at no charge to veterans and employers.

www.woundedwarriorproject.org

Wounded Warrior Project's Warriors to Work program helps individuals recovering from severe injuries received in the line of duty connect with the support and resources they need to build a career in the civilian workforce.

www.americasheroesatwork.gov

America's Heroes at Work is a U.S. Department of Labor project that focuses on the employment challenges of returning service members living with Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The project equips employers with the tools and education they need to help returning service members affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace.

Local job, health fair draws hundreds

By KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

The Health, Safety, and Job Fair at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Oct. 30 attracted more than 650 community members with 75 presenters offering information and services from a wide range of community organizations and programs.

The Hohenfels American Red Cross passed out material encouraging people to be prepared for an emergency or natural disaster.

More information on their "Four Steps to Safety" can be found by visiting the Red Cross office in Bldg. 10 or www.redcross.org.

Groups including the Hohenfels Community and Spouses Club, Protestant Women of the Chapel, Military Council of Catholic Women, KONTAKT club, and Girl Scouts were available to answer questions about their benefits and how to become a member.

While numerous tables were filled with these recreational organizations, many were there to provide information to the Hohenfels community members on preventive care and general wellness issues.

The Health Clinic provided free blood pressure checks, glucose checks, and flu vaccines.

The U.S. Army Center for Health, Promotions, and Preventative Medicine Europe distributed information on nutrition and breast cancer awareness.

"Breast cancer awareness shouldn't be just one month," said Karen Lewis, garrison health promotions and well being coordinator for USACHPPMEUR, referring to National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"It should be 12 months out of the year, not just in October."

Jamie MacKenzie, a certified occupational health nurse for USACHPPMEUR, used her table to promote the importance of occupational preventative health.

She distributed literature focused on creating a healthy workspace—available at <http://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/ergopgm/publications.aspx>—which she said more people need to do.

"People think it [their desk space] is already set up for them, and that's a mistake. Own it and make the equipment fit you, instead of you fitting it," said MacKenzie, suggesting that

workers make sure to adjust their chair, computer monitors, and keyboards for an optimal workspace.

For when it is time to leave the office, sports and fitness staff were present to promote upcoming classes and new instructors.

Two new spinning classes, "30 Minute Slam" at 11:45 a.m., and an hour-long class at 5:30 p.m., are now offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Zone, Bldg. 150.

Fitness instructor Jessica Brink, along with some adventurous volunteers, previewed her new Les Mills Body Attack class, a trademarked class featuring sports inspired cardiovascular exercise for building strength and stamina.

Brink will begin offering the class in December, with a large advertising push in January after a two-week end of December break, according to Kareem Braithwaite, sports and fitness coordinator.

Braithwaite also said that personal training appointments can be made by contacting him at DSN 466-2831 or kareemh.braithwaite@eur.army.mil.

Championing general wellness issues as well

as recreation, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers was one of the community organizations represented.

According to group literature, one of BOSS' main components is well-being; issues raised at meetings involving single Soldier quality of life are passed along to the senior military advisor for resolution.

Meetings are held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 2:30 p.m. at the BOSS Bldg. 321.

Taking care of the wellness of Hohenfels' four-legged community members, the Veterinary Treatment Clinic offered nail clipping and micro-chipping services free of charge, both of which are available for a fee by appointment during clinic hours.

Spc. Angela Teel reminded visitors that all identification card holders must register their pets with the clinic within two weeks of bringing them home, even if they choose to use an off-post vet.

She also said they hope to offer a pet first aid course if enough interest is generated.

Anyone interested should call the clinic at DSN 466-4560.

Hohenfels 'makes a difference' with gifts, paint

Story and photo by KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

Volunteers at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels rolled up their sleeves and made numerous donations for both Hohenfels' wounded warriors and children at a local children's home in nearby Parsberg.

They joined together with millions of volunteers across the United States who used Oct. 25 as a day to make a difference in their community.

The Hohenfels volunteers were part of the 18th annual Make a Difference Day, a national day of volunteering created by USA WEEKEND magazine.

More than 90 people showed up early Saturday morning to help paint the Warrior Transition Unit barracks, hoping to improve the building for wounded warriors. Another thirty were there on Friday afternoon prepping the building for the big day.

"It's awesome that the community is getting together to support the WTU," said 1st Sgt. Paul Ninelist from Company D, WTU. "It shows they're respectful of what they've done down-range and care about the Soldiers and their healing process."

Children from elementary school to high school, Soldiers from privates to sergeants major, family members, contractors, civilians, and teachers all came to work on the project, making it truly a community-wide event.

Cadets from the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps helped paint, Girl Scouts helped make the T-shirts each volunteer received, the Military Council of Catholic Women, with help from the Protestant Women of the Chapel,

donated books for the barracks living room, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers provided food for the volunteers and a day trip for the residents of the barracks.

Even German and American members of the KONTAKT club were there happily getting messy.

Gonzalo Soliz brought his two sons who listened intently to painting lessons from their dad while they worked on one of the bed rooms.

"It's a good thing to do," he said when asked why he brought his boys along. "It gets them out of the house and used to community service."

His 14-year-old son Emmanuel easily articulated why he wanted to help.

"I think it's only fair to help out people who are risking their lives while we're here safe and sound. We need to do whatever we can when they come home to make it the best homecoming," he said.

As if mobilizing a community to prep and paint an entire building in one day was not enough, Lori Starnes, volunteer coordinator for USAG Hohenfels Army Community Service who planned the event, chose to do a second project in addition to repainting the barracks.

"In the States you would usually do one big project, but here we have a unique opportunity to do two projects," said Starnes. "We did one for the Soldiers and one for the host nation for community cohesion with our host nation."

That second project involved collecting toys for donation to the Parsberg children's home.

Starnes and ACS staff put up autumn gift trees around post for com-

munity members to choose a leaf with a toy written on it, then purchase and return that toy to ACS for donation to the children's home.

When the truck from Hohenfels opened its doors in Parsberg in front of many curious children of all ages, almost 100 gifts were on it, including 18 bikes, microwaves, DVD players, skateboards, and much more.

"We put down a lot of things but never expected to get all this," said Josef Reedl, manager of the children's home, through a translator, adding that normally they get new toys and equipment for the center once a year, or once every two years.

"I am so happy I came, I can't believe how many presents and how much support for the Kinderheim there is from the Americans," said Jacob Wittmann, second mayor of Parsberg, also through a translator.

"I have seen a lot of partnership from the Americans, but I can tell this really comes from the heart," he said.

Lt. Col. Gary Bloomberg, garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Graham, command sergeant major of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, helped hand out gifts to the children.

After the truck was unloaded, Graham took the chance to kick around a soccer ball with some of the children before returning to the WTU barracks and donning the cover-all he had on that morning to resume painting.

"It's all about taking care of the Soldiers, anything we can do to make life better for these guys," he said while looking for spots to touch up.

Graham also talked about wanting to coordinate additional projects to



One of the children from the Parsberg children's home inspects a new bike donated to the home while Hohenfels volunteers work to inflate the tires of the other bikes. As part of Hohenfels' first organized Make a Difference Day, the community donated toys and equipment, including 18 bikes.

benefit the children's home.

"It was more than I expected, but we can do even more," he said of the number of gifts the community donated.

Starnes said Graham, along with Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recre-

ation, ACS, JMRC, and the command group was instrumental in making the event a success. Hohenfels is the first garrison in Europe to launch their own event for Make a Difference Day, said Starnes, and she plans to make it an annual occurrence.

Commissary hours, health care discussed at town hall meeting

By KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

It seemed appropriate that on the day Americans were exercising the most essential of democratic rights by electing a new president, the small Hohenfels garrison was carrying on another democratic tradition - its quarterly town hall meeting.

The meeting, held Nov. 4 at the Community Activities Center, served two purposes: keeping community members informed and receiving their feedback, said Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Gary Bloomberg.

Directorate and unit representatives, along with military leadership, answered questions during the 90-minute session.

Maj. Michael Zink, a military policeman with the provost marshal's office, received numerous questions.

Zink reminded attendees to call DSN 466-4001 for school closing and road condition information, which will also be publicized on Armed Forces Network, the command information channel, and at www.hohenfels.army.mil.

He said that on inclement weather days the MPs drive to off-post housing areas where roads have been identified as being potentially dangerous in bad weather. They determine the road conditions at those hot spots, including the hill in Velburg, then report back to the garrison commander and school principals who make the final decision.

Bloomberg said improvements have been

made to this system that did not work perfectly last winter.

Another question was asked about possibly increasing speed limit enforcement during physical training hours and at crosswalks. One community member remarked that motorists drive too fast past joggers and many cars ignore crosswalks.

Zink promised to look into solutions and urged leaders to remind their units that drivers must stop at crosswalks when a pedestrian is waiting to cross.

He also explained that although the MPs no longer switch speed limit signs during PT hours, there is a 20-kilometer speed limit at all times when passing joggers.

James Einwaechter, Department of Public Works chief, told attendees that the gym construction should be completed by March.

"It is a great investment in the community, and a great new look for the facility," he said of the multimillion dollar, 4,000-square foot addition.

Einwaechter said the theater renovation should be complete by February, with new seating and concession area.

In September 2009 the department plans to relocate the PXtra from its current location near the mailroom to Bldg. 9, which currently houses the vehicle inspection office. All products offered at the PXtra now will be offered at the new location, along with a book store, SIXT car rental, dry cleaning services, and Military Clothing and Sales.

Einwaechter said the PXtra relocation is part of an overall effort to create a "Main Street: Hohenfels" with essential shops and services all centered around one location. A little ways down from main street Hohenfels, the commissary will also see changes.

"This is a perfect example of how the community drives changes," said Bloomberg.

As a result of spouses voicing concerns to Bloomberg, the commissary will be open until 7 p.m. beginning Dec. 1.

After suggestions that came from the Army Family Action Plan, "we started opening early on Saturday mornings," said Jamie Segarra, commissary manager. "But it wasn't used, so we are going to take that extra hour and move it to Tuesday evening," he said.

After school closings and speed limit enforcement, the next most discussed issue was health care.

Lt. Col. Derek Cooper, officer in charge of the health clinic, reminded people that "in general, our (off-post) providers are fantastic and know where to send their bills, but sometimes there are glitches." He urged anyone who has recently been in a host nation hospital and receives bills in German to bring them to the health clinic.

"Even if it turns out to be your water bill, bring it to us," he said, so any medical billing paperwork can be taken care of promptly.

He also informed those in attendance that the clinic's funding is in part decided by how well they meet wellness measures. He said this

means people need to come into the clinic for their preventive care procedures like mammograms and colonoscopies.

Both the health and the dental clinic expressed concern over the number of no-shows - 10-15 percent of the appointments made.

The same is true for six to seven percent of appointments made at the dental clinic. Patients at both locations should arrive for their appointments at least 15 minutes early.

Daniel Mendoza, Hohenfels High School principal, urged parents not to wait until conference day if they feel their children are struggling. He said parents are welcome to call the school at any time to request an appointment with a teacher.

One community member asked Mendoza how much the schools and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center work together to plan the school calendar, expressing frustration that there have been recent days the schools were out but Soldiers still had to work, leaving families to pay additional child care costs.

Bloomberg said the schools and post leadership work together each year to sync the two calendars as much as possible. He said sometimes the training calendar is changed to provide Soldiers compensation days, but schools are unable to make calendar changes once it is set for the year. He also took time at the end of the meeting to invite parents to the tree lighting and free symphony concert Dec. 5.

"If you come to one thing on post all year, come to this," he said.

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

AWAG Conference

Registration for the AWAG Conference ends Friday.

The AWAG Oberpfalz Area Conference will take place 6 December from 8a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at Camp Aachen. To register contact Katrina Letourneau at oberpfalz@awag.us.

DoDEA Survey

The DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey is located at www.dodea.edu/home/index.cfm.

Students in the 4th-12th grade and parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the survey. The survey runs through Feb. 28.

ITR & ODR Trips

To sign-up for these trips now, call Vilseck ITR DSN 476-2563 or Grafenwoehr ODR DSN 475-7402.

Daytrips by ITR

Nov. 15-Rothenburg; Nov. 16-Two Castle Trip

European Overnights by ITR

Dec. 31-Jan 3-New Year's in Vienna; Jan. 15-19- Paris, France; Feb. 12-16-Brussels and Brugge, Belgium

Youth Sports Registration

Register runs through Dec. 19 for basketball, cheerleading, and wrestling. To register, call CYS Service Central Registration at DSN 475-6655 or DSN 476-2760.

Basketball Tournament

A CYSS basketball tournament and lock-in for teens Nov. 22-23 in the Bavarian military communities from 2 p.m. on Saturday to 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Activities provided include a basketball tournament and bowling and more.

Cost is \$15 per player (\$10 for those not participating in the tournament) to cover activities, food and drinks, and awards.

For more info, call the Youth Sports Director at DSN 476-4037 or CIV 09662-83-4037. Open to all teens registered with CYSS Youth Centers.

BOSS Tropical Island Trip

Sign up for the Dec. 19-21 trip to Berlin Tropical Islands, Europe's largest tropical holiday world.

Single Soldiers are welcome to enjoy some fun in the artificial sun this holiday season.

There are limited seats available, and spots fill fast! Call BOSS President, SPC John Maki, at DSN 475-8822 or CIV 09641-83-8822.

Grafenwoehr Fitness Center

Call the Graf Fitness Center at DSN 475-9007 for more information on fitness classes.

Spin Class with Heidi: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 5:30 p.m. All levels of fitness are welcome to attend the evening class.

Cardio Class: Tuesdays & Thursdays: This gives you strength and balance challenges geared at engaging the core muscles at all times. All levels of fitness are welcome to attend the class from 5:15-6:15 p.m.

Tai Chi Class: Tai Chi instructional classes are held Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. through Nov. 25. Come join the class whenever you can.

Netzaberg Residents

Due to water damages in several Netzaberg houses, we need to exchange almost all water faucets in the kitchens.

It is not necessary for the occupants to stay extra at home and wait for the contractor. If necessary we will arrange specific appointments later.

The contractor will have a letter from us with the company name and the mechanics name on the letter. It will take approx. 15 minutes per house.

All the occupants will get also a letter from us-we will post this letters on the house doors. The schedule is:

Today-Friday: Von Steuben Str.
Friday-Monday: Wernher v. Braun Str.

Nov. 18-20: Steinway Str.
Nov. 20-24: George Marshall Str.
Nov. 24-25: Eisenhower Str.
Nov. 25-26: Elvis Presley Str.
Nov. 26-27: John F. Kennedy Str.
Nov. 27- Dec. 1: Roemersbuehl

National Anthem Premiere

Watch the Dragoon National Anthem Saturday at the Vilseck Movie Theatre. The national anthem will feature 2SCR Soldiers in support of OIF 07-09. The Movie Playing: Kung Fu Panda. The event is free. Doors open at 1 p.m., movie starts at 2 p.m. For more information, call DSN 476-3276, CIV 09662-83-3276

Texas Hold'em

Enjoy free snacks, a great card game and play for amazing prizes Saturday. Reserve your seat by the Friday before the game. A non-refundable fee is due at registration. Cash, credit card and check are accepted. The event is open to all authorized ID cardholders. Childcare is available; contact Rose Barracks Central Registration for more info. To sign-up, call the Langenbruck Center at DSN 476-2360.

Thanksgiving Bunco Fun!

Enjoy food, fun and prizes as the dice start to roll Nov. 19 at 6 p.m. Pre-register as spots fill fast. Call the Langenbruck Center, DSN 476-2360, to register. Childcare is available for parents who need it. Please contact the Rose Barracks CYS Services Central Registration for more info at DSN 476-2760.

Christmas Trees

The Grafenwoehr Boy Scout Troop 261 will be conducting their annual holiday tree and popcorn sales Nov. 29-Dec. 21 at the Grafenwoehr Post Exchange (PX) on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sundays from 12-3 p.m. To help call Jacob Martin at 09641-454180, or Geoff Dewitt t 01621-625322.

Christmas Mailing Dates

The following is a list of USPS recommended mailing dates to ensure your mailings are received in CONUS by Dec. 25:

SAM PARCELS- Nov. 28
PAL PARCELS- Dec. 4
PRIORITY PARCELS- Dec. 11
FIRST CLASS LETTERS AND CARDS- Dec. 11

EXPRESS MAIL- Dec. 20
For more information, contact your local Post Office at 475-6333 or DSN 476-2581.

FAST Class

The Vilseck Education Center will be conducting a FAST Class Dec. 1-12 from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) provides Soldiers

with instruction in reading, mathematics, and language skills. FAST class is an excellent tool to prepare Soldiers to raise their GT score. The FAST class is a 60-hour academic course and is limited to twenty students per class. For more information please contact the Vilseck Education Center at DSN 476-2753.

AAFES Special Event

The Grafenwoehr Consolidated Exchange will be holding a special event Friday through Nov. 22 for our returning Troops. On Nov. 22 a Harley-Davidson XL -883 Sportster being given away by Exchange New Car Sales, stop by ENCS or the Graf Main Store to enter and see details.

Early Bird Shopping

The Grafenwoehr PX and Vilseck PXtra will be opening at 7 a.m. Saturday Nov. 28. Special PowerZone coupons and shopping spree giveaways are some of the specials going on that morning.

Grafenwoehr Health Clinic

The Grafenwoehr Health Clinic will be supporting the Blackhawk Brigade's preparation for deployment. During this time, there will be limited availability of appointments.

However, we have partnered with our German preferred providers to ensure we meet your immediate health care needs. We anticipate improved access beginning Dec. 1. If you have a health care concern and there are no slots available, please speak with our nursing staff they will facilitate access with our partner providers.

Hohenfels Briefs

New fitness staff and classes

MWR Sports & Fitness has a new line-up of fitness professionals and new fitness classes to help you meet your fitness goals. Below is the new fitness schedule. Personal training is also available upon request.

For more information please contact the Olympia Gym Fitness Center at 466-2726/2831

Monday: Middle C Fitness Class at 11:30 a.m. in The Zone / Circuit Training at 5 p.m. in the Post Gym

Tuesday: 30-Minute Slam at 11:45 a.m. in The Zone / Indoor Cycling at 5:45 p.m. in The Zone

Wednesday: Middle C Fitness Class at 11:30 a.m. in The Zone / Circuit Training at 5 p.m. in the Post Gym

Thursday: 30-Minute Slam at 11:45 a.m. in The Zone / Indoor Cycling at 5:45 p.m. in The Zone

Friday: Middle C Fitness Class at 11:30 a.m. in The Zone

Snowboarding equipment

Outdoor Recreation has all of your winter snowboarding needs covered. Check out all of the brand new equipment including boards, boots, bindings, and helmets.

ODR also does long-term rentals so for one small price, \$180 for adults and \$90 for youth (dependents under 18 or still attending school), you can get your equipment for the entire season. For information, call DSN 466-2060.

Community basketball

USAG Hohenfels, FMWR Sports is looking for personnel interested in playing basketball. Games begin in January.

To sign up, all interested personnel can stop by the Fitness Center or send an e-mail to dlmwrhohenfelssports@eur.army.mil.

For information call Bill Craven at DSN 466-2831, or Chris Cornelison at DSN 466-2493.

Managing holiday spending

A special workshop designed to keep you on track during the holiday gift giving season is being held today from 2-3:30 p.m. at ACS, Bldg 10.

For information, call Rachael Sosa, Financial Readiness Program manager at DSN 466-3401.

Dad's luncheon

Dads, please come and join the Chaplain Family Life Center Thursday for a free lunch and a great topic: "How do you deal with a bully? One of life's toughest challenges and perhaps not only for your children." Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. at the Chaplain Family Life Center, Bldg. 747.

Contact Dawn Glynn at 466-3473 for information.

Marriage seminar

The Chaplain Family Life Center will be holding a Marriage Seminar Friday at the Hilltop Chaplain Center from 9 - 2 p.m.

Based on over 25 years of marital research, couples will engage in practical exercises designed to strengthen their relationship. If you are interested in attending please call Dawn Glynn at DSN 466-3473.

EFMP Playgroup

An interactive and educational playgroup designed to teach parents developmentally appropriate play and help children improve social, cognitive and motor skills takes place Friday.

Emphasis is on children with special needs but all children between 0-3 years old are welcome. Check it out from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at a new location, the former CDC Annex, Bldg 44.

Call Pam Koch, Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator, at DSN 466-2083, CIV 09472-83-2083 for information.

Credit and budgeting

Join us Friday for a class that will explore a four-step budget process that can put you on the road to financial success. Find out more about it from 9-10:30 a.m. at ACS, Bldg. 10.

Call Rachael Sosa, Financial Readiness Program manager, at DSN 466-3401 for information.

MegaPlay Family Field Trip

Join Child, Youth and School Age Services and the Exceptional Family Member Program Saturday will co-sponsor a special Saturday at MegaPlay.

Participants need to be registered with CYSS. Transportation and entrance fees will be covered by CYSS and EFMP.

Reserve your seats at the CLEOS office in BLDG 10. For information call DSN 466-2078 or CIV 09472-83-2078.

1000 Pound Club

Show your strength and lift your way into the USAG Hohenfels 1000 Pound Club Saturday.

Complete any combination of 3 events (bench press, squat, dead lift) totaling more than 1000 pounds.

All participants that successfully join the 1000 Pound Club will receive a t-shirt and bragging rights. Competition is free and open to all U.S. ID card holders. Olympia Fitness Center, bldg. 47 starting at 11 a.m.

Wood shop safety

Learn to safely use the machinery in the wood shop Saturday. Once you are certified you may come back for help on individual projects.

There is a \$10 class fee. No pre-sign-up required. Wear closed toe shoes and appropriate clothing. Class runs from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Volunteer coaches needed

Volunteer Youth Sports coaches are needed by for the upcoming winter sports basketball and cheer programs. Currently, we are looking for three coaches for cheerleading, and 15 for basketball.

Coaches are needed by the COB November 21. Contact the Youth Sports office at DSN 466-2558.

Youth Sports winter sports

Enrollment for the Youth Sports Winter Sports season is now open for cheerleading, basketball, and bowling.

Enrollment is open through Nov. 21 and a \$5 late fee will apply to those that enroll after Nov. 21. Enroll at CLEOS, bldg. 10, DSN 466-2078. For information, please call the Youth Sports office at DSN: 466-2558.

Sunday Screenings

The Hohenfels Library presents it's new, after-hours program, Sunday Screenings on Nov. 23 from 4-6 p.m.

Sunday Screenings will showcase independent films from around the world. The next film, "The Grocer's Son" by Eric Guirado, is French drama that will be shown with English subtitles.

Sunday Screenings is an adult only (18+) program. Patrons are welcome to bring refreshments. Seating is limited, contact the Library at DSN 466-1740 to reserve your seat.

CYSS Advisory Committee

CYSS patrons please join us and participate in your CYSS Quarterly Parent Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 25 from noon-1 p.m. in the SAS, bldg. 112.

For additional information, contact CLEOS at DSN 466-2078/2080.

FAST class

Enroll in the upcoming FAST class held Nov. 25. Instruction will be held at the Education Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Nov. 25 to Dec. 10. (No class during Thanksgiving Holiday.)

Interested Soldiers will need to come to the Education Center, Bldg. 351, for an enrollment form to be signed by their commander and take a TABE test.

Contractual requirements specify that FAST classes have a minimum of 10 to be held. For further information, contact William Keller at DSN 466-2668.

Beginning crochet

Learn how to crochet Nov. 29 and make a Granny Square and dish cloth. Class fee is \$10 plus supplies. Bring your own hooks and yarn if you have them. Please pre-register and pay at least 3 days before class. 9 - 1p.m.

Hohenfels/Garmisch Chapel Holiday Schedule

HOHENFELS HOLIDAY SERVICES

3 Dec @ 1700 Advent Catholic Penance Service, Main Post Chapel
4 Dec @ 0930 MCCW Advent Program, Hilltop Chapel Center
8 Dec @ 1200 & 1700 Masses for Feast of Immaculate Conception, Rosary at 1130 and 1630
14 Dec @1030 Blessing of the Vehicles (prior to traveling) outside Hilltop Chapel Center
14 Dec@1800 Community Christmas Program Nainhof Chapel
24 Dec @1800 Combined Protestant Christmas Eve Service, Nainhof Chapel
24 Dec @ 1900 Catholic Christmas Vigil Service & Pageant, Main Post Chapel
25 Dec @ 1100 All nations church of God New years Eve watch night Service, Hilltop Chapel Center
26 Dec to 02 Jan 09, Pilgrimage to Rome
31 Dec @ 2200 All Nations Church of God New Years Eve Watch Night Service, Hilltop Chapel Center
31 Dec @ 1700 Catholic New Years Day Vigil Mass, (Feast of Mary), Main Post Chapel
08 Jan @ 0930 MCCW Epiphany Program, Hilltop Chapel Center

GARMISCH HOLIDAY SERVICES

23 Nov@1700 Generations of Advent Feast
7 Dec@ 1000 a.m. Christmas Program
8 Dec @ 1630 Immaculate Conception Mass
13 Dec @1800 Garmisch Community Holiday Music Celebration
17 Dec @ 1100 Garmisch Chapel community Lunch in the Pete Burke Community Center
21 Dec @1045 a.m. Protestant Christmas Service
24 Dec@ 1630 Children's Christmas Mass
25 Dec Christmas Mass @0900
31 Dec@1630 New Years Eve Mass

For more information please call Hohenfels Chapel at DSN 466-1570, and Garmisch Chapel at DSN 440-2819.

GRAFENWOEHR / VILSECK CHAPEL HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

26 Nov Thanksgiving Evening Service with music by Sulzbach-Rosenberg Christuskirche Choir *Vilseck Chapel* @1830 (Protestant) - Refreshments served

8 Dec Holy Day of Obligation-Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary *Vilseck Chapel* @ 1730 (Catholic)

15 Dec "Christmas Treasures" Handbell Concert *Vilseck Chapel* @1830 (Protestant)

24 Dec Christmas Eve Mass, *Vilseck Chapel* @1600 (Catholic)

24 Dec Christmas Eve Service followed by Christmas Cookie Fellowship, *Vilseck Chapel* @1830 (Protestant)

24 Dec Christmas Eve Service *Graf Chapel* @ 1800 (Protestant)

24 Dec Christmas Eve Mass, *Graf Chapel* @ 2000 (Catholic)

31 Dec Watch Night Service (Netzaberg Pentacostal Service) *Graf Chapel* @ 2200

1 Jan New Years Eve Mass *Graf Chapel* @ 1100 (Catholic)

For more information, visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil/sites/support/religious.asp.

What's Happening

Ansbach Briefs

Welcome home 12th CAB!

The Ansbach Community will officially welcome home 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers from their 15-month deployment to Iraq Friday starting at 10 a.m. at Katterbach.

The event features an official ceremony with Lt. Gen. Kenneth Hunzeker, V Corps commander, officiating; an unveiling of the Task Force XII commemorative print (available for purchase as well); and recognition of the Heroes of Task Force XII—including Soldiers and families.

Immediately afterward, USAG Ansbach invites everyone to its Veterans Appreciation Day activities in Hangar 2 on Katterbach. The celebration features live music, activities, and food and drinks.

Veterans Appreciation Day

The garrison hosts Veterans Appreciation Day at Hangar 2 on Katterbach from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and an after party from 6 p.m. to midnight.

The Veterans Appreciation Day features free games, rides, food, contests and music—and fireworks at 4:45 p.m.

The after party, for adults only, offers beverages and snacks, and a show by Travelin' Max, "The Party Starter," at 8 p.m.

MWR facilities close

Many USAG Ansbach Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities will close to support Veterans Appreciation Day events Friday.

Facilities that will not close include child development centers, school age services and teen centers.

Army Community Service, auto skills centers, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, arts and crafts, recreation centers, bowling centers, outdoor recreation, Soldiers Lake, value-added tax office and the Terrace Playhouse will be closed.

Fitness centers will close at 9 a.m.

PX early bird shopping

The Katterbach Post Exchange opens at 7 a.m. for early bird shopping Saturday and Nov. 28.

On those mornings, the PX will offer PowerZone coupons, shopping spree giveaways and more specials.

Gym opens early

The Katterbach Fitness Center opens at 5:30 a.m. Mondays-Fridays. For more information, call DSN 467-2771 or CIV 09802-83-2771.

Credit Union closure

Service Credit Union will be closed for Thanksgiving Nov. 27. For more, call DSN 467-2556 or CIV 09802-8680.

Collection of local debts

People who owed money to or were owed money by Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Rodriguez or Sgt. Errol James, 527th Military Police Company in Ansbach, should contact 2nd Lt. Waskar Juarez at DSN 468-7670 or CIV 0981-183-670.

Federal benefits open season

Federal Employees Health Benefits open season runs through Dec. 8.

Employees can make open season enrollments, changes, or cancellations through the Army Benefits Center-Civilian using the Employees Benefits Information System via the web at www.abc.army.mil and select "Benefits/EBIS."

Holiday mailing deadlines

To ensure delivery of holiday cards and packages by Dec. 25, post office officials advise that mail should be sent by the recommended mailing dates: space available parcels, Nov. 28; parcel airlift mail, Dec. 4; priority parcels and first class letters, Dec. 11; express mail, Dec. 20.

FRG training

Army Community Service offers family readiness group training Nov. 17-19 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Katterbach Yellow Ribbon Room in Bldg. 5817A.

The training is open to people interested in learning more about FRGs, including people already serving in FRGs.

To register, call the Storck Barracks ACS at DSN 467-4397 or CIV 09841-83-4397, or the Katterbach ACS at DSN 467-2553 or CIV 09802-83-2553.

IDs before pumping

AAFES requires people buying fuel at their facilities to show their identification card, Germany fuel ration card/gas coupons and vehicle registration prior to pumping.

Requiring the check prior to pumping is necessary to protect the tax-free fuel benefit for U.S. forces in Germany, according to an AAFES press release. Customs requirements established by the German Ministry of Finance must be complied with as required by the Status of Forces Agreement.

CYS Services renewal

People with children on the Child, Youth and School Services waiting list for full-time child care must renew their status with central registration every 90

days to stay active on the list.

CER provided everyone on the list with a one-time renewal, so people on the list should make sure they renew by Dec. 31.

People can call, e-mail or stop by the CER office to do this. People who do not renew every 90 days will be taken off of the list and not contacted when space becomes available.

For more, call CER at Katterbach at DSN 467-2533 or CIV 09802-83-2533, and at Storck Barracks at DSN 467-4880 or CIV 09841-83-4880.

IDs before pumping

AAFES requires people buying fuel at their facilities to show their identification card, Germany fuel ration card/gas coupons and vehicle registration prior to pumping.

Requiring the check prior to pumping is necessary to protect the tax-free fuel benefit for U.S. forces in Germany, according to an AAFES press release. Customs requirements established by the German Ministry of Finance must be complied with as required by the Status of Forces Agreement.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Bulk trash

Bulk trash pickup is scheduled for Askren Manor, Yorktown Village, and government-leased housing Nov. 25.

Put bulk items out prior to 7 a.m., but no earlier than the day before. Bulk trash is only those items too large to transport in your vehicle. For more information, call DSN 354-6201 or CIV 0162-270-9403.

Unit-level basketball

Come join the competition Nov. 22. Teams must register at Finney Fitness Center between Nov. 17-19. Tournament begins at 10 a.m. Nov. 22. For more information, call DSN 353-8234 or CIV 09721-96-8234.

Travel Opportunity

Join a special trip with Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Dec. 6. Enjoy a steam train and covered wagon ride through vineyards.

Visit Castle Elmstein and stop at a winery for coffee and wine-tasting. Bus departs Schweinfurt at 7:30 a.m. and returns approximately 10:30 p.m. For more information, call DSN 353-8476 or CIV 09721-96-8476. Deadline to sign up is Nov. 25.

Turkey trot

Join the Turkey Trot fun run Nov. 22 at Kessler Gym starting at 9 a.m. Adults run 10 km and children run two, three or five kilometers. Trophies will be awarded for top finishers and a free T-shirt will be given to all participating. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

Ski or snowboard

Join Outdoor Recreation Nov. 27-30 for skiing/snowboarding. Adults are \$299 and children have reduced prices depending on age. Cost includes transportation and three overnights, breakfasts, and dinners. For more information, call DSN 353-8080 or CIV 09721-96-8080.

Flu vaccines

The immunizations clinic is now giving flu vaccines during regular office hours on a walk-in basis: Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The vaccine is available by injection or intranasal spray. For more information, call DSN 354-6378 or CIV 09721-96-6378.

Books for downrange

Free paperback book kits are available in November at Ledward Library for deploying troops. Each kit contains 25 assorted popular fiction and nonfiction books to meet all tastes. Come pick up your kit now. For more information, call DSN 354-1740 or CIV 09721-96-1740.

Saturday child care available

Sign up now for Child, Youth, and School Services' Super Saturday Respite Care Nov. 22. Children ages 6 weeks to fifth-grade will be cared for from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The CDC and the SAS fees are \$15. The program includes one meal. Children must be registered with CYSS and also have current immuniza-

tions. Reservation deadline is one week prior to event. To sign up, call DSN 354-6517 or CIV 09721-96-6414.

Holiday mailing dates

Brighten up someone's holiday and mail early! To ensure delivery of holiday cards and packages by Christmas, the 2008 holiday mailing dates to the U.S. are as follows: Space Available Mail Parcels, Nov. 28; Priority Air Mail Parcels, Dec. 4; Priority Parcels, Dec. 11; First-Class letters, Dec. 11; and Express Mail, Dec. 20.

Open mic night Wednesdays

Every Wednesday night Ramon's, above Finney Fitness Center, will host an open mic night for anyone interested starting at 6:00 p.m. Come to sing, play guitar, read poetry, do stand up comedy, or just have a good time.

Check the weather

For information about weather and road conditions this winter, call DSN 354-6690 or CIV 09721-96-6690. Weather service will be available through Apr. 30, 2009.

Survey deadline extended

Military Health System has extended the deadline to give feedback for wounded, ill or injured service members and their families. Fill out a survey at <http://www.health.mil/Pages/Page.aspx?ID=18up> until Nov. 28.

Swim in the winter

Join Outdoor Recreation trip to Geomaris, the indoor pool in Gerolzhofen, Nov. 20. Swim indoors or out for two and a half hours with a high dive, waterslides and kid's pool. Cost is \$5 and a 4 euro entry fee. Trip departs ODR on Conn Barracks at 5 p.m. and returns by 8:30 p.m. For more information, call DSN 353-8080 or CIV 09721-96-8080.

Socialize at the Lunch Bunch

Do you want to get out of the house, make a few new friends, and learn where good restaurants are around town?

The Army Community Service monthly Lunch Bunch is the perfect fit. Join Schweinfurt's Lunch Bunch Nov. 20 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933. Children are welcome! Please bring euro for lunch.

Learn to control anger

Do you know your anger style? Come to Army Community Service's class on anger management at Ledward ACS building 242 beginning Tuesday to find out ways to deal with and control your anger.

This three-part series takes place on Tuesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

ADD and ADHD support

Come speak with others living with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Nov. 24 from 10 a.m. to noon. Class is held at Ledward Barracks Army Community Service, bldg. 242. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Daddy basic training

Are you soon to be a father or is another baby on the way? Army Community Service offers Daddy Basic Training Nov. 21 from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This entertaining and interactive hands-on training teaches the skills that all dads need to have. For information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Build a volunteer portfolio

Learn how to make your volunteer experience work for you at Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room Nov. 19 from 11 a.m. to noon. Bring any certificates, memos, scrolls, awards, job descriptions, and pictures from past volunteer experiences and learn to put it all together in a book that highlights strengths. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Smooth move seminar

Leaving the community? Army Community Service wants to help "smooth" your transition at Ledward ACS Tuesday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Free computer classes

Army Community Service is offering free computer classes from 8 a.m.-12:50 p.m. in Ledward Barracks bldg. 206. A certificate of completion is issued at the end of each class. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Monday – Basic Microsoft Excel I
Tuesday – Basic Microsoft Excel II
Nov. 19 – Microsoft PowerPoint
Nov. 20 – Microsoft Publisher & photo editing

Get tips on birth and babies

Do you have a baby on the way and want to be prepared with what to expect? Come to Army Community Service's two-part series, "Birth-n-Babies" at Ledward ACS tomorrow from 1-4 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, call DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

USAG Ansbach's
VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY
"THANKING THE SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES OF USAG ANSBACH"

MAIN EVENT:
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14
1100-1700 HRS
HANGAR 2, KATTERBACH

FEATURING FREE GAMES, RIDES, FOOD, & MUSIC!

AFTER PARTY:
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14
1800-0000 HRS
HANGAR 2, KATTERBACH

WITH A PERFORMANCE FROM VARIETY ACT "TRAVELIN' MAX." ADULTS ONLY PLEASE.

Please bring dollars for additional concessions. No coolers or glass bottles. Look for the shuttle service schedule.

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Oberammergau passion play a lesson in history, culture

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Watching a five-hour play, performed in a foreign language, about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ would probably not be considered entertaining by most people, even for those who consider themselves devout Christians.

But the Oberammergau passion play is about so much more than religion. It synthesizes more than 375 years of religion, culture, history, politics, death, war, and perseverance into one tangible expression of the human experience few people have the chance to witness.

Performed in nearby Oberammergau, Germany, a town about 20 kilometers north of Garmisch, those living in Bavaria can easily attend this historical event if they plan far enough ahead.

Begun in 1633 with a vow to God, the Oberammergau passion play is performed only every 10 years.

The next performances will be between May 15 and Oct. 3 in 2010, though tickets went on sale at the beginning of 2008 for this world-famous event that occurs less frequently than the Olympics.

The 2010 performances will be the 41st production of a play that began in the midst of the Thirty Years' War.

During the war, disease was spreading rampantly so the village took measures to prevent death from entering the town. Watchmen were placed around the entire perimeter allowing no one to enter for fear they would carry in the plague.

Traditional accounts say that one night an Oberammergau man who had been working outside the city snuck into town to join his family for a celebration.

Two days later, he was dead. In less than two weeks, at least 84 people had died out of a population of approximately 1,000.

Knowing no other way to stop the disease, the villagers turned to God.

They vowed that if they would be spared from the plague they would enact the last week of Christ's life every ten years to the best of their ability.

Such vows were common at the time throughout Europe, however, it is said that from that point not a single person in Oberammergau died from the disease.

The vow had worked, and the Oberammergau people have kept their promise ever since, though

not always as frequently as they had hoped.

Since that first performance in 1633, politics, war, and social and technological advances have altered the play, sometimes preventing performances altogether.

In the 18th century the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, as well as other political factors, caused the play to be banned many times.

The

Enlightenment was opposed to all religious plays because it believed that reason, not religion, was the best hope for the future of society. Many different seasons the Oberammergau people applied for special exception to the state-wide ban on passion plays. Some years they were successful, others they were not.

In the 15th passion play year of 1780 they were narrowly granted an exception, temporarily changing the name of the play to "The Old and New Testament" to avoid any reference to the passion.

The 2010 performance will begin with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and end with the resurrection.

It will be performed for the first time in two parts, beginning in the afternoon and resuming at night after a lengthy intermission.

The 41st performance's script revisions are part of a continuing string of changes.

The oldest existing script from 1662 was created from older plays: a medieval passion play from the late 15th century and one written during the reformation in 1586.

In 2000 the script was revised to

downplay criticisms of anti-Semitism and to challenge the viewpoint that women played only a minor role in Christ's life.

The stage location is also a living history of the changes the town has seen.

After the first spectators began to arrive in the mid 18th century, the number of visitors continued to grow as the years passed, creating the need to continually move stage.

It was originally erected over the fresh graves of the plague victims, beginning as a simple wooden skeleton that was improved throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. It was then moved inside the church, then outside again to the churchyard. In the 19th and 20th centuries the stage was updated further to include a covered seating area and modern amenities.

Sets and more advanced staging equipment evolved with new technological advances.

Today there are more than 4,700 seats inside the amphitheatre with tickets available in four different price categories.

Those seats are filled most nights between May and October for a total of 102 performances.

Visitors can purchase tickets individually or as part of a one or two night package.

Packages for performances on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday went on sale at the beginning of 2008. Individual tickets for Saturday performances will go on sale in spring 2009.

Theater-goers that come for the play will also get a fascinating lesson in community spirit, as the entire town must work together to honor their centuries old vow.

The cast members must be Oberammergau residents by birth.

The villagers portraying Jesus, Mary, Pontus Pilate, the apostles, children, and priests, rehearse for 10 months before opening night while the orchestra and singers study their music.

The male actors grow authentic beards, no fakes allowed. Villagers create all of the more than 1,000 costumes.

The townspeople even let their spare rooms during performances: many of the packages available are for accommodations with "private landlords."

Though 2010 may seem like too far in the future to be making vacation plans, tickets for

this world-famous event have already been on sale for almost an entire year.

One night packages, for Friday performances, include lodging with breakfast, a hot meal before the play, a hot dinner with several courses during intermission, performance ticket, a program book, and a ticket to the Oberammergau Museum.

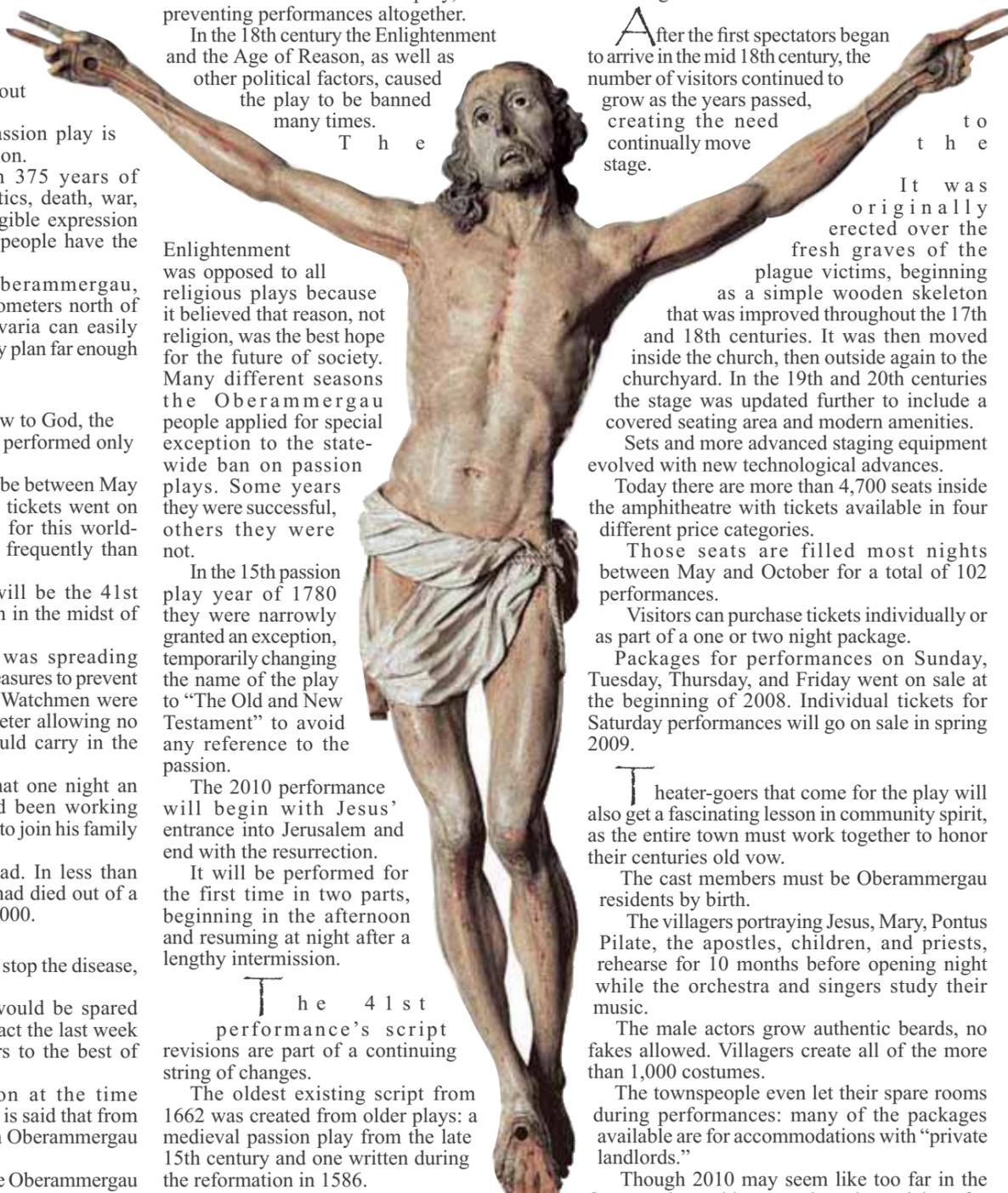
One night packages range from 199-575 Euro per person depending on the type of room.

Two night packages include all the above, as well as the extra night's accommodations and dinner upon arrival, and range from 275-839 Euros per person.

Tickets without a package start at 49.50 Euros and reach 165 Euros per person for prime seat locations.

For more information or to arrange a package, visit www.passionsspiele2010.de now to view accommodation options and download an order form.

Information on purchasing tickets without a package will be out in early 2009.



Courtesy photo

The oldest existing script from 1662 was created from older plays: a medieval passion play from the late 15th century and one written during the reformation in 1586. In 2000 the script was revised to downplay criticism of anti-Semitism.



The Oberammergau passion play, first performed in 1633, is held every 10 years, with the next showing in 2010. All participants are Oberammergau townspeople, amateur actors who uphold a vow the town made to God in the 1630's that the town would perform a play every 10 years depicting Jesus' life if God would save them from the plague.

Courtesy Photo

Warrior Care: Survivability begins with Soldiers, aid on the battlefield

Story and photo by
C. TODD LOPEZ
Army News Service

"The progress that has been made in taking care of our Soldiers and the increasing survivability of Soldiers starts with the Soldier," said Secretary of the Army Pete Geren.

Geren and others from the Army's medical community gathered Nov. 7 at the Pentagon to discuss the current status of warrior care and the progress that has been made in caring for injured Soldiers.

The event marked the beginning of "Warrior Care Month," an official month-long recognition by the Department of Defense and military services of their efforts to take care of wounded, ill and injured warriors.

Soldier Aid

Soldiers in the Army are taught self-aid and buddy care and this is a prime factor in the 90-percent survivability rate of combat-injured Soldiers, said Maj. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho, commanding general of the Western Regional Medical Command, and chief of the Army nurse corps.

"Every single Soldier is trained in self-aid and buddy-aid," said Horoho. "We do that so we have force multipliers across the entire theater of operations. They have the skills to save lives."

Horoho also said advances in the medical equipment Soldiers carry with them in the field have contributed to their ability to help themselves and others.

The medical kits distributed now to Soldiers include equipment to ensure continued breathing for Soldiers with chest wounds, various bandages and a new tourniquet that can be applied with only one hand.

Increased chances of survival

The Army has found that placing a greater emphasis on keeping open breathing passages and stemming blood loss have led to increases in survivability, Horoho said.

The tourniquet in particular has been getting recognition from wounded Soldiers who have said it was instrumental in their survival.

"Almost every single one said it was either them placing the tourniquet on themselves or a battle buddy doing it for them which is what saved their lives," she said.

Advances in medical products

The Army is also testing medical products such as Combat Gauze and WoundStat as additional methods of reducing blood loss.

Training for professional Army medics is also a contributing factor to the success rate of Soldiers injured in battle, Horoho said.

"We've looked at ensuring we have highly trained combat medics -- the 68W -- every platoon has one 68W assigned," she said.

"They are trained to national registry EMTB standards and that is augmented by advanced combat trauma training.

"That gives them an advanced skill set to make a difference in the lives of all warriors ... within that first ten minutes."

The general said the Army has worked to improve upon the civilian sector's concept of the "golden hour" of trauma care, where the best way

to guarantee survivability is to get the most critical care to a patient within the first hour of an injury.

She said the Army has recast that concept as the "platinum ten minutes."

When Soldiers get back to the United States they receive "level-4" medical care in stateside facilities like Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Warrior Transition Units

But following that kind of care, they may move to one of 36 Warrior Transition Units across the United States.

It is in the WTUs that the Army has made great strides in assuring Soldiers don't just "get well" but that they get back on track with their lives -- either transitioning successfully back into the Army, or moving back into the civilian world,

according to Brig. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, director, Warrior Care and Transition.

There are more than 11,000 Soldiers currently in Warrior Transition Units or community-based Warrior Transition Units, Cheek said.

"Each one is a Soldier with a unique medical condition, with unique goals and aspirations," he said.

The Army has found success with those Soldiers by assigning each a triad of care.

WTU Care

The triad of care includes a squad leader, a nurse case manager to manage medical appointments and schedule medical care, and a primary care provider to oversee managing multiple medical conditions.

Room for Improvement

"That triad works with the Soldier to optimize their medical care," Cheek said. "It's a great system we have set up and the Army has a lot to be proud of."

But Cheek also said the service has a way to go to make him happy in the way it delivers care to Soldiers.

"We want to work on improving on performance of the organization," he said, saying the Army wants to make service provided to Soldiers in the WTUs more predictable to Soldiers and their families.

"We can do that by improving performance in administration and making Soldiers the centerpiece of this."

Every single Soldier is trained in self-aid and buddy-aid. We do that so we have force multipliers across the entire theater of operations. They have the skills to save lives.

Gen. Patricia D. Horoho
Comander Western Regional Medical Command



Brig. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, director, Army Warrior Care and Transition, spoke Nov. 7 about the Army's 36 Warrior Transition units. He said care provided to Soldiers in the units is something the Army should be proud of.

IMCOM-E signs environmental agreement

Story and photo by
IGNACIO RUBALCAVA
USAG Baumholder Public Affairs

Protecting the environment is taken seriously in Germany and other European communities.

Accordingly, on her first visit to U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder,

Diane Devens, director of Installation Management Command-Europe, met with representatives of the state of Rheinland Pfalz and the German federal government to sign an agreement that affirms the commitment U.S. forces have in abiding by German and European Union environmental protection guidelines.

Representing the state of Rheinland Pfalz was Margit Conrad, minister of the environment.

The German federal government was represented by Karl Diller, parliamentary state secretary for the federal ministry of finance.

"I am privileged to witness the signing, and participate in the signing, of this historical agreement between Rheinland Pfalz and the Federal Republic of Germany for nature and landscape protection on military accommodations used by our forces," said Devens. "This agreement is instrumental in achieving our goals."

Natura 2000 is a European Union-wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive.

The network strives to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's threatened species and habitats.

Closer to home, hundreds of flora and fauna species not found anywhere else are thriving on Baumholder's military training area.

These are but a few of the environmental treasures the German government and the European Union are striving to protect under the Natura 2000 umbrella.

"The protection of partly endangered species and their habitats have been and always will be a special emphasis to us," said Devens.

"Our gathering today clearly demonstrates the invaluable cooperation between the U.S. military forces, the Federal Republic of Deutschland, and the state of Rheinland Pfalz," Devens said.

"Further, it demonstrates the importance the U. S. forces places on the protection of a shared environment."

Normally, one would not readily associate a military training area with a place where endangered flora and fauna flourish but that is indeed the case on Baumholder's military training area.

Devens listed a couple of contributing factors for the unusual occurrence. Most military training areas are fenced and limit trespassing that could damage the environment.

Not using pesticides and fertilizers also helps wildlife thrive in its natural environment.

This and other reasons allow for many species to thrive on the military training area here.

"We were aware that our military reservations have a high ecological value," said Devens. "Therefore we were not completely surprised when we learned that the German states

identified military sites for inclusion in the European Union Natura 2000 effort."

"Frankly," she added, "we were concerned that the decision to include

Our gathering today clearly demonstrates the invaluable cooperation between the U.S. military forces, the Federal Republic of Deutschland, and the state of Rheinland Pfalz. Further, it demonstrates the importance the U.S. forces places on the protection of a shared environment.

Diane Devens
Director IMCOM-Europe

our sites in the Natura 2000 nominations could result in large breeding insurgence and impede the required flexibility to adjust to training needs. Our concerns proved unfounded."

The IMCOM-Europe director noted that such training of Soldiers "has never been as crucial as now."

"We must train to fight and win the global war on terrorism," she said.

"Our goal is to accomplish effective military

training and continue to provide quality facilities to meet mission requirements, and meet Natura 2000 protection requirements."



Diane Devens, (left), director of Installation Management Command-Europe regional director; Karl Diller, parliamentary state secretary for the federal ministry of finance; and Margit Conrad, minister of the environment for the state of Rheinland Pfalz, sign the Natura 2000 agreement, which protects wildlife in Europe, including those thriving on U.S. military installations.

ERMC conference fosters networks, skills designed to build Army team

ERMC Public Affairs release

What do Winnie the Pooh and senior spouses of Army healthcare professionals have in common?

Both shared the spotlight Nov. 3 at a Europe Regional Medical Command conference in October at a Viernheim conference center.

Senior spouses were in the limelight as nearly 20 of them from medical facilities as far away as Belgium and Italy - including two male spouses of Army health clinic commanders - attended the two-day ERMC Commanders and Senior NCO Conference for the first time.

A six-hour Spouses Conference breakout session was held the first day. They were welcomed by Sandy Gallagher, wife of the ERMC Commanding General, Brig.

Gen. Keith W. Gallagher, and Simone Larson, ERMC Family Readiness Support Assistant.

"The goal of the Spouse's Conference is to inform and empower," said Mrs. Gallagher. "What we learn here will have a positive impact on Family Readiness Group support efforts back home."

Winnie the Pooh starred at the beginning of the Spouses Conference as Cathy Speer led a discussion about gentle Pooh's interaction with other personalities in the One Hundred Acre Wood.

"It was fun," said Lanna Thompson, wife of

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Thompson, Vilseck Health Clinic NCOIC. "We learned in a humorous way how to deal with all types of personalities by understanding their traits."

Thompson, who has been around Army medicine for about 10 years, said she also learned a lot from a "Caregiver Burnout" session presented by Julienne Stathis of Franklin Covey, a world renown time management training and assessment service for organizations and individuals.

To help spouses understand what today's Soldiers experience, ERMC Command Chaplain (Col.) James Griffith gave a "Battlemind" presentation. Dr. (Col.) Robert Smith, HMEDDAC deputy commander for clinical services, discussed community and Army health clinic relationships.

Three Heidelberg-area senior spouses hosted a forum to discuss leadership and family support issues. The spouses included Cathy Speer, Sandy Gallagher, and Kozeta Beam.

Lori Campbell, wife of U.S. Army Medical Activity Heidelberg commander Col. Kyle Campbell, called the conference "invaluable."

"Our communication is much better now," said Campbell. "It makes a big difference to meet people face-to-face."

One of those people is Rich Breen, a retired Army colonel married to Col. Lorraine Breen, who commands the Vicenza Army Health Clinic

at Caserma Ederle in northern Italy.

Breen, first director of the U.S. Army Soldiers Media Center, said the Spouses Conference builds a foundation for action.

"If we are going to be serious about the Army as a family, we must back the talk with action," said Breen.

Breen said the leadership and professional development skills presented at the conference help "build the team that will lead the Army into the future."

"This was an excellent opportunity for spouses to network, to share unit success stories

and to provide camaraderie," said Breen, who is coordinating an Army-endorsed "Freedom Team Salute" program that recognizes the enduring bond between Soldiers, Family, community and veterans. Information is available at www.freedomteamsalute.com.

In December, ERMC spouses will host Christmas caroling and visits wounded Soldiers at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

Larson said the next ERMC Spouses Conference will be in March in conjunction with the semi-annual Commanders and Senior NCO Conference.

What we learn here will have a positive impact on Family Readiness Group support efforts back home.

Sandy Gallagher

Spouse of ERMC Commanding General



Photo by Steve Davis

Lori Campbell (left), wife of U.S. Army Medical Activity Heidelberg commander Col. Kyle Campbell, talks with Anne-Marie Parramore and retired Col. Rich Breen during a conference break.

Feedback essential during Warrior Care Month

U.S. Army Medical Department, PAO

November has been designated Warrior Care Month and the Europe Regional Medical Command will be providing information about the health and quality of care for wounded, ill, or injured service members and their families.

Visit the ERMC Web site <http://ermc.amedd.army.mil> in November for weekly information or to submit a healthcare question by clicking the "Ask the Doc" e-mail link.

Questions can also be submitted to Brig. Gen. Keith W. Gallagher, the U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army Command Surgeon and also the ERMC Commanding General, on his blog site.

In addition, the Department of Defense has a new Warrior Care Web site at www.warriorcare.mil. The site offers information for service members and Families.

All questionnaire responses are anonymous to encourage honest and specific answers that will lead to positive changes in how the MHS handles care for wounded, ill, or injured service members.

The Military Health System is asking wounded, ill or injured service members and their families to help health system leadership better understand the needs and expectations of warriors in their care by completing an online questionnaire.

The questionnaires—one for wounded, ill or injured service members, and one for family members—are available through Nov. 28 on the Military Health System Web site at www.health.mil.

The questionnaires ask for feedback concerning a service member's experience and satisfaction with the care he or she has received since becoming wounded, ill or injured.

All questionnaire responses are anonymous to encourage honest and specific answers that will lead to positive changes in how the MHS handles care for wounded, ill or injured service members.

The questionnaires are part of Defense Secretary Robert Gates' commitment to supporting wounded, ill and injured service members—ensuring that their care is the Department of Defense's top priority.

Care is continually improving, but MHS leaders recognize that there is still more to be done.

By listening to the opinions of wounded, ill or injured service members and their families, the MHS

will be in a better position to meet their needs and expectations.

The online questionnaires are available at www.health.mil/Pages/Page.aspx?ID=18.

America's Military Health System (MHS) is a unique partnership of medical educators, medical researchers, and healthcare providers and their support personnel worldwide.

This DoD enterprise consists of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; the medical departments of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Combatant Command surgeons;

and TRICARE providers (including private-sector healthcare providers, hospitals and pharmacies).

TRICARE Management Activity and the Military Health System TRICARE Management Activity, is the Defense Department activity that administers the health care plan for the uniformed services, retirees and their families.

It serves more than 9.2 million eligible beneficiaries worldwide in the Military Health System.

The mission of the MHS is to enhance Department of Defense and national security by providing health support for the full range of military operations.

The MHS provides quality medical care through a network of providers, military treatment facilities, medical clinics and dental clinics worldwide.

For more about the MHS, go to www.health.mil.

Chicken soup best remedy for cold, flu

by **ROY ADDINGTON**

USAHC Bamberg

Autumn, football and those bothersome colds are back.

Upper respiratory illness is the expensive term for sniffing, sneezing, coughing and aching with poor sleep and grumpy feelings.

Adults can expect to have 2-4 colds per year lasting about a week. Kids under 6 years old may have as many as 8 per year. These can last up to two-weeks at a time giving the impression that our kids are always sick.

There are a lot of viruses that cause colds. At the risk of upsetting my mother, colds do not fall from the sky nor do colds come about by not wearing a sweater.

Colds are spread by airborne droplets sneezed, coughed or smeared from one person to another.

A day after exposure to these droplets, the victim's nose begins to fill up with fluids to combat the viral

assault.

The viruses are captured in these fluids which, if not contained in a tissue or sleeve, continue the spread of these socially eager microbes.

Hand-washing is the best defense against colds. Alcohol-based gels are good, convenient alternatives if soap and water are not available.

Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands: long sleeves are excellent places to cough or sneeze into. Of course, a disposable tissue will do.

Should you "catch a cold", hot teas, salt water up the nose (nasal saline) and Tylenol can be used for symptom management.

A lot of money is spent trying to convince people that Echinacea, Dimetapp, Zinc and other concoctions will cure the common cold.

While a lot of money is used for these products, not one has been shown to resolve symptoms any better than chicken-soup.

These products can be dangerous

and have proven deadly to infants.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advised against using any over the counter medication containing antihistamines, decongestants and anti-cough medications in children 6 and under.

Tylenol, humidifiers and nasal saline are more effective and less likely to cause problems when used as directed.

Get out doors, wear long sleeves and cheer on your favorite teams.

Wash your hands with hand sanitizers. Do not forget soap + water + friction = decreased infections.

Treat yourself to chicken soup and make an appointment at your local health clinic if cold symptoms worsen or you are not getting better within a week or two.

For more information, here are two of my favorite, peer-reviewed web sites for medical advice: www.uptodate.com/patients, and www.familydoctor.com.

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

The flu and the common cold are respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses.

Because these two types of illnesses have similar flu-like symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone.

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense.

Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

* Information obtained from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/coldflu.htm>.

Compare prescription prices online

ERMC Public Affairs release

A Web link is now available listing Military Health System pharmacy prices which changed Oct. 15.

The link for the Pharmacy Pricing Estimator Tool is off the Europe Regional Medical Command's "eUBO" link on the ERMC homepage at <http://ermc.amedd.army.mil>.

TRICARE Management Agency officials, who manage PPET, remind beneficiaries that the military cost may not always be the most cost effective, even though it is based on average wholesale prices.

It sometimes pays to compare the prices from the PPET with other commercial pharmaceutical sources.

For questions on the changes and what they mean for you, contact the ERMC e-Uniform Business Office by E-mail at ebu@amedd.army.mil or by clicking on the "Contact Us" tab on the eUBO Web page.

Read previous medical articles on a wide variety of topics by visiting The Bavarian News archive at www.milcom.de.

Free high-adrenaline program reduces risky behavior for redeployed Soldiers

by **RONALD H. TOLAND JR.**
Bavarian News

The U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach's Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Outdoor Recreation, in coordination with the garrison and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, will conduct the Warrior Adventure Quest Program--Alpine Skiing Jan. 5, in Garmisch, Germany.

With approximately 2,200 Soldiers returning from downrange, platoon size groups of about 30 Soldiers each will participate in the Warrior Adventure Quest.

Marc Jarvis, Outdoor Recreation director, said USAG Ansbach is one of the selected garrisons in Europe to develop the Warrior Adventure Quest program as part of the Army's Reset, Reintegration and Battlemind training initiatives.

"It is part of the 90-day time period for Soldiers returning from deployment," said Jarvis. "Going from that high-adrenaline type mindset phase of deployment to a lower-adrenaline range upon return, gives the Soldiers time to

relax and release any pent up energy during this activity."

He says the WAQ provides high-adventure recreational learning programs for Soldiers going through reset, helping them transition to the "new normal," and decrease high-risk behavior.

"All WAQ programs include a Battlemind Psychological Debrief and the WAQ is the 'hook' to peak Soldiers' interest (outdoor vs. classroom), with the BMPD being the tool to assist the Soldiers to learn from their experiences," said Jarvis.

He added that with a start date of Jan. 5, the majority of Soldiers will cycle through the four-day winter program over three-months at Keans Lodge and Riffelriss Trail in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, with all equipment and transportation provided by MWR ODR.

The free adventure is designed to help returning Soldiers deal with post-combat stress.

"We want to help mitigate possible destructive behavior of the Soldiers," said Jarvis.

He explains that the program is in line with DOD (Department of Defense)-directed

initiatives and services which focus on a Soldiers' redeployment.

The program uses productive recreation activities to alleviate high rates of risky and destructive behaviors attributed to redeploying servicemembers.

"Instead of them seeking this same high-octane adrenaline rush and getting it via destructive behaviors—like driving vehicles fast, child or spousal abuse, drug and alcohol abuse—we want to help refocus their need for high adrenaline in a positive way through this program's outlet."

But not only is this program required and fun, it is a learning environment for Soldiers.

"We want to provide them with lifelong learning skills and direct them in sports that they can do for the rest of their lives in an affirmative

way—learning new skills, trying new things, building group cohesion and esprit-de-corps, and focusing their energy in a constructive way. So, there is an instructional component to this program as well," said Jarvis

As the MWR component that specializes in healthy high-adventure activities, outdoor recreation was given the opportunity to conduct this premier program.

Outdoor recreation high-adventure activities provide safe, structured outlets that satisfy the drive for adrenaline with mitigated risk through progressive skill instruction in selected activities.

To sign your unit up for the WAQ, contact Jarvis

or the WAQ staff at Katterbach Outdoor Recreation Division at DSN 467-3354 or CIV 09802-83-3354.

“ We want to provide (Soldiers) with lifelong learning skills, and direct them in sports that they can do for the rest of their lives...”

Marc Jarvis
Outdoor Recreation director

SCU offers help during holidays

Service Credit Union press release

Service Credit Union is donating Holiday Gift Cards, valued at \$30,000, to families needing holiday assistance across the 12 Army and Air Force bases where the credit union's 15 branches serve in Germany and at the Pease Air National Guard base in New Hampshire.

Richard Tolle, Senior Vice President of Overseas Operations and Service Credit Union Branch Managers in Germany will present the cards to senior military leaders for distribution throughout the holiday season.

More than 600 VISA® gift cards will be donated to help families buy

food and gifts overseas.

Tolle says, "This is just one small way we can show our gratitude to these warriors and play an active role in the heartbeat of our military communities."

"It's a unique circumstance that these families are facing financial challenges while already giving so much for their country," says Gordon Simmons, President/CEO of Service Credit Union.

"We appreciate their sacrifices and hope these gift cards will make their purchasing for family celebrations a little easier."

"We have been serving the needs of our military members for over fifty

years," continues Gordon Simmons, President/CEO.

"It's our responsibility to help them when we can and our great pleasure to give these families the ability to provide the holiday dinner and gifts we all hope to have over the holidays."

Service Credit Union serves communities in Europe and in the U.S. Military families represent a large segment of the credit union's membership.

These families face distinctive financial challenges to living a military life, and often have a loved one deployed.

Service Credit Union is a full service financial institution, offering a wide range of financial products to its members.

With 15 branch locations in Germany, 16 locations in the U.S., two staffed 24/7 contact centers and full online banking services, Service Credit Union serves all branches of the U.S. military and Department of Defense employees and their families worldwide. Service Credit Union has over \$1.2 billion in assets.

“ It's a unique circumstance that these families are facing financial challenges while already giving so much for their country. ”

Gordon Simmons
President/CEO Service Credit Union

iWinner

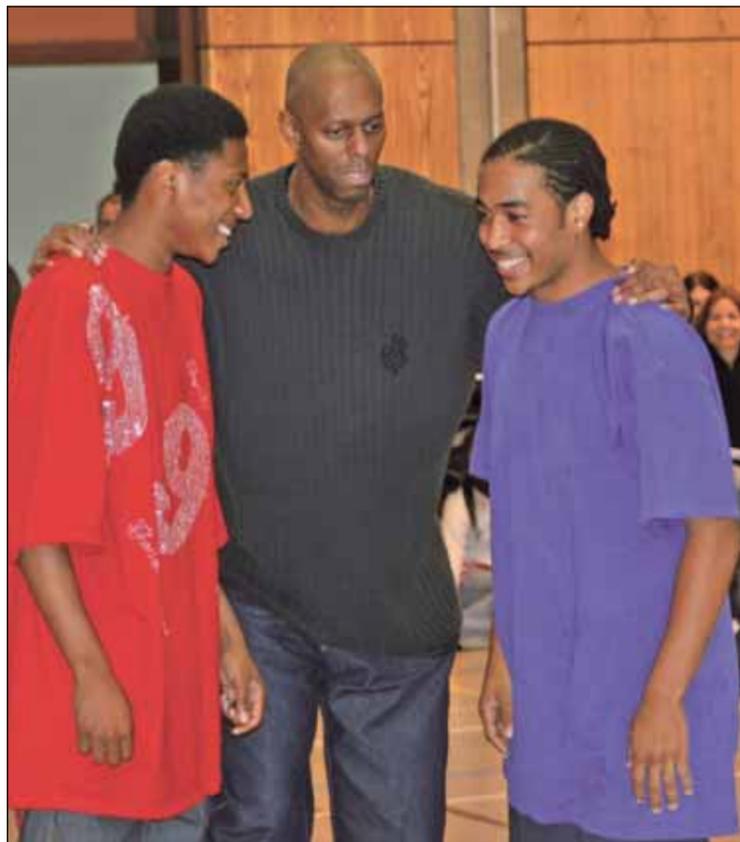


Courtesy photo

Sgt. Curt Johnson, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and wife Jinjir receives a one-gigabyte iPod shuffle from Bruce Belknap, supervisory librarian at the Bleidorn Library, Oct. 29. The iPod was a prize from the library's reading contest.

Turning RED

Students, basketball star commit to drug free life



Jordan Shack (right), 17, and Marcus Allen (left), 17, listen to Joe Asberry, professional basketball guard and forward, on game tactics Oct. 22 at Ansbach Middle/High School.

Asberry spoke to more than 150 students about the dangers of drugs in honor of Red Ribbon week.



Cathryn Jarrell's 4th graders show off their commitment to a drug-free life with signs they made for Ansbach Elementary School's kick-off parade for Red Ribbon week Oct 24.

Covenant hits one-year mark

by **MARK HEETER**
Schweinfurt CI Chief

The Army Family Covenant, launched one year ago at installations around the world, solidified the Army's commitment to the importance of families as a force multiplier. And the covenant lives today.

"The intent of the whole covenant was for the Army to show their support for Army Families, and in turn helping the troops downrange," said Michael Payne, USAG Schweinfurt Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) coordinator.

The CYSS program has been among the largest beneficiaries of the covenant, which Lt. Col. Anthony Haager, USAG Schweinfurt commander, signed here in October 2007.

Elimination of registration fees, free child care, free classes and reduced rates throughout CYSS were, and have remained, hallmarks of the program. The Army Family Covenant followed the 15:12 program and, in Schweinfurt, the Blue Star Card.

"That was kind of testing ground for what eventually became the AFC," Payne said.

"Those were the highly impacted garrisons that had the high deployment rates that first implemented that," said Milenie Schwarz, CYSS

program and operations manager. Schweinfurt was among that first group of communities selected for the 15:12 program, the predecessor of the covenant.

The larger Army Family reaps the rewards of the covenant, according to Payne.

"It's the Soldier that enlists. It's the family that reenlists, because if they're not happy, they're the ones with the say," Payne said. "And so we are providing the things that enable them to maintain a decent way of living."

Since its implementation, the covenant has expanded to include Warrior Transition Units, not simply deployed Soldiers' families, Schwarz said.

"I think it's how much money the government is putting into this program in support of families. It's an incredible amount of money," Schwarz said. "We're also getting extra money in support of CYSS programs, so we can enhance the already existing support we offer."

Army Family Covenant money, which continues to pour into the community, and especially youth programming, has also helped pay for staff development at youth centers, according to Payne.

"Army family Covenant has been paying for training since its implementation," he said.



Photo by Emily Athens

Kindergarten students at the Child Development Center smile happily as school ends and play time begins.

Giving back



Photo by George Ohl

President of the Schweinfurt Community Spouses Club Carol Haager (right) shakes hands with Thomas Leier, manager of the Schweinfurt Wildpark, after SCSC made a \$500 donation to help reconstruct the park's goat living area. The city forestry office will begin the project next year.

Viral meningitis diagnosed in Bavaria, not uncommon in fall

by **MARK HEETER**
Schweinfurt CI Chief

As the temperature and humidity take a turn toward winter, cases of the common cold rise.

A few cases of viral meningitis – much different and more common than the more severe bacterial meningitis – have sprung up around the area.

"We've had a couple cases (of viral meningitis) in Bavaria this fall. We have a couple cases in Bavaria every fall," said Dr. (Capt.) Sarah Niles, chief of preventive medicine and the public health physician for Bavarian Medical Activity.

"Viral meningitis is very, very different from bacterial meningitis," Niles said, adding that viral meningitis is common this time of year, mainly due to changing weather patterns.

"Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in

brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disability," according to information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Meningitis is just an infection in the fluid around the spinal cord that most commonly is reflected by fever, headaches and a stiff neck," Niles said.

While viral meningitis might be cause for a few nights' stay in the hospital, doctors generally treat it simply with fluids, rest and fever reduction, she said.

"Most of the time, patients recover and do very, very well," Niles said.

Preventive measures are as common as the cold.

"Prevention for it is, if you have a cough or you have a fever, stay home.

Prevention for it is, if you have a cough or you have a fever, stay home. Keep your germs to yourself, cover your mouth, wash your hands.

Dr. (Capt.) Sarah Niles
Bavarian Medical Activity

"Keep your germs to yourself, cover your mouth, wash your hands," Niles said.

"Just because you hear about meningitis, it is not a reason for concern.

"If you or someone you know is having those symptoms, please go get them looked at by your health care provider.

"And if you are sick, it's always good to stay home and take care of yourself, not to spread it," she said.

SKIES programs offer exercise, life lessons

Story and photo by **EMILY ATHENS**
Bavarian News

Graceful steps, kicks, and punches: a few of the moves the School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills Unlimited is teaching this winter to the children and youth of the USAG Schweinfurt community.

Of the vast array of programs, SKIES offers instruction on the elegant steps of ballet or the dynamic moves of karate.

SKIES provides just what its name indicates. Offering equal opportunities for youth of military and DoD civilians, SKIES strives to enhance the possibilities for children to gain knowledge, become inspired, explore their talents, and acquire new abilities.

"Our primary focus is to establish good quality programs for children, so they can discover their skills and get better at them," said Peter Potter, acting SKIES director.

Potter also emphasized the goal to ensure consistent and affordable prices for participants, while providing dependable, high-quality instructors. These instructors not only possess great talent in what they teach, but a passion in educating children in lessons that stretch beyond the classroom.

"My goal is for my students to learn about their feelings, their body, and their self-respect.

I want every child who leaves my class to know that they are beautiful, graceful, and amazing dancers," said Kim Brice, the SKIES ballet instructor.

"Studies show that children who are physically active grow up to become healthier adults. Encouraging them to make exercise a priority is very important," added Brice.

Dmitrij Videnin, the SKIES karate instructor, also believes the importance of children learning lessons that apply to their daily lives outside the classroom.

"By teaching karate, I'd like to reduce the aggression potential of children. (My goal is) not so much that they learn how to fight, but that they have a good body conscious," Videnin said.

It is obvious that the SKIES programs give children an opportunity to become socially active with their peers, potentially building their self-esteem, explained Potter.

"Especially with the deployment coming up, these classes will provide a positive outlet for the children and help support the parents," said Potter.

Ballet classes are available for children ages 3 to 5 on Wednesdays 5-5:45 p.m. at the Abrams Center, Wednesdays 3-4 p.m. for ages 6 to 8 in the elementary school cafeteria, and Fridays 3-4 p.m. at the elementary school cafeteria for ages 9 to 12. Classes are \$35 per month for one class per week.

Karate classes will be held Mondays and Wednesdays 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Finney Fitness Center for ages 6 to 18. Cost is \$40 per month for two classes per week.

For information, call DSN 354-6414 or CIV 09721-96-6414.



Possessing the highest karate degree attainable in Europe, Dmitrij Videnin looks forward to teaching youth the art of Kyokushinkai karate.

Teen theater classes offered

by **SANDRA WILSON**
Bavarian News

Is your teen looking for a creative outlet this fall?

Schweinfurt's community theater presents Introduction to Theater Arts for ages 12-18.

"I've noticed in the last couple years I've had a lot of youth interest in theater," said Garland Travis, USAG Schweinfurt entertainment director.

The program is designed to meet once a week at the Abrams Center across the street from Ledward Barracks. Teens will learn all aspects of the performing arts, from behind-the-scenes to center stage. Youth can experience the details of stage make-up, learn lights and sound, and even hear some of the history of theater. No previous experience is required.

"Even if they're just interested in the tech side of theater," they can come and hone their skill in that area, Travis said, emphasizing that where their passion lies is what can be focused on.

The \$50 monthly fee includes all materials and guest speakers who may come to share experiences on stage. Youth will learn tricks to help memorize lines, be exposed to detailed scene work and acting, and learn the importance of publicity and production.

"It's not just luck—a lot of hard work goes into theater," Travis said.

The class start date will be determined by the schedule of those who sign up.

"We can be as flexible as we need," he said, adding that once a day is selected to meet, youth can count on a two-hour class each week.

For information, call CIV 0162-296-2776.

Studies show that children who are physically active grow up to become healthier adults. Encouraging them to make exercise a priority is very important.

Kim Brice
SKIES Ballet Instructor

Deployment looms, spouses offer advice

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Deployment of the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate) is just around the corner and with roughly 4,000 Soldiers departing from Schweinfurt and Grafenwoehr, this mass exodus will affect many people staying behind.

Many of those people are spouses and children, and the question remains whether families should head back to the U.S. for a long visit or stay overseas.

The decision is based on what's best for each individual family, but it's not an easy choice to make, especially for those facing their first deployment. Some families in the community have already been through previous deployments and expressed their opinions about staying or going.

"I encourage ... women to stay. I know it's great to go see your family and stuff but when you're in Germany especially, this becomes your family and these ladies really stick together and make strong bonds and they understand the situation better than your family may," said Trisha Swienton, who faces the third deployment of her husband in the upcoming weeks.

In addition to the community bonds, Carolyn Hudson, family member of 9th Engineer Battalion, commented about the ease in connecting with her husband downrange because of the free Military Postal System and the time zone of only two hours difference between Germany and Iraq.

She originally planned to leave Germany once her husband departed and her commitments were taken care of with the Family Readiness Group.

"Reasons I wanted to go back: I wanted someone to take care of me, to help with the kids, not be the sole one responsible for running

a household. I never did end up going back. I really am thankful I stayed because I think there are a lot of benefits," Hudson said.

Carmelita Taylor, family member of 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, had no intention to stay in Germany while her husband deployed for the mission in 2006-07.

"I tried to EROD (Early Return of Dependents) home ... because we were supposed to PCS anyway right when he got back ... but they told me no, I can't do it," Taylor said.

"I didn't want to come to Schweinfurt and start all over. I hated it at first ... but actually it was probably the best thing that happened. I got used to the community," she shared. "The best thing I did was keep busy. It really made time fly."

She spent her time mailing party packages downrange for various holidays and making sure the Soldiers in her husband's unit received a care package for their birthday.

Volunteering at the elementary school and traveling with her children also enriched her time while he was away.

Theresa Smith, a family member of 1st Sqdn, 91st CAV, was new to the overseas community as well and tried to EROD back to the U.S. but was denied approval.

"But I'm really glad that we stayed. It was challenging at times for sure," Smith said.

Her daughter was in first-grade when he left, and they both learned the value of the Schweinfurt community.

"The school was really good with the

deployment. I think it also really helps you as a mom and a wife to stand by yourself," Smith said.

Her family chose to utilize a lot of the free programs offered during the deployment.

Both Taylor and Smith visited family in the states for a short time during the deployment but chose to spend the majority of their husband's 15-month tour in the Schweinfurt community.

Julie Correia, family member of the 630th Military Police Company, expressed how she was nervous at first about the support system of the community with her being new, especially since their company was so small.

She found satisfaction in volunteering and discovered the benefits offered to deployed families.

"It's so important for the kids to have someone just like them," Correia said explaining how her children could attend school and participate in sports and other activities while being around other kids and adults that understand how it is to have a missing loved one.

For her as a parent, "volunteering is key to finding friends and keeping busy," and the deployment care card gave her an amount of free child care when needed.

"You need to find something to get involved with," said Joe Garcia, who ended up choosing to remain in Germany during his wife's deployment because he wanted to keep the family together.

For him, it was his kindergarten son that sustained him while she was gone.

"I gave up a nice job to come over here, (but) I'd do it again if the situation arose," Garcia said.

While his marriage relationship stands strong, he believes the decision to stay or go should be heavily influenced by the strength of the each couples' marriage.

"If you have a rocky relationship and things aren't going well, maybe you should stay here to try to work those things out whatever they may be.

"Because the easier it is to run home to mom or that security blanket, whatever that may be, the easier it is to hang it up," he said, explaining how relatives back in the states can actually get in the way of trying to build a healthy relationship with the

spouse downrange.

Family member Lauren Meyer, 1st Sqdn, 91st CAV, explained she felt closer to her spouse by staying here during the deployment because of the frequent updates and easy access to information provided by the rear detachment.

Sara Russell, family member of 9th EN Bn, echoed those sentiments.

"Here, I have direct access to community resources, I am tied into the unit, getting current and accurate information, and I have my friends to rely on," Russell said.

Various factors make up the equation of whether to stay or go. What's the best place for yourself, your marriage, and your children?

"It's a big decision ... carefully weigh all your options. A lot of times it can sound very comforting to go home, but I think you can miss a lot of neat things that can happen while you're gone with people that are in the same stage of life, same situation, that add to the deployment and make it more than just checking days off the calendar, but that it is in some ways a good experience for us," Hudson said.



Joe Garcia

"I gave up a nice job to come over here... I'd do it again if the situation arose."



Theresa Smith

"I think it also really helps you as a mom and a wife to stand by yourself."



Carmelita Taylor

"I hated it at first... but actually it was probably the best thing that happened..."

Employment, money found at home

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Have you wanted to find a way to earn money at the same time as staying home?

Child and Youth School Services offers that opportunity by giving Family Child Care provider training.

Stay-at-home parents or those seeking at-home employment can attend and start the process to become a provider in their own home.

FCC providers can offer child care for up to six children from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. in their home.

They are paid the same rate that parents pay to drop their children off at the Child Development Center on Askren Manor.

Providers are also given the ability to claim reimbursement for other expenses like food for the children.

"We really don't have many homes at the moment. We've got a big need for child care," said Brian Eve, FCC trainer, acting director explaining the

need for more providers.

To be eligible for the training, those interested must live in government quarters on post or in government-leased housing.

The next step is to pick up an application at CYS central registration in the Commons bldg. 242.

"There's quite a bit that they have to do before we can certify them," Eve said, explaining that applicants go through extensive background checks; submit references from people that know them in the community; attend CPR, first aid, and fire safety training; and allow inspections of their home.

Once the requirements are finished successfully, a provisional certification is issued under which child care can begin in the home.

Despite the rigorous application process, those on their way to becoming an FCC provider will find that all the training is free of charge, and the ending certificate is nationally recognized so it can be used for jobs at

any military installation or anywhere in the U.S.

"In the states, they would have to pay out of their own pocket" for the training, Eve said.

The training received to become an FCC provider is "considered the same" that an employee at the CDC would receive, said Pam Rio, CYS outreach services director.

The main difference between the CDC and home providers is the environment in which the children spend time.

Being in the home, providers offer a smaller place for added comfort.

For that reason, it's a popular choice for parents when seeking child care.

"We have a huge waiting list" of children needing care, Eve said.

"(Home providers) will be really busy with kids all the time. It's just a matter of checking off all the little boxes on our list of stuff that needs to be done" in order to get a home up and running, he said.

Those interested should pick up an application at CYS central registration in the Commons on Ledward Barracks.

A 90-minute orientation of the program takes place every Friday.

More information is available by calling CYS at DSN 354-6517 or CIV 09721-96-6517.

"We really don't have many homes at the moment. We've got a big need for child care."

Brian Eve
FCC Trainer, Acting Director

Unattended cooking sparks concern

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Food is heating on the stove when suddenly you realize you're missing an ingredient.

The commissary is just a short distance— maybe the food will be okay while you step out just for a moment.

Besides, you're hungry, and you want it to be ready when you get back.

Don't do it, stresses the USAG Schweinfurt fire department.

"It happens about three or four times a week. People put stuff on the

stove and leave," said Frank Drexler, USAG Schweinfurt fire inspector, adding that Askren Manor and the barracks have the most incidents.

Food or grease catches on fire or smoke sets off the fire alarms and the USAG Schweinfurt fire department makes their six-minute trip to the home to contain the hazard.

"A lot of people don't think it could happen to me or even realize how fast it can happen," Drexler said.

Staying in the house is not enough. Even leaving the kitchen to go to another room can create a potential life-threatening situation when food is cooking and left unattended.

"Unattended cooking is a problem," said Ralph Metz, USAG Schweinfurt fire inspector. "Do not leave the kitchen."

"If they really have to leave, then turn off the stove and move the pots," Drexler said.

Microwave popcorn is a culprit of fires as well, said the fire inspectors. Leaving the popcorn in too long may result in a burst of flames right inside the microwave.

A simple solution remains: keep an eye on the stove, oven, and microwave when cooking.

"Fire can happen to anybody at anytime," Metz said.

GOTCHA!

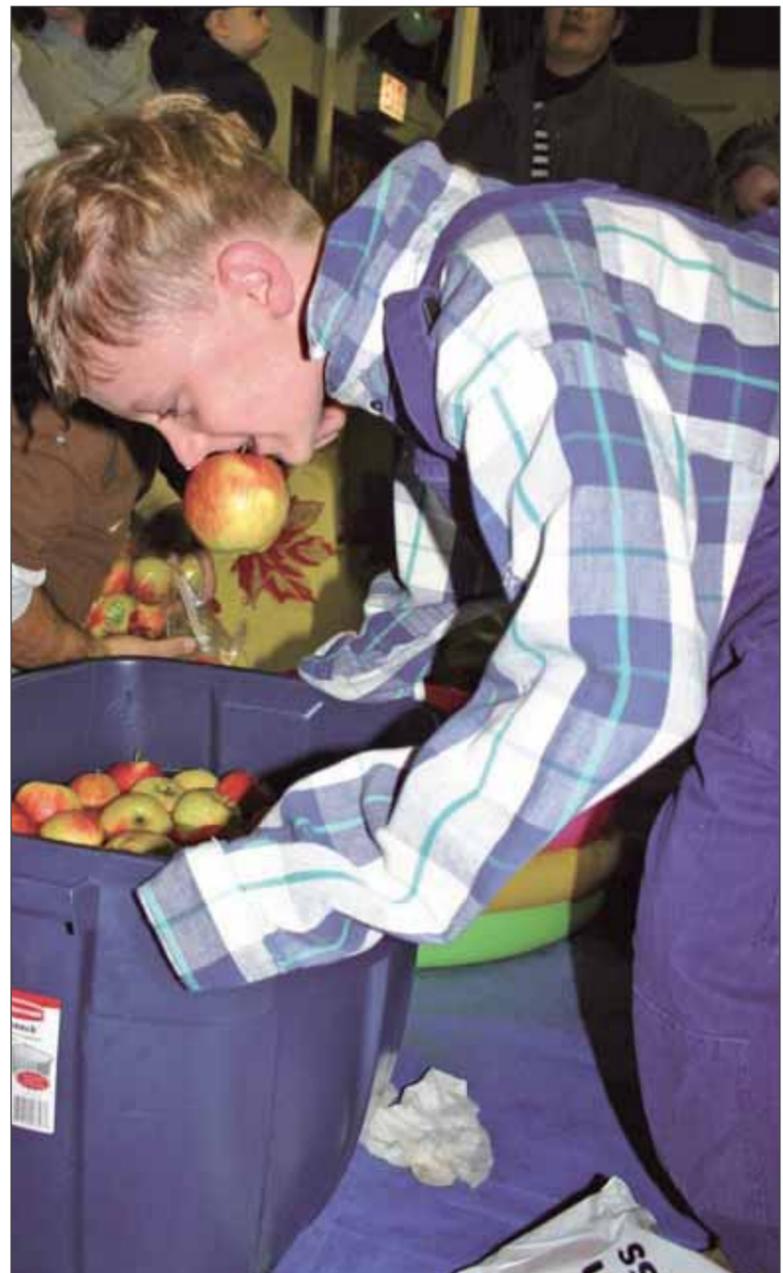


Photo by Sandra Wilson

Fifth-grader Johan Rau fishes for an apple during the apple-bobbing game at the Schweinfurt Community Harvest Fest Oct. 31.

Illesheim Soldier handpicked for All-Army Rugby training camp

by
RONALD H. TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

From no Army to All-Army. That is what happened to one Soldier of the 2-159 Air Reconnaissance Battalion from Illesheim, Germany.

Sgt. Micah Johnston, captain of Illesheim's "Black-n-Blue" rugby team, was selected Oct. 24 with three others from Installation Management Command-Europe to participate in the 2008 All-Army Rugby Trial Camp at Fort Benning, Ga., Nov. 4-14.

Johnston said he never played or knew anything about rugby before the Army, and started learning the sport prior to his enlistment.

"I had some friends in college that were in the National Guard who made the Army team, so it was a goal of mine before the military—kinda the best of both worlds," said Johnson.

The 35-year-old says he has been playing the sport for 11 years.

"This is one of the first years the Army has done it, so I was able to apply. I have my foot in the door now and this is a great opportunity for me," he said.

Individuals selected from the try-

out camp will represent the Army in the Armed Forces Rugby Championship, at Fort Benning Nov. 15-21, according to the All-Army Rugby Trial Camp Selection message.

Johnston said he feels he has a great chance to make the team.

"I think my solid knowledge of the game will serve me well to get on the team. I am captain of our team here now, so that must speak for something.

"I think most of what it will come down to is who wants it more—my determination and confidence is there, my knowledge of the game is there...so we'll see what happens," he said.

Johnston said once selections are made, the team will play an inner-service military tournament.

"This is an opportunity that I would not have in the States—a chance for me to represent the military, the Army, and specifically my battalion, and my company in the inner-service tournament...it is a great feeling," he said.

Anyone interested in playing for the Black 'N Blues can contact Dave McNaughton at DSN 467-4540 or at david.mcnaughton@eur.army.mil.



Courtesy photo

U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach's Sgt. Micah Johnston, C Co 2/159 Avn, on the attack vs. Ingolstadt during the Black 'N Blues convincing 29-0 victory at the Bavarian 10's Tournament Oct. 11. Johnson was selected to the All-Army rugby training camp at Fort Benning, Ga. He is only the second Soldier to be sele from the storied Black 'N Blues since the late 1990's.

Glimpse Back at the '08 CYS Season



Photo By Sandy Davis

Baumholder captured the Child and Youth Services youth sports junior football championship with an 18-22 win over Grafenwoehr/Vilseck Nov. 2.



Photo By Mary Markos

Grafenwoehr Knights defenders could not stop the Hohenfels offense Oct. 24 in Grafenwoehr.



Photo By Mary Markos

Grafenwoehr and Vilseck's youngest players finished the season with a hard-fought game in honor of redeployed family members Nov. 2 in Vilseck.



Photo By Mary Markos

Heidelberg's defensive line overcomes the Knights Oct. 18. Heidelberg proved victorious every time they faced the Grafenwoehr 10-12 year old team. Grafenwoehr and Vilseck had six football teams in the program.



Photo By Mary Markos

Grafenwoehr cheerleaders offer their support Sept. 20 in Vilseck. More than 80 cheerleaders, ages 3-15, participated in the program from the two communities.

Installation is truly 'Efficient Basing'

continued from Page 1

woehr and Vilseck communities were administered by separate base support battalions. As the base support battalions were inactivated and the 100th ASG took control of both communities, the plan was to prepare Vilseck for the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment and Grafenwoehr for Theater Enabling commands (military police, engineer, and signal units).

Boyle took command of the ASG in 2005, and by the next summer, the regiment was moved to the Vilseck side of the newly formed USAG Grafenwoehr, where the unit trained at the Grafenwoehr Training Area and subsequently deployed to Iraq in 2007. Its Soldiers are now redeploying from a tour in Iraq.

"The arrival of 2SCR was truly a challenge because all personnel arrived from the U.S. in less than three months time," Boyle said. "As a result, many projects were completed after 2SCR arrived and some, such as barracks 'flagship facilities,' were specifically undertaken after the Soldiers deployed. But we learned a lot from the 2SCR move and that is definitely an asset as we prepare for another brigade's arrival," he said.

In January 2008, it was announced that the 172nd Infantry Brigade would move to Grafenwoehr from Schweinfurt and replace the planned Theater Enabling commands. Within six months, more than 1,000 172nd Brigade Soldiers relocated to Grafenwoehr and the influx will continue as the unit trains and deploys just as the 2nd SCR did 15 months ago.

"This time the Soldiers and their families are relocating in phases, allowing installation services to adjust to the rising population," Boyle said. With the addition of the 172nd, the number of assigned and associated personnel at the USAG Grafenwoehr is expected to climb to more than 35,000, triple what it was four years ago.

"Efficient Basing - Grafenwoehr" was based on the idea that Soldiers should train where they live. By moving the troops to the training area, the Army saves money by avoiding transportation costs and using economies of scale on base support. It requires fewer people, and

less energy and space to operate one base with twice the personnel as it does to operate two bases.

Although Efficient Basing-Grafenwoehr has evolved into the Grafenwoehr half of the community, when the current plan is completed in 2010, the Grafenwoehr half will have 28 new company operations buildings located adjacent to the seven separate motor pools that form a border between the training area and the main camp. Twelve new barracks are being erected to house 154 Soldiers each, in the most modern Army-standard barracks.

"I have been impressed with all the new facilities, but particularly the quality of the barracks for Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Eric Stetson, rear detachment commander for the recently arrived 172nd Infantry Brigade.

The new barracks/company operations concept places all tactical and operational facilities in the company operations buildings, which are located within the motor pools and not in the basement of the single-Soldier barracks.

"The Soldier walks into the company operations area, draws his weapon and his TA-50 from his NFL-style wall locker, goes out the back door, gets in his vehicle, drives onto the tank trail and goes to the range. When the mission is completed, the Soldier hits the wash rack, returns his weapons, puts his TA-50 back in his wall locker, and exits the company operations building before walking 50-150 meters to his barracks," Boyle said. "Because the Soldier is now located closer to his barracks or housing, he has more personal or family time."

According to 172nd's Stetson, "Our Soldiers are enjoying the benefits of living close to the ranges they train on."

The new 830-unit housing complex, Netzaberg, located nearly two miles northwest of Grafenwoehr on the former racetrack, was designed and built to the latest specifications required by German and U.S. laws.

Amenities include wall-to-wall carpeting, 110/220 electricity, appliances, a full basement, Armed Forces Network basic television and individual yards. Soldiers of all ranks live in this village and the square footage of the homes exceeds

Department of the Army standards for most grades.

"Netzaberg village is a remarkable achievement," Stetson said.

The look and feel is that of any upscale German neighborhood, which is precisely what this housing area is. Ninety percent of the homes in this 12-neighborhood community are filled or have been assigned to incoming families.

The Netzaberg complex surrounds the newly built elementary and middle schools that opened this fall.

The Child Development Center and Child and Youth Services are centrally located next to the Netzaberg schools. An AAFES shoppette/gas station and a chapel will also be constructed in this complex.

The enhanced quality-of-life features that are now part of the USAG Grafenwoehr include the Army's largest PX and commissary facilities in Europe, Soldier barracks removed from unit operation/administrative areas, housing facilities built to host-nation standards, and a central campus-like environment for single Soldiers.

The old four-pump gas station has been replaced by a 24-pump station, and construction plans still include a new Army lodging facility nearby.

The Army post office/community mail room was modernized and expanded to accommodate the growing number of personnel. A new community support center is located right inside the main gate, and the vehicle-inspection point is across the street, so Soldiers can quickly accomplish their in-processing tasks without having to leave the area or drive to another building. The new Grafenwoehr physical fitness center is close to barracks and Netzaberg housing.

In addition to the new construction at the USAG Grafenwoehr, virtually every building on post will undergo major renovation or conversion. USAREUR and 7th Army's Joint Multinational Training Command, the USAG Grafenwoehr's senior-tactical mission command, had elements scattered throughout the installation but now have a consolidated headquarters, as does the 69th Signal Battalion.

Other improvements to the garrison include enhancements to the training area, an expanded library, new dining



Army photo

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's physical fitness center features a gymnasium, indoor track, rock-climbing wall and a variety of modern training equipment.

facility, new roads and traffic circles, consolidation of the NCO Academy into a single complex and upgrades to the airfield.

For the Army, savings multiply when installations consolidate operations from another base, similar to what Grafenwoehr did with nearby Vilseck.

"The Vilseck side of the USAG Grafenwoehr continues to see construction and renovation for barracks, medical facilities and even a high-end sports store," Boyle said.

The consolidation has also helped promote the larger and better-stocked PX and commissary.

"The Grafenwoehr commissary is now open seven days a week, and

the PX just added three additional registers," Boyle said.

Special events, such as concerts, tours, sports competitions and other MWR functions can be held more regularly at larger installations.

"We are actually looking at using our Deployment/Redeployment Center as an additional venue for large events," said Boyle.

For Grafenwoehr, the planning and implementation of transforming the installation into what will be the largest Army base in Europe continues to evolve and improve.

Officials believe that USAG Grafenwoehr, with two communities separated by a training area, is truly "Efficient Basing."

Casey: Dwell time increasing to 24 months

continued from Page 1

station between deployments -- will grow from 12 months to 24 over the next three years.

"As the demand for our forces stays at what it is now, we are growing the Army by about 75,000 (Soldiers) between now and 2010, and we will gradually add more units," the general said.

"So because of the growth and the demand being held steady, the time that Soldiers stay home between deployments gradually increases."

Dwell time is expected to increase from 18 months in 2009 to 24 months in 2011, he said.

Casey said the increase in troop strength will be completed by 2011.

At that point, about 15 brigades will be prepared to fight irregular conflicts and 14 more trained for other missions.

About 80 percent of the Army's brigades have been converted to modular formations in the largest organizational change the Army has seen since World War II, Casey told junior officers and senior NCOs here.

These modular units are trading their Cold War-era skills for those needed for 21st-century conflicts ranging from conventional battle to

asymmetric warfare.

The effects of continuous deployments accumulate and are wearing Soldiers and their families down, the general said.

"We've got to give our folks more time at home so they can fully recover from the repeated deployments," Casey said.

Units also benefit from longer times between deployments, he added, because leaders have more time to train their Soldiers to fight in conventional and unconventional warfare.

Units with a dwell time of 18 months or less should continue to train for the unconventional fight, Casey said.

Units with more than 18 months at home station should enhance their conventional warfare skills.

"We have to build that depth into our force so we can truly operate across the spectrum of conflicts," he said.

The change in dwell time is one part of bringing the Army back into balance, Casey said.

"We are deploying at a pace that we cannot sustain either from the standpoint of sustaining the all-volunteer force or the strategic flexibility

to do other things," he said. "So last year we started a program that would put us back into balance."

The program will take about four years to complete, Casey explained.

The Army has to continue to support, sustain and care for its Soldiers and Families as it prepares, trains and equips units to fight in current and future conflicts -- all while continuing to transform the force.

Casey pledged that the Army will continue its commitment to the Army Family Covenant, noting that funding for Family programs will increase to \$1.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2009.

Casey said he wanted to observe how the 172nd has prepared for its upcoming deployment to Iraq with only 12 months to get trained and ready.

"I am very impressed with (how) the leaders, the Soldiers and the Families are dealing with a difficult thing," he said. "I am very proud of the commitment that I see in the eyes of everybody I have talked to. They believe in what they are doing, and they are going to make a difference."

Casey also discussed issues concerning

medical care for Soldiers and their Families, the possibility of bonus payments to Soldiers whose tours of duty are extended under the Army's "stop-loss" program, difficulties faced by some family members in obtaining USAREUR licenses, and mental health programs for Soldiers and Family members.

As he prepared to join several junior enlisted Soldiers for a lunchtime meeting, Casey praised leaders throughout U.S. Army Europe for putting in the "the extra effort that it takes to hold things together" in an overseas environment.

"It is always a little harder when you are outside of the United States to do things," he said.

"I believe the command is very focused on ensuring the they have the support that they need. I certainly saw it in spades as I went around today."

During his stay in Europe, Casey also met with leaders of the new U.S. Africa Command and discuss combined operations with senior European military leaders during the annual Conference of European Armies in Heidelberg, Germany.

Leahy charged with premeditated murder

continued from Page 1

tion of premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit premeditated murder, and one specification of a violation of Article 78, accessory after the fact.

The charges are allegations, and the accused is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

The hearing is an investigation to determine the appropriate disposition of the charges brought against Leahy. This is not a trial.

Federal law gives troops not in uniform, veterans right to salute during playing of National Anthem

continued from Page 1

es of legislation.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Inhofe said in a written statement.

"Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform," he said. "The U.S. Code is now consistent for veterans and all service members in regards to the symbolic gesture of the military salute."

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your opinion?
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