

Bavarian News

Vol. 5, Nr. 5

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

March 11, 2009

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A FAREWELL TO FOSS

Bavarian News editor **Adriane Foss** says farewell this month after serving the USAG Grafenwoehr for three years.

During Foss' tenure as editor, the Bavarian News was named the best newspaper in U.S. Army Europe THREE years in a row and the **Army's best newspaper** (tabloid-size) for 2007 during the Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Journalism Competition. The newspaper also won several other journalism awards.

Foss and her family are preparing for her new position as editor of "The Outlook" at USAG Vicenza, Italy. She will be missed.

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For road conditions and the latest community news, visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil

RESET

Strykers receive four-month makeover

Story and photo by **MELISSA WOLFF**
Assistant Editor

A visit by Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody on Feb. 25 marked the first month of the Stryker RESET program in Vilseck. Dunwoody, the U.S. Army Materiel Command commanding general, also famously noted as the first female four-star general, toured through the facilities where the RESET was taking place.

During her visit, Dunwoody climbed into one mortar mounted vehicle waiting for its final inspection, saying that she was proud of the work done at the 2d Stryker

Cavalry Regiment's first RESET in Germany.

While nearly completed Stryker vehicles appear new, with freshly painted white interiors and new electronic equipment, some have been through nearly three tours in Iraq.

This RESET, since the regiment redeployed from Iraq this fall, has been 2SCR's concentration.

"Now that we're back from Iraq, this is our priority, this is our focus — getting our equipment up to standard so we can start training," Maj. Jon Pendell, 2SCR public affairs officer, said.

See RESET Page 6



Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody, U.S. Army Materiel Command commanding general, visits Vilseck Rose Barracks to observe the Stryker RESET.

YEAR OF THE NCO

Grafenwoehr celebrates NCO lineage

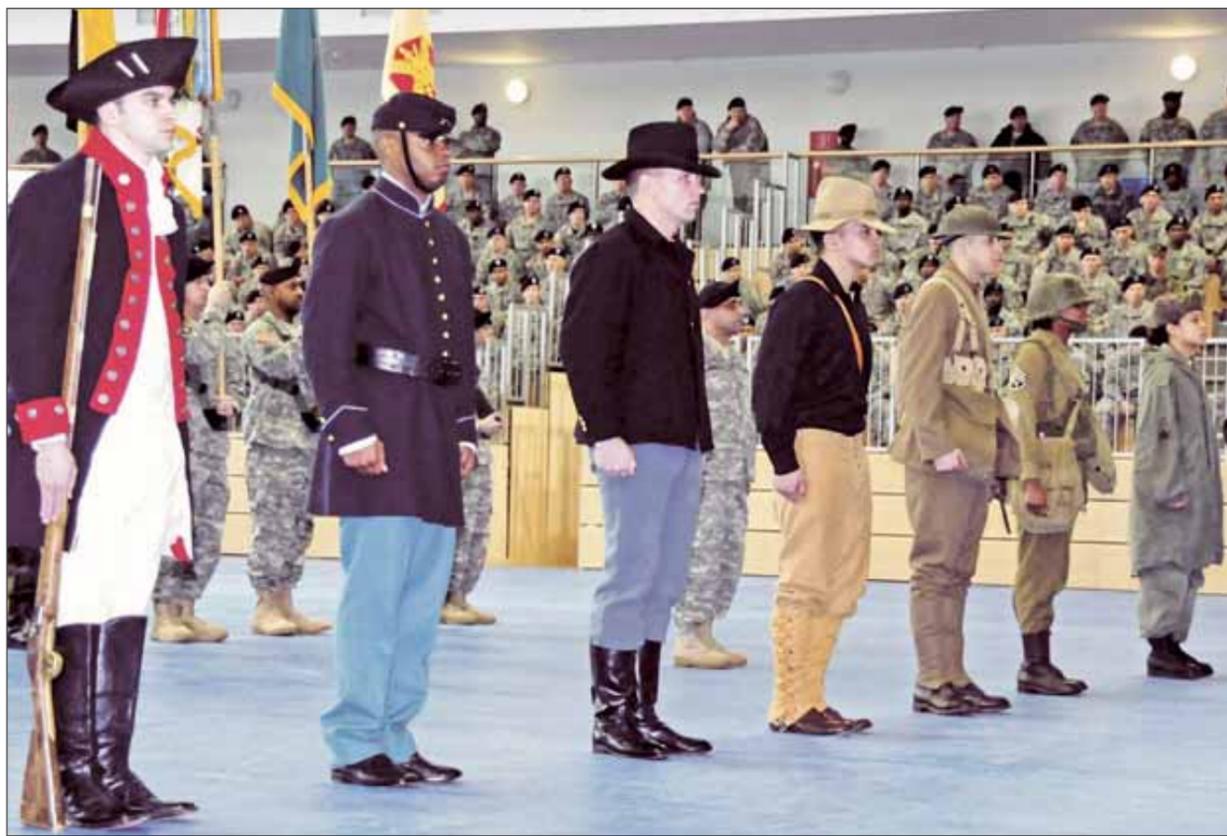


Photo by Melissa Wolff

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command kick off the Year of the NCO Feb. 26 at the Grafenwoehr Physical Fitness Center. For full coverage, see Page 6.

Two-hour parking initiative takes effect tomorrow, aids traffic, pedestrian safety

USAG Grafenwoehr PAO

A new garrison initiative to improve parking and pedestrian safety in Grafenwoehr's Community Mail Room and Banking Customer Zone will result in newly designated two-hour customer parking spaces starting tomorrow.

The new two-hour parking will result in a net gain of available parking for those frequenting the CMR, Legal Center, Chapel, Service Credit Union, Community Bank, and the Red Cross.

The parking redesign will also result in ample long-term parking

being made available in front of the Chapel and in the main parking lot facing Bldg. 141 (CMR).

Customers using the two-hour parking should use a Parking Clock/Disk in their vehicle.

Violators will be ticketed.

Drivers are also asked to pay attention to their speed while in the Banking Customer Zone. The speed limit in the CMR and Banking Customer Zone is 20 kilometers per hour.

For more information, and to see a graphic of the CMR and Banking Customer Zone, visit the garrison Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil.



ACHIEVEMENTS

NMS students make school history

NMS press release

Four middle school students from Netzaberg Middle School competed in the DoDDS Bavarian District Regional National History Day competition held at Rainbow Elementary School in Ansbach.

On February 27th, sixth graders Alex Barnett, writer/director and Paulotte Sued, editor/actor, won first place in the documentary film category for short film on Albert Einstein's 1921 Nobel Prize moment.

Eighth graders Kelsi Brunson and Sarah Schaffer designed a first-place Web site that honored Gloria Steinem's See YES Page 6

A PIECE OF HISTORY

Cobra King identified

by DAVE MELANCON
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

One day after Christmas 1944, "Cobra King" battled its way into World War II history. One day before Christmas 2008, it officially began a new journey to its rightful place as part of the Army's heritage.

Today Cobra King sits overlooking the back gate of Vilseck's Rose Barracks, a nearly forgotten silent steel hulk.

But on Dec. 26, 1944, the same Sherman "Jumbo" tank and its crew led a combined infantry and armor column that relieved Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division surrounded by the enemy in Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge.

The tank's moniker comes from the tank corps tradition See OFFICIALS Page 25

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Leadership addresses issues, actions to meet *your* needs

Services, support, teamwork and priorities have been overarching topics for our garrison enterprise at several important meetings held during the past few weeks.

Garrison firsts

Our Senior Commander, BG David Hogg participated in our 'first ever' Community Action Council (CAC) to address common community-wide issues emanating from our 46 separate installation forums, as well as chaired our 'first ever' Installation Planning Board (IPB) with separate unit commanders to discuss the long-range garrison footprint.



Our three garrisons conducted separate Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) conferences to identify community and Army-wide issues. Finally, complementing the CAC, IPB and AFAP was our 'first ever' strategic Enterprise conference with our garrison leaders and staffs from Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, and Garmisch the last week of February.

The conference allowed our three-garrison 'Enterprise' an opportunity to proactively work on issues, priorities and risks in the areas we see as key to our success in the future.

Focus areas

BG Hogg endorsed four focus areas common to our three garrisons:

- (1) Well-Being (Quality of Life) to identify areas of improvements for each community
- (2) Installation Planning to develop lay-down of current and future needs for housing, barracks, schools, traffic flow, and service gap

(3) Funding/Common Levels of Service (CLS) to identify services that could be reduced if we have a significant budget shortfall

(4) Command Information and Communications to improve our customer and supporter relations both internally and externally.

While this is part of our overall strategic planning process, my intent is to take a 'common sense' approach to what we need to accomplish, and how we can accomplish these needs in the near-term.

We will implement our action plans quickly after receiving input on our results from the Senior Commander.

Not only must our 'Enterprise' work closely, it must communicate effectively with you, our customer, so you understand how we plan to keep Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Garmisch the premier garrisons in Europe.

AFAP

Similarly, our Enterprise held three separate AFAP conferences in the last weeks of February and our goal was allow our community and family members to identify local issues and concerns to improve the quality of life here.

With the Army Family Covenant in place, the AFAP Conference is a forum that will allow us to shape Army-wide support at the grass roots level to meet your needs.

The workgroups at our three conferences prioritized issues submitted by the community and they also listed the four most valuable services for us to use for planning future budgets.

Conference issues

The top five 2009 conference issues were Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) resources; prerequisite for USAREUR driver's license;

OCONUS career referral program; fitness center hours expansion; and school-age children and safety.

The next step

The next step is to send all of the issues from the workgroups (11 total) to the appropriate action officers for them to determine if they can be resolved locally or elevated to the IMCOM-Europe regional AFAP Conference in June.

A similar process takes place at that conference and if they cannot ultimately be resolved by IMCOM, they will be forwarded to Department of the Army for the process to be repeated here.

Our CAC, IPB, Enterprise strategic planning conference, and AFAP prove how much we all depend on each other for the good of the community.

Your duty

Each of us has the power to help and be involved which brings us to our most important topic as a community —suicide prevention. 'Shoulder to Shoulder, No Soldier Stands Alone' was the basis of our suicide prevention stand-down.

You are there for your fellow Soldiers, Family members and DOD Civilians, and the guide for suicide intervention is ACE: Ask your buddy; Care for your buddy; Escort your buddy.

You are there for your fellow Soldiers, Family members and DoD Civilians, and the guide for suicide intervention is ACE:

- **Ask your buddy**
- **Care for your buddy**
- **Escort your buddy**

... It is everyone's duty to intervene if they suspect someone is suicidal.

Our stand-down is the first phase of the Army's suicide prevention campaign, and the next phase begins after March 15, when we will begin our chain teaching.

We will be successful once we remove the stigma associated with asking for 'mental' health, and to achieve this requires educating everyone that seeking help is okay and is a sign of strength, not weakness.

It is everyone's duty to intervene if they suspect someone is suicidal.

Teamwork and support are about putting the good of others ahead of personal agendas and is what Army Strong means, and I believe our great community exemplifies Army Strong!

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

CSM CORNER



Help celebrate the many achievements of NCOs, Women's History Month

Year of the NCO

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command kicked off the "Year of the NCO" Feb. 26 at the Grafenwoehr Physical Fitness Center.



I had the distinct honor of participating in this event and cannot express the pride I felt as nearly 600 non-commissioned officers recited the NCO creed and affirmed the charge of the non-commissioned officer.

With over 200 years of service, the NCO Corps has distinguished themselves as the "backbone of the Army."

I have confidence that every NCO in our garrison has, and will continue, to embrace his role and maintain the high standards of professionalism

that has placed fear in our enemies and earned respect from our allies.

I extend my thanks to each and every NCO- job well done!

Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month. I invite everyone to join the garrison in celebrating March 27 at 11 a.m., at Bldg. 134 (next to the Kantina) in Vilseck.

This year's theme, "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet," highlights the contributions women have made in environmental studies.

Women, like Mollie Beattie, a forester, conservationist, and government official who was the first woman to head the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Beattie oversaw the successful reintroduction of the gray wolf into the northern Rocky Mountains.

To recognize her extraordinary work in the field of conservation, Congress named a wilderness area in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in her honor.

Others like Arlene Blum made contributions that continue to impact

our daily lives.

Blum, a bio-physical chemist

and environment activist, was instrumental in banning Tris and Fyrol, two cancer-causing chemicals used as flame retardants on children's sleepwear, and the pesticide DBCP.

Today, Blum is fighting the use of flame retardants in everyday products such as upholstered furniture.

Throughout our nation's history, women have been an integral part of our progress and success.

Take some time this month to remember the contributions of the

notable and ordinary women who have helped to shape our country.

I have confidence that every NCO in our garrison has, and will continue to embrace his role and maintain the high standards of professionalism that has placed fear in our enemies and earned respect from our allies.

We should also give thought to the more than 198,400 women who proudly serve in the military and those who forged the way for military accomplishments. **Military Saves**

The month of March also brings an end to Military Saves Week.

Military Saves Week ran from Feb. 22 to March 1 and focused attention on the benefits and ways to

increase financial stability and plan

for a secure financial future.

Although the week is over, I encourage everyone to continue saving money, and preparing for future financial needs.

Information on savings and finances can be found at Army Community Service, which offers the following classes:

- Basic Investing
- Understanding Mutual Funds
- Money Management Class
- Checking Account Maintenance
- Dumping Debt

Your thoughts are important

If you have any specific questions or issues you would like me to address in an upcoming column, contact The Bavarian News at DSN 475-7113.

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

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

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Driver's education course prepares teens for tests, driving challenges

Story and photo by
KIM GILLESPIE
USAG Grafenwoehr PAO

Kimberly Morris, 18, is looking forward to taking her driver's license test.

She may go home to Savannah, Ga., and get a stateside license first, but she knows she's now fully prepared to take the U.S. Army Europe test.

Morris, a Vilseck High School student, is taking a driver's education class that is part of an Installation Management Command-Europe program supported by Department of Defense Dependent Schools for teenagers of service members and Department of Defense civilians.

Teenagers who successfully complete the course receive a USAREUR Driver Education certificate, a half-semester high school credit, and it fulfills the 50-hour class training required by most driving certification agencies in the U.S.

Jim Mollo, a Netzaberg Middle School computer instructor contracted by DoDDS to provide driving instruction, spends two hours each Tuesday at the Netzaberg Child and Youth Services facility providing a combination of classroom instruction and computer simulated driving.

The students spend the initial classes learning the road signs and laws and taking practice tests.

They then move on to simulated driving. The driving simulator, which is only available to Mollo and his students, is a multi-panel monitor which includes a rear view mirror, side mirrors and the life-like perception of peripheral vision.

"In a real vehicle, you feel the weight of the car. You don't feel that here, but the scenarios are the same," Mollo said.

The scenarios include driving in the rain, in the fog, even on narrow mountain road and through busy traffic circles. Just like in real life, a driver may encounter a deer darting in front of the car.

The simulator provides instant feedback, which includes the severity of an accident. This feedback is then used by the instructor to analyze the student's performance throughout the course.

"It's like a video game, but the scenarios are real," Yvette Ybay, 17, said. Ybay also notes that Mollo is extremely patient when it comes to advising the students about their simulated driving which at times can be what Ybay describes as "scary."

"The key is for parents to take them out too," Mollo said.

While the students know they cannot get a driver's license in Germany until they turn 18, they are grateful for the driver's education program offered.



Vilseck High School student Anna Muzzy, 16, navigates the challenges of the road in the driver's education simulation under the guidance of instructor, Jim Mollo.

"The German driving school is 5,000 Euros. I took 2,000 Euros worth of lessons. You don't have driver's education in the schools like you do in the States," Morris said.

The IMCOM-Europe driver's education program is free. For more information about the program, contact the garrison's Child and Youth School Services office.

Training aid production moves to Grafenwoehr

Story and photo by
DENVER MAKLE
JMTC Public Affairs Office

The Training Aids Production Center at Grafenwoehr has opened its doors, and is a building like no other

on the Grafenwoehr Training Area. It smells like the average Home Depot or Lowe's back in the States.

There's the fragrance of sawdust in the big open bays where the technicians work.

The plastic targets Soldiers use

on the ranges for zeroing and firing qualifications are products that can be easily reproduced by the professionals that deal in plastics, aluminum, and wood.

As part of the JMTC's Training Support Activity Europe, the TAPC services training requests from seven countries and 18 cities, throughout Europe.

Technicians build training enablers for Soldiers preparing for deployments or special unit training. Training NCO's and officers can request products be custom-built.

The equipment is in place. The all local national-staff has been hired. There is only one American in the whole organization.

It's been a challenge, but the TAPC is ready for business.

Formerly known as the General Support Center, the TAPC was located in Roedelheim, Germany, about 15 minutes from Frankfurt am Main.

"Geographically, the Training Support Activity Europe provides support throughout the USAREUR area of responsibility.

The new Grafenwoehr location is centrally located allowing TSAE to optimize its support," said R. C. Claflin, chief of Training Support Activity Europe.

"Along those same lines there's an added benefit to being physically located at GTA, which will enable the production center to best meet our home-station and deployed training support and visual information requirements."

It was difficult when the Center was located in Roedelheim, Claflin said.

"The TAPC is a training support multiplier. It enables training tools that aren't in the Army inventory to be built in a timely manner, so Soldiers can get the most realistic and relevant training possible — a critical capability if we are to keep up with lessons learned from down range."

One unit needed a life-size Stryker vehicle — that mock-up now resides in the middle of the Joint Multinational Simulations Center.

Another unit in Italy needed a full-scale helicopter — that training tool is currently under production.

"Everything we produce is custom made. It doesn't matter how big or small the object," John Krollpfeiffer, the TAPC production chief.

"In the end, the Soldiers using our tools don't know where it comes from, or who made it. They simply focus on whether or not it works, and is realistic."

The JMTC trains Servicemen

and women from the United States military and allied nations using a suite of training tools; live, virtual and constructive, which are tailored to meet the needs of today's joint operations.

These training tools are designed to be sent anywhere, anytime.

The TAPC is Europe's sole provider of custom and non-traditional training aids.

"Two-and-3-D models, Stryker and HMMWV vehicles, mine and grenade replicas are a few of the items produced at TAPC," said John Krollpfeiffer, the TAPC production chief.

"No matter what we do; a box, a plastic weapon, a 3-D relief map, or printed poster — we are in business to help educate the soldier."

It's not the local Home Depot or Lowes; the unit doesn't have to build the training tool themselves.

The TAPC specializes in the design, production, and fabrication of non-standard (custom) training aids, models, displays, posters, exhibits, visual information services, or any other items that cannot be acquired from the Training Support Centers within United States Army Europe.

Units that would like to request TAPC services can contact any TSAE TSC in Europe by calling their local DSN + 1398.



TAPC is equipped to produce training aids for all varieties of missions, from road-side explosive devices to life size equipment.

COMMENTARY

Gunpowder, fate, support: Suicide 'survivor' shares story

The worst taste in the world is the gunpowder residue at the business end of a shotgun. Not so much because of the taste itself, but the reason why you're tasting it.

My now ex-wife and I had filed for divorce two days earlier and a loaded shotgun in my mouth was the best solution I could devise to express my deep sadness.

Whether sheer clumsiness, divine intervention or an unconscious moment of self-preservation, I lived despite pulling the trigger.

I was blessed - my little finger received the hammer strike instead of the firing pin - sparing my life.

That was nine years ago.

Today, I'm blessed by a closer relationship with God and a wonderful family.

I'd lie if I said I haven't thought about taking my life since that cold November morning.

Some bad news in the middle of a deployment

to Iraq led me down the familiar path of suicidal thoughts.

Fortunately, I had a great team of Soldiers by my side who knew me well and knew something wasn't right. Between them and the nearest chaplain, I was able to talk through my feelings, my thoughts and my options.

Ultimately, taking your own life should never be an option on the table, no exceptions.

Unfortunately, 143 Soldiers made the wrong choice in 2008, which works out to a rate of 20.2 suicides per 100,000 Soldiers and is the highest number since 1980 when the Army began tracking the figure. It's also higher than the national suicide rate - 19.2 per 100,000 people.

In response to a growing rate of suicide, the Army began using the ACE Suicide Intervention Program in 2008.

The acronym ACE stands for:

Ask your buddy - Have the courage to ask

the question, but stay calm, and non-judgmental. Ask the question directly, e.g. Are you thinking of killing yourself?

Care for your buddy -

Remove any means of self-injury. Control the situation in a calm way; force would only escalate the situation. And actively listen to your friend's concerns.

Escort - Never leave your friend alone, and escort him to the chain of command, a chaplain or a health care provider. Get him help.

Well before this program Soldiers across the force were doing just that. I'm proof positive that this method helps save lives. My friends knew me best and started asking questions - made sure I didn't do anything stupid and got me help.

Soldiers have many places to turn if they feel they've run out of options.

The best advice I can give to anyone who thinks they have run out of options - start talking. The more trusted people you talk to the better your chances of getting help and the better your chances for survival.

Editor's Note: The author's identity has not been disclosed at the author's request.

“... a loaded shotgun in my mouth was the best solution I could devise to express my deep sadness.”

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, contact:

- **Ansbach/Katterbach**
Military Police, CIV 0981-183-114
Behavioral Health Clinic, CIV 0981-183-853
- **Garmisch**
Military Police, CIV 750-23801/827
- **Grafenwoehr/Vilseck**
Military Police, CIV 09662-83-3397
Behavioral Health Clinic, CIV 09662-83-2995
- **Hohenfels**
Military Police, CIV 09472-83-2812
Social Work Services, CIV 09472-83-4625/4284
- **Schweinfurt**
Military Police, CIV 09721-96-114
Behavioral Health Clinic, CIV 09721-96-6231

Defense schools change requirements for early childhood education students

by SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY
American Forces Press Service

Young military children who thought the first day of school was imminent may not have to worry about reading, writing and arithmetic until next year because of a change in entrance age requirements.

The new rule, which goes into effect this fall with the start of the 2009-2010 school year, requires that students reach the pre-established age by Sept. 1.

Students must be 4 years old to enroll in pre-kindergarten or the Defense Department's Sure Start program. Kindergartners must be 5, and first graders, 6. Under current rules, children have to reach the above ages by Oct. 31.

The Department of Defense Education Activity made the change after research showed that 36 states require kindergartners to be 5 by Sept. 1 or earlier, Marc Mossburg, chief of curriculum for DODEA, said.

"This was done nationally for a variety of reasons, but it basically gives most kids a sure start in kindergarten and first grade," Mossburg said. "We did make the choice to align

We're trying to keep pace with the nation and trying to make sure our military kids have that advantage.

Marc Mossburg
DoDEA Chief of Curriculum

ourselves with the nation. We're trying to keep pace with the nation and trying to make sure our military kids have that advantage."

DODEA's decision to implement the change also was, in part, an effort to ease the transition of students who start in a defense school, but then transfer to a public school, Mossburg said.

"We wanted to make sure that our kids, if they go to kindergarten and they transfer to a first grade in the States, that they are ready to enter that first grade," he said.

Consequently, students who have completed a year at an accredited kindergarten and then transfer to a DODEA school can enroll in first grade regardless of whether they meet the age requirement, Mossburg said.

There are considerations for kindergartners who transfer after starting

school but before completing kindergarten, as well.

"We realize we deal with the military population. Our exceptions are based upon those families who [transfer] here and they've already started kindergarten," he said. "They're enrolled in kindergarten. They're going to kindergarten for a week, or a month, or six months and they're younger and they come into our [program], we don't say, 'Oh, you don't meet our [age requirement].'"

"We accept them, but that's where the exceptions are; those students whose parents are [transferring] during the school year," he added.

Mossburg knows that some parents and students eagerly awaiting that first day of school may be disappointed in DODEA's decision, but he's confident the change was made in the best interests of the students.

Lori Pickel, DODEA's acting early childhood coordinator, who has already encountered this situation, agrees. Her son didn't meet North Carolina's age requirement to start kindergarten when the military family was stationed in the state.

But, she said, how that realization affects students is really up to the parents.

"We all know that our kids' first teachers are parents," she said. "We set the stage in our attitude and the way we're going to accept it."

"You ... as the parent, have to choose: Is it going to be a positive or a negative?" she said.

Parents whose students don't meet the age requirements by Sept. 1 have options for their children, including the Defense Department's child development centers, Mossburg said.

The centers teach a developmental program like that used in DODEA's preschools.

In addition, if a parent feels their student can handle some advanced work, regardless of their age, DODEA offers parent guides by grade on its Web site.

The guides provide grade-appropriate standards and activities.

Spotlight on Education



Name: Lisa Zimmerman
What grade and subject do you teach? 5th grade, all subjects
Hometown: Pawtucket, R.I.

How long have you been a teacher? For 21 years, 19 of them with DoDDS

What do you enjoy most about teaching? Every year is different. Every day is a new day. You always have new kids and every kid has a different personality so you can't ever teach something the same way twice.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed? Don't quit. Don't give up on yourself. If you want to be successful, it takes work.

Students from Netzbarg Elementary School brave the snow to march in a Fasching Parade Feb. 20.

Photos by Mary Markos



RETIREE CORNER

Know what you need, where to go to file your income taxes

by DAVE STEWART
Graf Retiree Council president

Tax time is here and special issues surround retirees living in Germany as ordinary residents.

A tax treaty exists between the United States and Germany to protect against being taxed by both countries on the same income.

U.S. Social Security and certain pension and annuity benefits may qualify to be excluded from a U.S. tax return, but must be reported in order for the exclusion to be elected.

Also, interest earned on German bank accounts as well as investments are taxable and reportable items.

The Office of the SJA will assist eligible retirees and widows (ID Card holders) in preparing their U.S. tax returns.

These are the some of the forms to bring for the session:

- Social Security Administration Form (s) SSA 1099 for benefits received in '08.

- Statements of retired annuities received: 1099-R, i.e. military and if applicable civil service or NAF retirement, or life insurance and other annuities.

- Interest, Dividend and Miscellaneous 1099 forms that are usually issued by banks for interest, dividend and withdrawal payments, to include 1099-B statements for brokerage account transactions.

- Record of contributions to and withdrawals from 401Ks, TSP, IRAs, or other tax qualified retirement programs.

- Tax information for itemized deductions: home mortgage interest, real estate tax, medical expenses to include the cost of medical insurance and charitable contributions.

To set up an appointment in please call:

Grafenwoehr	09641-83-9258.
Vilseck	09662-83-2714
Hohenfels	09472-83-2836
Bamberg	09513-00-8261
Katterbach	09802-83-2104
Illesheim	09841-83-4511
Schweinfurt	09721-96-8286
Garmisch	09802-83-2104

DFAS representative returns to various locations across Europe

by DAVE STEWART
Graf Retiree Council president

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service Military Retired Pay section will have a representative visiting Grafenwoehr (in Bldg 244, Room 239) on 24 Apr 2009. They will service customers from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

If you are a U.S. military retiree or the surviving spouse of a retiree and are having any problems with your pay from DFAS make sure you pay us a visit during this time period.

Even if you have not been experiencing a pay problem the DFAS representative can do a face-to-face audit of your retired pay account with you and make any corrections or changes on-the-spot.

Some of the actions DFAS can help you with:

- (1) View retired Soldier's pay account
- (2) View annuitant's pay account
- (3) Change allotments
- (4) Change beneficiary information
- (5) Change mailing address
- (6) Change bank information
- (7) Change tax filing and withholding status
- (8) Reissue 1099-R for tax filing purposes.
- (9) Request copies of the Retired Account Statement

The DFAS dates for all of Europe are:

April 18, Stuttgart - (Bldg 2915) Panzer
April 20, Ramstein (Morning) RSO Office
April 20, Mannheim (Afternoon) CPF Bldg
April 21, Kaiserslautern (TBD)
April 22, Wiesbaden (AAF) RSO Office
April 23, Heidelberg (CPF Bldg) Shop Ctr
April 24, Grafenwoehr (Building 244) RSO Ofc
April 25, Schweinfurt - (Building 40) Conn Bks
June 6, Ansbach (Katterbach Kaserne)
June 8, Garmisch (Marshall Center)
June 9, Hohenfels (TBD)
June 10, Bamberg (Building 2970)
June 12, Vicenza (TBD)

The Bamberg Garrison will hold their annual Retirement Appreciation Day March 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It will be held in coordination with the Bamberg Community Health Fair. The event will be take place in the Freedom Fitness Facility on Warner Barracks in Bamberg. Services and agencies participating include TriCare; Veterans Administration; Legal Assistance; Customs; ID Card; and Nutrition Information.

Ceremony honors NCO Corps' achievements

by Spc. GERALD WILSON

JMTC Public Affairs

"No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as 'The Backbone of the Army.'"

These words from the NCO Creed rang out across the auditorium of the Grafenwoehr Fitness Center as more than 500 active and retired Soldiers gathered Feb. 26 to recognize the accomplishments of the Noncommissioned officer during the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Commands' kick-off ceremony for the Year of the NCO.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren announced last year that 2009 would be "the Year Of The Noncommissioned Officer." During 2009 the Army will celebrate the achievements of the NCO by showcasing the NCO story and honoring the sacrifices and achievements of the NCO Corps.

During the ceremony JMTC Command Sgt. Major Darius A. ZaGara gave a brief history of the

transformation of NCO from its conception during the Revolutionary War to the present.

ZaGara commended the NCO Corps for the level of professionalism it has displayed.

"Our NCOs today, from Command Sergeants Major on down have consistently proven themselves both within the Garrison environment and on the field of battle," he said. "You have earned the respect of your leaders, the nation you support and have won the respect and admiration of the citizens of the United States."

Highlighting the event was a parade of Soldiers chosen to wear period military uniforms, from the Revolutionary War to the present. Two of the NCOs chosen for this honor found the experience to be one they won't soon forget.

Leading the parade was Sgt. Kenneth Adams of the 7th Army JMTC Staff Judge Advocates office, who wore the uniform of an NCO from 1776. To Adams the role of the NCO is a dual-sided one. The NCO is both a servant and a leader.

"We serve our country, our commanders and we also serve our Soldiers," Adams explained. "At the

same time we are called to be the leaders of our Soldiers as well as trainers for the Army."

To Adams, being an NCO is an honor and something he has strived for since he enlisted six years ago.

"I grew up in the Infantry where being an NCO is a big deal," Adams said. "I really appreciate the opportunity I have had to lead Soldiers."

Adams said that the one thing he hopes his Soldiers have learned from him is to value integrity and take responsibility for everything that happens on their watch.

Staff Sgt. Anthony Vernon from JMTC Range Control portrayed a Civil War Soldier during the event.

"Celebrating the Year of the NCO basically honors the way we do things," he said. "We are always interacting with the Soldier on a hand-to-hand basis."

"This celebration shows us that they appreciate everything we have done and will continue to do in the future," Vernon said.

Both Adams and Vernon agreed that being an NCO is all about taking care of the Soldier.

"The Soldier is the number one priority to me," Vernon said. "Whether



Photo by Mary Markos

More than 500 active and retired Soldiers recite the NCO Oath Feb. 26 during the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr and the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Commands' kick off ceremony for the Year of the NCO.

it is a pay issue or training them up to come back safe from a deployment."

"If we look at the NCO Creed," he

said, "and live that on a daily basis, we can strive on to do bigger and better things."



Command Sgt. Major Mike Boom takes over for Cpl. Timothy Wells at a cake cutting ceremony honoring the Army's Year of the NCO Feb. 27.

Command sergeants major kick off Year of the NCO

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

Warhog Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Boom and U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Command Sgt. Maj. Perry Clark spoke to Soldiers at the garrison dining facility Feb. 27 about the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer.

The ceremony was a symbolic kick off for a year's worth of activities that will incorporate the theme, said Clark.

"Our NCOs have come a long way and done a whole lot. They make it all run. You just can't celebrate that in half an hour," Clark said about why these Soldiers deserve an entire year to be recognized.

"This is the way the Army says thank you for what you do, for the sacrifices you make. It has been a long time coming."

Both men spoke about the achievements

and importance of the NCO corps before Boom and Cpl. Timothy Wells, the newest garrison NCO, cut a cake decorated in honor of the celebration.

"The Army NCO corps is the reason for our Army's success and a model worldwide," said Boom. "You can see that here when we train troops at JMRC."

He explained that in today's fighting environment with many decentralized missions run at the platoon and squad levels, NCOs are critical to the success of the overall mission.

"They're out there taking care of Soldiers in the most austere conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, serving multiple tours," he said, adding that NCO spouses also need to be thanked for their sacrifices.

"NCOs reenlist over and over. And the Soldiers reenlist because they want to be like their NCO one day."

"We were always the unsung heroes, it's nice to finally get the recognition," said Wells.

The Army NCO Corps is the reason for our Army's success and a model worldwide.

Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Boom
Warhog Command Sgt. Major

Ansbach NCO uses leadership skills on both sides of the ring

by RONALD H. TOLAND Jr.

Bavarian News

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston said in a recent presentation that the noncommissioned officer is the glue that has holds the Army together.

Staff Sgt. Ian Jackson, a team chief and signal support specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment is part of that binding mixture.

Not only is he part of the larger Army team of NCOs, Jackson applies similar leadership concepts to his off-duty activities as the team captain of the Ansbach boxing team.

"I box because I like to beat people up in an organized manner," said Jackson. "It ties into me being an NCO because I am a driven person. I like to succeed - sports, work, whatever - and with that comes more responsibility."

Born in Newport News, Va., but calling Spanaway, Wash., home, the 33 year old was raised in a military household and is currently slated for drill sergeant school.

"I believe I was bred for the military," said Jackson. "My whole life is the Army - I go to the gym to stay in shape for the Army and work out three to four times a day, depending on what day it is."

With the highest Army Physical Fitness Test score in his shop - a 300 - Jackson said fitness is important.

"I tell my Soldiers, 'Your goal is to beat me, not for me to beat you.'"

He applies that same idea when sparring.

"Boxing keeps me in shape," said Jackson, and "I tell my teammates, 'I can take a harder

hit than that.'"

He says his teammates who came out to box are just as competitive as he is and want to win.

"Just like being in the Army, to make rank you want to take your correspondence courses, take

college classes and get promotion points. The same applies to boxing. If you want to win, you have to do the drills, make it to practice on time and give 100 percent in practice."

He said learning, leadership and competition were always present in his family. He used that

background to recently lead Ansbach to the Installation Management Command-Europe boxing tournament team title.

Jackson said he likes being a leader and hopes that idea rubs off not only on his team-mates, but on his Soldiers too.

"If you work hard at something, you can get what you want," he tells members of both groups. Being an NCO is one of the toughest jobs to have and for me it represents a great accomplishment. It's like boxing: if you work hard at it you'll win because you'll have trained harder than the other person."

Jackson certainly follows those words, according to his supervisor, Sgt. 1st Class Mark Duncan.

"He is a dedicated leader of Soldiers and a stellar example of 'Be, Know, Do,'" Duncan said.

"This NCO can be seen leading from the front - leading the battalion's color guard, leading the battalion through a 15-month deployment as the battalion information technology NCO in charge - and still finding time to consistently score over 300 on the APFT."

He also mentioned Jackson's extra-curricular activities and commended him on his accomplishments.

"He is a champion (U.S. Army Europe) boxer (2006 USAREUR heavyweight champion) and this NCO is what my corps is all about."



Staff Sgt. Ian Jackson (left) set up a jab followed by a right cross to stop his opponent at 0:30 seconds in the 2nd round Jan. 31.

Photo by Mary "Tweedy" Knief

Congressmen visit Marshall Center, convey tone of new administration

by YVONNE LEVARDI
Marshall Center PAO

After a whirlwind visit through Western Europe, Congressman John Tanner, D-Tenn., and nine other representatives arrived Feb. 20 at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

Their stop came after a week of meeting and briefings during the congressional recess.

"What is taking place here at the Marshall Center is exactly what we want to further in terms of democracy, human rights, rule of law," Tanner said.

"The Marshall Center is bringing people together here – maybe from countries who cannot or are not getting along. For individual citizens to come here, be able to have a dialogue, and be able to understand one another is exactly where the world has to go from this point forward," he said.

The delegation arrived Feb. 19, and visited the NATO school in Oberammergau, Germany – the first congressional visit ever to that school.

At the Marshall Center, they received the mission briefing and met with staff and faculty.

They also met with Mayor Thomas Schmid and signed the town's Golden Book. The book has signatures from notable visitors, including former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld visited the Marshall Center for its 10th anniversary in 2003.

The visits to the Marshall Center and NATO school culminated the quick recess week which saw the group start their week in Brussels, Belgium on Feb. 14.

"We tried to put as much into this recess week that we can for two reasons," Tanner said.

"One is to enhance our own personal knowledge base about what's going on here in Europe with respect to NATO, energy security, the global financial crisis, and the OSCE; but also because we think there is a window of opportunity with the new American administration to basically reenergize NATO.

"I think Vice President Biden said as much



Photo by Karlheinz Wedhorn

Dr. John P. Rose, Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, addresses the Congressional Delegation after their arrival to the Marshall Center.

in his speech in Munich, so we as members of Congress wanted to come as soon as we could and do as much as we could here in Europe to solidify that new tone."

Rep. Tanner was elected president of the 26-member nation NATO assembly in November, so the annual meetings in Brussels were the first stop for the group that also included Reps. John Boozman, R-Ark.; Jo Ann Emerson, R-Mo.; Baron Hill, D-Ind.; Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y.; Charlie Melancon, D-La.; Jef Miller, R-Fl.; Dennis Moore, D-Kan.; Mike Ross, D-Ark., and David Scott, D-Ga.

After meetings on topics including NATO's current political agenda, the Alliance's ongoing military operations including the mission in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and energy security, half the group visited NATO headquarters and met with the secretary general, Jaap de Hoop

Schaffer.

Others visited the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) headquarters and met with General John Craddock, SHAPE Commander Europe.

"We also met with the entire North Atlantic Council, (all of the member-nation ambassadors to NATO) and had a good meeting discussing Afghanistan, which is the largest out-of-area military expedition NATO has ever undertaken," Tanner said.

The delegation went to the European Commission for briefings on the world economic crisis, followed by a trip to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to discuss energy security issues as well as the global financial crisis.

"There's more to national security than just military might – there's also energy security and

financial security," Tanner said.

Both topics were addressed at the delegation's follow-on stop to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna. At the OSCE, Tanner, as president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, addressed parliamentarians from 56 member-nations.

Overall, Tanner hopes his delegation has been able to convey the new tone of the American administration to the NATO and OSCE parliamentarians in Brussels and Vienna.

"As the president said, 'We'll shake hands with anyone who'll unclench their fists,'" Tanner said.

"We're open for consultation and consideration – we want to know what they think and how we can work better together on the challenges we face both in the east as well as in Afghanistan."

The delegation returned to Washington, D. C., Feb. 21.

(Below) Kindergarteners Pearl Yocum (left) and Carolyn Brown, explain a display of "things with 100" to Stephene Moore (right) and Peachy Melancon, spouses of the Congressional Delegation, during a visit to Garmisch Elementary-Middle School Feb. 20.



Photo by John Reese

DOWNHILL ADVENTURE



Courtesy photo

When Garmisch Outdoor Recreation promises a "mini-bob" downhill event, the emphasis is on the mini. These racers were participating in the only event that had more than one person careening down the slope of the Hausberg Feb. 28. The garrison's Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation team hosted the Ski, Board and Bob Spectacular to keep the annual event alive, and the mini-bob race turned out to be exciting and hilarious.

**NEED COVERAGE FOR AN EVENT OR
HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?**

Call the Garmisch Public Affairs Office
at DSN 440-3701 and tell us about the
issues that matter to you.

Garmisch hosts AFAP conference

by DORIS TYLER and
KARI SHARPE

Special to the Bavarian News

Garmisch held its first Army Family Action Plan Conference Feb. 25-26 at the Pete Burke Community Center on Artillery Kaserne.

Twenty delegates, including Soldiers, family members, civilians and retirees representing the garrison, the George C. Marshall Center, the NATO School and the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort spent two days reviewing 39 issues submitted by community members.

Delegates split into two groups to read and discuss the issues. They questioned numerous experts before selecting their top five issues to present to garrison manager Karin Santos.

"Being a part of AFAP at any level is a great way to see how the Army

is trying to take care of, and hear the collective voice of the Soldiers, Family Members, and Civilians that make today's Army," said Shelley Stokes, a conference staff member who served in January as a delegate at the Department of the Army's AFAP Conference held in Alexandria, Va.

The Garmisch AFAP Steering Committee, a group charged with reviewing and addressing the issues presented or if necessary forwarding them to the appropriate level for consideration and resolution, will meet regularly to track and report on progress.

Historically Garmisch has forwarded any AFAP issues for inclusion in higher command level AFAP conferences.

"This year's conference clearly reflected the grass roots level of the AFAP program and that no community

is too small to benefit from the process," said Patty Pearce, another conference staff member.

Army Community Service, sponsor of the conference, thanked the community members who submitted their issues to take advantage of the opportunity to make their voices heard higher up the chain of command. ACS also expressed gratitude to the devotion of the delegates, subject matter experts, and the conference staff and volunteers, saying their efforts can make a lasting positive impact upon the Garmisch community.

The AFAP Conference will be an annual event and ACS collects issues throughout the year.

Community members with ideas to improve the community or questions can contact the Garmisch ACS at DSN 440-3777, CIV 08821-7503777 for more information.



Photo by John Reese

Freddy Osorio facilitates the delegates' discussion of AFAP issues at the USAG Garmisch Conference. The conference took place Feb. 25-26 on Artillery Kaserne.



Spc. Christopher Bockhol (left) greets his daughter Sophia after a ceremony Feb. 27 welcoming Team Cherokee back from Afghanistan. The Soldiers performed both humanitarian and combat missions during their eight-month deployment to the country.

Photo (below) by Spc. Alex Godinez



Photo by Troy Darr

Team Cherokee returns from Afghanistan mission

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

After more than eight months away from their families and friends, Team Cherokee has returned to Hohenfels proud of the job they did to help the people of Afghanistan, but saddened by the four comrades who will not be returning to their loved ones.

"My instinct when we left was to bring everyone back, though unfortunately that didn't happen," said Capt. Terry Howell, commander of C Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and Team Cherokee.

Pfc. Tan Ngo, 20, was killed Aug. 27, 2008 by an initial burst of fire when insurgents attacked his convoy in Zabul Province.

Maj. Brian Mescall, 33, Cpl. Joseph

Hernandez, 24, and Sgt. Jason Parsons, 24, were all killed Jan. 9 when an improvised explosive device hit their vehicle.

"They all gave their lives for a reason," said Howell. "If it was me I would want my family to understand that I died for a cause and that it was a good cause."

The team also had many injured Soldiers and numerous troops are still in the United States recovering from their wounds.

He said the cause those Soldiers and the entire company was working toward while supporting Task Force Zabul and the International Security Assistance Force included many humanitarian missions.

The 1-4 Soldiers not only patrolled their area of operations for enemy

activity, but also spent countless days establishing schools and health clinics, distributing winter wheat and farm equipment, and helping health care providers treat diseases in adults and children.

"If we win the hearts and minds of the population, especially of the young people and children by doing things like giving out shoes in the winter when they don't have them, they will remember that the enemy is not doing that for them, we are. That is going to stay in their minds," said Howell.

His Soldiers agree.

"I think they know we mean well," Pvt. Chase Bradford said of the Afghan people he met.

"Just because they don't have much now doesn't mean they should have to grow up in a country where they

will never have anything," said Spc. Daniel Dennis.

Howell said many of the humanitarian projects utilize the Afghans themselves as contractors.

That way, for example, they are not only getting a new community center, but are learning how to build their community at the same time.

Part of making sure people can have hope for their future comes not just from humanitarian assistance now, but also from providing them with a safe environment in which to build that future, a task 1st Lt. Larry Baca said Team Cherokee focused heavily on.

Baca said 1-4 Soldiers helped train and mentor the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, which he thinks was one of their most important missions.

"We assisted the Afghan forces in retaining a government presence in each of our areas and used our additional manpower to help them stabilize the region," he said.

Though Afghanistan may not be dramatically different because of the time Team Cherokee spent there performing humanitarian and combat missions, Howell and other soldiers said their efforts were meaningful.

"Attacks on villages in our footprint have pretty much ceased. We've prevented attacks on children. We got to the point where we can give them things, like wheat or shoes, without the enemy coming and using or destroying it," Howell said.

He said there might still be a long way to go, but even so, "we have done tremendous things."

Former Hohenfels safety manager dies

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Franz Greiner, retired local national safety manager for the Combat Maneuver Training Center and 282nd Brigade Support Battalion safety office, passed away on Jan 22. He was 69 years old.

Greiner lived in Adertshausen where he resided after retiring as a local national employee for the U.S. Army.

A funeral service was held on Feb. 6 at the St. Katherine Cemetery Chapel in Amberg.

Greiner was the CMTC and 282nd BSB Hohenfels safety manager from 1982 to 1994.

His colleagues describe him as an immensely successful safety manager for the CMTC/282nd BSB. While Greiner was Hohenfels safety manager, the CMTC/282nd BSB won the 7th Army Training Command commanding general's safety award for fiscal years 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991.

"Franz was well respected by everyone at CMTC Hohenfels," said Dan Voglesong, U.S. Army Garrison safety manager.

"He was a very well-liked, nice man and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family."

Greiner is survived by his wife Gertraud; his children Markus, Roman, and Beate; and his brothers Maximilian and Gebhard.



Creative Solutions

Left to right: Derek Ray, Jordan Markham, and Robert Evans perform a skit they wrote about "The Lost Labor of Heracles" Feb. 21 during the annual Odyssey of the Mind competition hosted by Hohenfels Elementary School. Zoe Abner, Lauren Fisher, Eliana Reagin, and Kevin Brazie made up the rest of the fourth- and fifth-grade team that earned second place in their division. According to Kathleen McMillan, educational technologist at the Elementary School and coordinator of the event that was attended by teams from Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Garmisch, and Schweinfurt, Odyssey of the Mind is an international competition in which students select a problem then work to present their creative solution to a panel of judges against teams with the same problem and in the same division. Winners from the Bavarian regional competition will advance up through the levels of competition with the eventual possibility of attending the world competition held in the United States.

Photo by Kristin Bradley

Hohenfels training area travels to Fort Bragg

by DAVE MELANCON
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

The Joint Multinational Readiness Center's Operations Group is taking on the largest mission and most complex road trip in its history.

For the first time, the Ops Group, as it is known here, joined by two company-sized elements and a battalion headquarters from the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry and operators and analysts from the Instrumentation Training Analysis Computer Simulations and Support team, traveled to the U.S. this month to train Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.

About 600 members of the JMRC are participating in the monthlong mission, said Maj. Andrew Tackenberg, Ops Group operations planning officer.

The unusual JMRC rotation is

testing the JMRC's exportable training capability, Tackenberg said.

"We are taking the JMRC and our Expeditionary Instrumentation System and its capabilities to Fort Bragg," said Maj. Brad Eungard, the Ops Group's logistics officer. "We're making the Fort Bragg training area a Hohenfels (training area) box."

While the Ops Group's observer/controllers, trainers, opposing forces and civilian role-players, analysts and technicians usually train units bound for peacekeeping missions or combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, as the Army's rapid reaction force, the 82nd's 2nd Brigade is always on alert for missions worldwide and cannot leave Fort Bragg to train, he said.

Moving more than 600 people and the JMRC's EIS put the group's logistics section to the test, Eungard said.

"So now, instead of just sending a

team, we are taking this headquarters, which is a first," he said. "We are taking all of our analysts to Fort Bragg and doing everything there."

The computers, generator, tents and other major pieces of equipment were packed in December, he said. The equipment was inspected in Hohenfels in early January to ensure it met U.S. Department of Agriculture standards for cleanliness, and radios were checked to meet U.S. frequency specifications. Some equipment had to be modified to use American 110-volt power rather than the German 220-volt standard.

By mid-January the gear was ready to be hauled by truck to the German port of Bremerhaven. The Fort Bragg contracting office provided help with making arrangements and contracts, Eungard said.

All that is just a small portion of the equipment the Ops Group will use on

the mission, Eungard said.

While the bulk of the EIS travels by sea, the first human elements of the mission left for the States Feb. 16 via commercial charter flights.

The team arrived at Fort Bragg Feb. 23 and is setting up and testing the systems so training can begin March 2.

When it does hit the road for training sites in Germany or Bulgaria, the EIS, opposing forces and ITACCS technicians travel with only enough equipment to train a battalion-sized unit, Eungard said.

Moving so much equipment and so many people usually involves a brigade-level logistics section backed up by a support battalion and its resources, the major added.

The Ops Group and its logistics section, with support from U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels logisticians, tackled the assignment during several unit training rotations and holiday leave, he said.

While the amount of equipment is not enormous, Eungard said, the biggest challenge for the mission was that the contingent -- the full Ops Group headquarters and the majority of the ITACCS team -- had not deployed before en masse.

"This is the first time we will be doing a brigade-sized unit solely with the Expeditionary Instrumentation System," said Daniel Hoeh, ITACCS director. "We have used it to train battalions as a subset of the main instrumentation system."

The system tracks Soldier and vehicle movement throughout the training area, records "hits and misses" and collects radio communications among Soldiers, the leaders and units. Video equipment monitors the action. All this information is then compiled

by the ITACCS team and given to the observer/controllers and others, who use it to prepare and conduct after-action reviews with the units that participated in the training.

The entire equipment package will fill a "small parking lot, about 100 feet by about 100 feet," Hoeh said, and includes three containers filled with instruments used for tracking vehicles, monitoring radio traffic and collecting and storing video information, as well as three containers that serve as work space for the team's analysts.

"This will be the first time we have taken this system out of Europe," Hoeh said.

It took about 4,000 hours to get the system cleaned, packed and ready for shipment to the United States, Hoeh said.

"This mission to Bragg will give us and the Army a chance to see what it takes for this type of mission to become routine," he said.

Observers from Army Training and Doctrine Command's combat training center directorate and the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., will evaluate the exercise for its "efficiencies and effectiveness," Hoeh said, so the Army can consider establishing ITACCS systems at its other training centers.

The OPS group, OPFOR and ITACCS teams are expected to begin returning to Germany in late March, he said.

"This is the first undertaking for a unit this large for the Joint Multination Readiness Center," Hoeh said. "We want to do it well. We are going there to train one of the elite brigades and we want to provide them with a good training event."

“We’re making the Fort Bragg training area a Hohenfels (training area) box.”

Maj. Brad Engard
JMRC Ops Group's Logistics Officer



U.S. Army photo

The Instrumentation Training Analysis Computer Simulations and Support team from U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany sets up the Expeditionary Instrumentation System to train Soldiers of the 172nd Infantry Brigade at a German army training center in Hammelburg.

Guard, Reserve Soldiers train at JMRC for Kosovo mission

by DAVE MELANCON
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

Just three months after returning to the United States from a 15-month tour in Iraq with the 29th Infantry Division, Spc. Sean Evans of the California Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 185th Armor jumped at the opportunity to deploy again.

However, instead of shipping out for another tour in Iraq, the infantryman joined about 1,300 other members of the California Guard's 40th Infantry Division for a 10-month peacekeeping mission to Kosovo as part of KFOR-11, the 11th iteration of the Kosovo Force mission. The task force also includes Guard members from Alaska's 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation; Maryland's C Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Air Ambulance; West Virginia's 753rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company; and the U.S. Army Reserve's 176th Medical Group from Garden Grove, Calif.

Task Force Falcon prepared for their deployment during a mission rehearsal exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center here from Jan. 22 to Feb. 15, and deployed to Kosovo shortly afterward. The task force is scheduled to assume responsibility for the KFOR mission from the Missouri Army National Guard in mid-March.

The Los Alamitos, California-based 40th led the Kosovo mission in 2005. U.S. forces have conducted the KFOR rotations, called Operation Joint Guardian, since 1999.

While the basic mission in Iraq and Kosovo is the same -- to help people build their country in a safe and secure environment -- the attitude and stance Soldiers carry with them to Kosovo requires them to remain alert, but they will not always be on edge.

"I am going from straight-legged (infantry) -- humping and driving in a Humvee turret in Iraq -- to a completely different mind-set in a non-violent area," Evans said. "You're not expecting mortar attacks, so you do not have to keep your IBA (interceptor body armor) on all the time. You'll keep your weapon slung on your back. You're out there in the towns with the civilians and talking with them."

Evans said his unit's change in perspective began during the task force's training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., in December. Simulated street

patrols were less confrontational and more relaxed, he said. Instead of looking for improvised explosive devices and snipers, he and his fellow Soldiers learned to observe a community's day-to-day routine and to prepare reports on those observations for their leaders.

The Soldiers also trained for detainee operations, learning personal defense -- including unarmed self-defense, using non-lethal weapons -- and familiarized themselves with the Albanian and Serbian languages.

Instead of training for raids and convoy support operations, they studied and practiced crowd control, using shields, batons and other non-lethal weapons, Evans said.

"We were constantly on the alert. We were running raids and other missions during the entire day," Evans said of his unit's training for Iraq. "We were not in the attack mind-set [training for Kosovo]."

Evans' change in outlook is typical for many KFOR-bound Soldiers who train at JMRC, and his attitude reflects the Task Force Falcon mission, said Col. Philip Butch, the task force's deputy commander for civil and military operations.

"Some of these Soldiers have been in an insurgency environment where people are trying to kill them," the colonel said. "Soldiers are not getting killed in Kosovo, nor are they getting blown up. So the mind-set we give these Soldiers right off the bat is to treat everyone with dignity and respect."

One reflection of that new reality is that Butch's 16-Soldier CMO team will work with the international community organizations such as the Office of Security and Cooperation Europe, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, local civic and political leaders, and non-governmental and private humanitarian organizations.

Soldiers are in the country in a supporting role, Butch said. They will use Kosovo's institutions and help local leaders to support the nation-building process.

The Guard troops have one advantage over the active Army counterparts that they will exploit in Kosovo, Butch added.

"We want to leverage the National Guard's civilian skill sets," he said. "We have Soldiers that have a wide variety of civilian occupations that will blend in well in this environment. We

bring a wealth of knowledge from working in the civilian sector: bankers, sociologists, law enforcement and agriculture."

Kosovo is new country with new constitution and a very young population, and its development will take time, the colonel said.

"This is going to be a long process," he said. "It is going to take a generation to get these youth on the right track, and part of that is to have good prospects for jobs."

The ongoing global economic recession will add to the challenges facing the task force, he said.

During their month at Camp Atterbury under the guidance of the 205th Training Brigade, members of the task force focused upon building relationships with the people of Kosovo, Butch said. Contractors, many recent Serb and Albanian immigrants, acted as role-players, forcing the Soldiers to practice an important skill -- communicating through interpreters.

"You're not talking to the interpreter, you're

talking to the person you're talking to," Butch said. "Nation-building is building a good solid rapport with the residents of Kosovo -- Albanian and Serb."

Trainers emphasize how to conduct proper engagements with Kosovars, he said, including managing their weapons posture and body language to the point of suppressing the Californian urge to wear sunglasses.

The "bilateral training" at Hohenfels focuses on junior Soldiers and leaders who will have "big jobs" demonstrating the values of America and its Army to Kosovars, he said.

"About 99 percent of our contacts will be at the squad level -- at the Soldier level," Butch explained. "In this day and age, an E4 (a junior Soldier) can have strategic implications by what he says or by what he does, or what he fails to do."

The bottom line, Butch said, is that Soldiers will keep their minds on safety and security, but their primary focus is on helping people.



Photo by Sgt. Darriel J. Swatts

A Soldier from the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division observes activity in a simulated village in Kosovo during a multinational training exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels.

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

FRG meetings

The USAG Grafenwoehr Command established the first Tuesday of each month as a designated Family Readiness Group Meeting Day.

To further assist families in attending FRG meetings, child care facilities will also extend hours of operation on the first Tuesday of each month.

Tax centers are open

Scheduled appointments and walk-ins are available daily, with extended hours several days a week.

In Graf, call DSN 475-9258, CIV 09641-83-9258, in Vilseck DSN 476-2714, CIV 09662-83-2714 for more.

Bellamy Brothers to perform

Join us for the Bellamy Brothers concert March 24 at 7 p.m. in the Memorial Gym on Rose Barracks. Following the show, stay for a meet and greet.

For more information on the Bellamy Brothers, who have released more than 40 pop and country albums, visit their website at <http://www.bellamybrothers.com>.

Graf & Vilseck blood drives

Conducted by the Armed Services Blood Bank Center - Europe, based at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, and sponsored by 2SCR.

All blood collected by the Armed Services Blood Program is from the military community and stays in the military community. All Community Members are invited. Invite your spouse, friend, family member.

Make an appointment for donation at www.militarylifeforce.com

April 8: Grafenwoehr Community Blood Drive at the Field House, Bldg. 547, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

April 9: Vilseck Community Blood Drive at the Rose Barracks Memorial Gym, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Youth skiing

CYSS offers weekly ski trips to Mehlmeisel ski slope Wednesday afternoons for youth 8-10 years of age, and Friday evening for youth 11-18.

For more, call DSN 476-4037, CIV 09662-83-4037.

Travel opportunities

To sign-up for these trips, call Vilseck ITR DSN 476-2563, CIV 09662-83-2563, or Graf ODR DSN 475-7402, CIV 09662-83-7402.

- Salzburg, Austria, March 13-15
- Barcelona, Costa Del Sol, Granada and Seville, Spain & Avignon, France,

April 3-12

- Euro-Disney and Paris, April 6-9
- Mosel Wine and Medieval Castles, May 1-3
- Cinque Terre, Pisa, and Lucca Italy, May 21-25

ODR ski trip

A trip is being offered to Zillertal Ski Safari, March 13-15.

Call Rose Barracks ODR at DSN 476-2563, CIV 09662-83-2563, or Graf ODR at DSN 475-7402, CIV 09641-83-7402 for more.

VFW news

The Grafenwoehr VFW hosts an Open House every Wednesday at 6 p.m. Business meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Vilseck VFW holds an Open VFW night Thursdays for members and those curious, held at Bldg. 133 (located behind Vilseck Fire Station) 6-10 p.m. There will be food, fun, and cards.

POC is Commander, James Holliman 0160-91423858, or Sr. Vice Commander Roger Schneider 0160-95877025.

KONTAKT Club

Check out your local German-American friendship organization, KONTAKT Clubs in Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and Amberg.

For more, call DSN 475-8885, CIV 09662-83-8885, or DSN 475-1600, CIV 09641-83-1600. Or visit: <http://www.kontakt-vilseck.de>

Employment Readiness

ACS Employment Readiness Program offers weekly e-mails of jobs available within USAG Grafenwoehr.

Attend Resumix preparation and Interview Skills classes at Rose Barracks and East Camp. Individual counseling is available. Call ACS at Vilseck CIV 09662-83-2650 or Graf CIV 09641-83-8371.

Langenbruck Center events

- Karaoke Night, Friday, 6 p.m. at The Zone Sports Bar
- Indulgence Night Bunco March 18 at 6 p.m. Join us for an evening of fun, food and friendly chatter. Win gift cards and other great prizes. Call CIV 09662-83-2360 to reserve your seat.

Youth Sports registration

CYSS Spring Sports registration runs thru March 20 or until rosters fill up. YS Sports includes T-Ball (3-5, 6-7 years), Baseball (Coach Pitch 8-9, Player Pitch 10-12, 13-15) and Softball (10-12, 13-15). Soccer will be offered for 3-15 year olds.

Parents can sign up at either Central Registration Office in Grafenwoehr or Rose Barracks.

Special Olympics

The annual Kaiserslautern Special Olympics Spring Games will be held on Wednesday, 6 May, at the German police training center, Bereitschaftspolizei, in nearby Enkenbach.

Many hundreds of persons are needed as volunteers for this event, including more than 700 Buddies to the athletes.

Beyond Buddies, there are other areas where volunteers are still being added. If you wish to volunteer as a Buddy or for another position, please do so as soon as you know your availability for the event on May 6. Contact Larry_Zani@compuserve.com

Identity theft

Identity theft is a problem around the world. Think you're not at risk? Unfortunately you are. Do you hand your credit cards to servers? Do you sign your credit cards? Do you supply personal information over the internet?

If you can answer yes to one of these questions, contact Mr. DuJon Moss, Certified Identity Theft Risk Management Specialist at 0162-736-7148 to find out more about identity theft and to schedule him to speak at your next meeting.

Clinic appointments

You can now book your Vilseck Health Clinic appointments for you and your entire family from the comfort of your own home by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://www.tricareonline.com/welcome.do>
2. Click to agree to the terms and conditions
3. Click Register with TOL
4. Fill in the appropriate information for each family member

Estate claims

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of SPC John S. Jeffries of 41st CTC, 18th CSSB, should contact the following summary court martial officer, 1LT James C. Simmons at DSN: 476-5120 or email james.c.simmons@us.army.mil.

New MPA program

University of Maryland announces its Master of Public Administration Program, a 36 credit professional graduate degree, in Vilseck.

Call DSN 476-2462/6106, CIV 09662-83-2462/6106 for more.

Hohenfels Briefs

Parental support

The New Parent Support Program has a mission to provide you the best information, guidance and tips to be great parents. It's only natural for expecting parents to be excited and apprehensive about such a big change in their lives. The NPSP staff will come right to your home to help you understand what is happening and what will happen after the birth.

Call DSN 466-4073 for an appointment.

English as a second language

Looking for a little help with English as your second language and don't know where to turn? The Relocation Readiness Program at ACS is providing assistance with ESL for Soldiers and spouses in multiple forms including on-line, in-person tutor and special DVD, each designed to allow you to move along at a comfortable pace.

Call ACS at DSN 466-4860 for more information.

Victim advocate

Spouse or sexual abuse is behavior not consistent with Army values. If an incident occurs, you have 24/7 assistance. Call 0162-296-1075.

Volunteer of the Year

The Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony is fast approaching. ACS is asking for nominations for the Volunteer of the Year, 2008.

The Garrison would like to provide suitable recognition to community volunteers who have really made a difference. You may nominate a volunteer from your specific organization and also nominate for the top 6 categories: Youth Volunteer of the Year, Active Duty Volunteer of the Year, Civilian Volunteer of the Year, Family Member Volunteer of the Year, Family of the Year, and Host Nation

Volunteer of the Year.

Nomination forms are available at ACS, Bldg 10. Or contact lori.stames@eur.army.mil to have forms emailed to you.

Confidential counseling

Military and Family Life consultants are licensed psychologists and social workers who rotate from the states in four to six week tours to be here to talk one on one about what's bothering you. Absolutely no names or records kept. Sessions are free and fully confidential. For an appointment, contact them directly on their cell phones at 01522-422-1454 or 0160-220-5610. Suspected harm to self or others will be reported to the appropriate agency.

March Bunco

Enjoy a night of indulgences beginning at 6:30 p.m. Friday at the Zone, Bldg. 150. Feel free to dress up like your favorite Sex in the City actress. Win great prizes, meet new friends, sample great food and beverages. Don't miss the fun and a chance to win great prizes from Best Buy, William-Sonoma, SpaFinder.com, iGourmet and more.

Call DSN 466-2060/2241 to reserve your seat or just show up with your friends and have a great time.

Free movies

Free at the Community Activities Center: Tomorrow- Punisher: War Zone, 7 p.m. (R)
Friday- The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, 7 p.m. (PG-13)

Youth Sports enrollment

Registration is now underway for all Youth Sports and Fitness spring sports. Offered this spring will be Start Smart Baseball for ages 3-5, baseball for ages 6-15, girls' softball for ages 10-15, soccer for ages 6-15, track and field for ages 8 and up, and tennis for ages 8-15. Cost for enrollment range from \$35-50 depending on the sport. Enrollment will continue through Friday, and a late fee will apply after that date. Parents may enroll their children at the CLEOS office located in Bldg. 10. For more, call DSN 466-2078. All players must have a valid sports physical through June 19.

Coaches needed

Adults that can provide positive instruction, leadership and supervision to children and youth ages 3 to 15 are needed to serve as coaches for a variety of spring sports. The Youth Sports and Fitness office is in need of 10 baseball coaches, 3 softball coaches, 12 soccer coaches, and 2 tennis coaches, 2 track and field coaches, and 1 Start Smart baseball coach. All coaches are needed by March 13th to ensure they receive proper training. Excellent training and instruction will be provided. Great

discounts are available for the children of coaches who are enrolled to participate in sports.

For more information call DSN 466-2558 or go to the Youth Sports and Fitness office in Bldg. 94.

ODR ski trips

Let ODR do the driving and enjoy a quick winter getaway to the Bavarian Alps. The Winklmoosalm mountain community in Reit im Winkl, Germany, offers alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, hiking in the snow and much more. The remaining one-day trips are scheduled for March 21, 24, and 28; April 4 and 18. A new, reduced price of \$20 for adults, \$15 for children, and \$15 each for groups of 5 or more, is now available. The cost includes transportation only. Outdoor Recreation has new equipment rental available for \$15 per day for adults.

For more or to make reservations call ODR at DSN 466-2060.

Lenten fish fry

Come have some fun with the kids and others from the community. Join others for food, fun, and games at the Hohenfels Religious Community Lenten Fest and Fish Fry March 14 from 2-5pm at the Hilltop Chapel Center. Bingo will begin at 2 p.m. followed by the Fish Fry. Watch care will be available for children 3 years of age and under. All are welcome at this fun event. For more information contact the Hilltop chapel center at DSN 466-1570.

Red Cross classes

March 21: CPR from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., ACS conference room.

March 24-26: Babysitter's training from 3-5 p.m., details to be announced.

March 28: First Aid from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., ACS conference room. Cost is \$30 for First Aid, \$35 for CPR, or \$40 for both. Additional course dates are available in Vilseck.

KONTAKT Club

Check out your local German-American friendship organization, KONTAKT Club in Hohenfels.

Upcoming activities include:

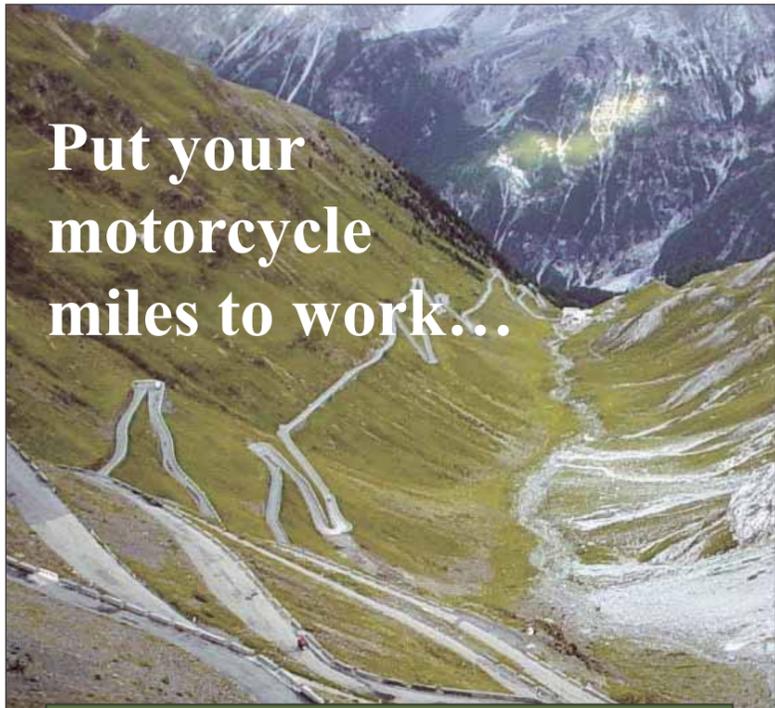
March 4: Bowling Night from 7-9 p.m. at Lane 17 next to the CAC.

March 6: Line Dancing at CYAC, Bldg. 743, located across from the Commissary at 7 p.m.

March 18: Monthly club Stammtisch at Josef's Tavern in Hohenfels beginning at 7 p.m.

March 20: Karaoke and Game Night. Bring your voice and your favorite board game to Mayer's German Kantine, Bldg. 36, beginning at 6 p.m.

For more or for directions call the Public Affairs Office at DSN 466-4294, or visit the club's website at www.kontakt-hohenfels.com.



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If you're an experienced rider with a clean driving record, good riding and interpersonal skills, we want you to teach our Basic and Experienced Rider Courses.

The next Coach Preparation Course will be at USAG Grafenwoehr April 13-24.



To register, go to: http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/management/so_atstp.asp
For more, call DSN 370-7788, CIV 06221-57-7788

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I.C.E. WEBSITE
<http://ice.disa.mil>

What's Happening

Ansbach Briefs

AER campaign

The Ansbach Army Emergency Relief Campaign runs tomorrow - May 15. Kickoff takes place tomorrow at noon at the Katterbach Dining Facility and Tuesday at noon at the Storck Barracks Dining Facility.

For more or to contribute to AER, call DSN 467-2553, CIV 09802-83-2553.

Bone marrow drive

The Katterbach Health Clinic hosts a bone marrow drive Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Participants will only give a cell sample at the drive. Samples are taken using a swab and no needles are involved.

People who are currently restricted from giving blood can still provide a sample for the bone marrow drive.

DFAC hour change

The Shipton Kaserne Dining Facility recently changed its hours. The facility is open from 7-8:30 a.m. for breakfast, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. for lunch, and closed for dinner. Facility also open for weekend brunch and supper.

College registration ongoing

The Ansbach Education Center encourages the community to start earning their degrees now. On-site registration for classes goes on now through March 20.

Visit your Education Center at Katterbach Bldg. 5818 or call DSN 467-2817, CIV 09802-83-2817, at Storck Bldg. 6503 or call DSN 467-4750, CIV 09841-83-4750.

Ski trip

Ansbach ODR offers a four-day ski trip to Kaprun Friday-Monday. Cost is \$325 for a three-night stay, breakfast, dinner, transportation and guide services. For information, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Parents Day Out

Katterbach and Storck Barracks Child Development centers and School Age Services host Parents Day Out in March, May, June and July. The day gives parents a break by offering child care on the designated Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Katterbach hosts days Saturday and June 27, while Storck days May 16 and July 25. Dates and times are subject to change.

For more, at Katterbach call DSN

467-2533, CIV 09802-83-2533, at Storck call DSN 467-4880, CIV 09841-83-4880.

Free fitness classes

Ansbach fitness centers offer free fitness classes that include Pilates, indoor cycling, muscle power and more. Certified fitness instructors offer group exercise programs at the Bunch Fitness Center at Storck Barracks and the Katterbach Fitness Center.

For more call DSN 468-7311, CIV 0981-183-311.

Weight loss support

The Storck Barracks Yellow Ribbon Room hosts a weight loss support group Wednesdays 6-7:30 p.m. and Fridays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

The group is open to all community members. It features weight loss topics, advice, meal ideas, healthy recipes, positive reinforcement, fitness information, and more.

Call DSN 467-4555, CIV 09841-83-4555 for more.

Book club

Ansbach community libraries host monthly book clubs on a book a month.

The Storck Library's next meeting is Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m. The book is Betty Smith's "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn."

The Bleidorn Library's next meeting is March 18, 6-7 p.m. The book is Alexander McCall Smith's "The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency."

For more at Storck call DSN 467-4675, CIV 09841-83-4675, or Bleidorn call DSN 468-1740, CIV 0981-183-1740.

Baseball officials clinic

Ansbach CYS Sports Office hosts a baseball officials clinic March 21, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. for those interested in becoming an umpire for the upcoming season.

The office is in Barton Barracks Bldg. 5284. Little League certification and NAF contracts will be provided. Call DSN 468-7866, CIV 0981-183-866.

'High School Musical'

The award-winning Terrace Playhouse presents Disney's "High School Musical-On Stage" March 25, 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Ansbach Middle/High School.

Tickets cost \$9 for adults, \$7 for students, and \$20 for a family. Call DSN 468-7636, CIV 0981-183-636.

Now hiring

The Franconian Inn on Bismarck Kaserne is hiring clerks who can work nights and weekends. The starting pay is \$8.44 an hour. For more, go to <http://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/eur/index.htm>

and search keyword Desk Clerk.

Applications or resumes can be brought to the NAF advisory center, Room 313, Bldg. 5254 Barton Barracks, or call DSN 468-7822 or CIV 0981-183-822.

MCEC hiring

The Military Child Education Coalition is hiring cadre members for Parent 2 Parent teams. 10-15-hour part time positions are available in Ansbach, Bamberg, Baumholder, Heidelberg, Mannheim and Schweinfurt.

Cadre staff consist of parents with personal experience and a strong commitment to education and military children. Professional training is provided and cadre will work in their communities to provide workshops for parents.

To apply, go to the MCEC Web site: <http://www.militarychild.org/files/pdfs/ParenttoParentJobApplicationForm.pdf>. The application deadline is Sunday.

Alterations

The Storck Barracks Alterations Shop is open Mondays and Thursdays from 2-6 p.m. Alterations is located next to the military clothing sales store.

"On the Scene"

Want to know what is going on within USAG Ansbach? Check out the "On the Scene" newsletter available at the garrison's web site, www.ansbach.army.mil. The newsletter is posted every Friday.

Contact jim.k.hughes@eur.army.mil to subscribe for a PDF version by e-mail.

If you would like to publicize an event, or have a story idea, call public affairs at DSN 468-1600, CIV 0981-183-1600.

Get fit

Ansbach Health Promotions offers the civilian fitness program that allows employees a chance to get up to three hours a week to exercise.

The next open enrollment is March 23, 10 a.m.-noon and 4-5 p.m. at Bunch Fitness Center on Storck Barracks. An enrollment is offered March 25 from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-5 p.m. at Katterbach Fitness Center. Call DSN 468-7863, CIV 0981-183-863.

Get cooking

Storck Barracks Yellow Ribbon Room offers a German cooking class March 18, 10 a.m.-noon. Kartauser klosse with vanilla and chocolate sauces is on the menu. Call DSN 467-4555, CIV 09841-83-4555.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Kessler job fair

Looking for employment? Dress for success and bring your resume to the job fair at Kessler Fitness Center March 20 from 9 a.m.-noon. It is also an opportunity to network with other job seekers. For more information, call Army Community Service at CIV 09721-96-6933.

NAF resume class

Learn how to apply for NAF (non-appropriated funds) vacancy announcements by attending the NAF resume class tomorrow at the Ledward education center from 10 a.m. to noon. Learn what NAF positions are available and discover the tricks to writing a resume specifically for them. Call CIV 09721-96-6444.

Register for unit-level soccer

Registration for unit-level six-on-six soccer season runs through Mar. 20. Play is open to unit-level teams only (rear detachment teams can combine within battalion). Season runs from Apr. 8-May 18. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8234.

Book club

Attend the adult book club at Ledward Library on the last Thursday of each month.

The next meeting is March 26, 5:15 p.m. to discuss Diane Ackerman's "Zoo-keeper's Wife." A copy can be picked up at the library's circulation desk. Call CIV 09721-96-6487 for more.

Bulk trash

Bulk trash is scheduled for pick-up from Askren Manor, Yorktown Village, and government-leased housing March 24. Please put items out prior to 7 a.m. on pick-up day but no earlier than the day before. Bulk trash is only those items

too large to transport in your vehicle. Call DSN 354-6201, CIV 0162-270-9403 for information.

Saturday child care

Do you need a break from the kids to run errands or just relax at home? Sign up now for CYS Super Saturday child care March 21. Children ages 6 weeks-fifth-grade will be cared for from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. for \$16.

Reservation deadline is Friday. Call CYS at CIV 09721-96-6414.

Women's history tea

The Schweinfurt Equal Opportunity Office and Ledward Library invite all women to attend the Women's History Month tea party at Conn Community Club March 19, beginning 2 p.m.

Enjoy guest speakers, browse book collections and displays, and test your knowledge by entering the trivia contest.

Neuschwanstein castle trip

BOSS invites you to sign up for a trip to Neuschwanstein castle March 28. Bus leaves at 6 a.m. and returns approximately 10 p.m.

Transportation is 37 Euro and castle entry is 9 euro. Deadline to sign up is March 20. Call CIV 09721-96-8476.

Fishing in Germany

Conn ODR hosts a fishing license class April 3-5. Cost is \$65. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8080.

Soccer clinic

Participate in the Schweinfurt soccer clinic at Finney Fitness Center March 25-27 from 6-8:30 p.m. Clinic is open to all ID card holders age 18 and up but not in high school. A tournament will be held March 28, 6-9 p.m. Call Finney gym at CIV 09721-96-8234.

B.O.S.S. wants your input

Want to help plan events for single Soldiers or give input into how things run?

Attend BOSS council meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The next meeting is at 2 p.m., March 24 at Finney Recreation Center. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8476.

Youth baseball/softball

Youth ages 6-18 are encouraged to sign up for the upcoming baseball and softball season. Registration ends Friday, so sign up now!

All participants must be registered with CYSS and have a current sports physical.

Conditioning for ages 10-18 begins March 16 and practice for softball and baseball begins March 30.

For more call CIV 09721-96-6414.

Green beer

Come to the Irish Pub at Conn Community Club March 17 for green beer and appetizers starting at 5:30 p.m. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with an Irish drink and jig.

Free computer classes

ACS is offering free computer classes, 8:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m. at the computer lab in Ledward bldg. 206. A certificate of completion will be issued at the end of each class. Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

- Monday - Basic Microsoft Excel I
- Tuesday - Basic Microsoft Excel II
- March 18 - Microsoft PowerPoint
- March 19 - Microsoft Access

Love and logic parenting

ACS offers classes in "Becoming a Love & Logic Parent." The class is Tuesdays, 9-11 a.m. at SAS. For more, or to sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Learn to manage debt

Are you in debt and don't know how to get out? Do you need expert advice and tips on staying out of debt? Come to ACS's "Seven steps to getting out of debt" class March 25, 3:30-4:30 p.m. For more, or to sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Treasurer training

Learn how to be a treasurer at ACS's class "Treasurer training" at the Yellow Ribbon Room March 18, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Learn how to run a ledger, a monthly report of funds, and more. Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Pregnant?

Come to ACS's class "OB orientation" March 18, 9 a.m.-noon to learn about your pregnancy, nutrition, resources in the community and more. Mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend. Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

G.U.T.S.

Teen newcomers are invited to come to ACS's class "G.U.T.S." at the Schweinfurt Middle School library March 24, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Take a bus tour through town, learn basic German phrases, and more. Bring euro for lunch. To sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Interview skills

Learn how to make a positive first impression on job interviews by attending the "First impression employment readiness" ACS class March 19, 2-4 p.m.

Topics include types of interviews, how to dress, and more. Call CIV 09721-96-6933 for more.

Child, Youth and School Services

PARENT EDUCATION CLASSES

Introduction to Baby Sign Language | Ages and Stages
Child Growth and Development | Special Needs Awareness
Character Counts | Effective Guidance Practice

These parent education classes are offered on a regular basis as part of our Child, Youth and School Services employee orientation program. Classes are open to all parents and are offered in both Katterbach and Illesheim. If you are interested in attending one or more of these, please contact the CYS Services Outreach Director at:

09802.83 2531

Hourly care may be available for registered CYS patrons.



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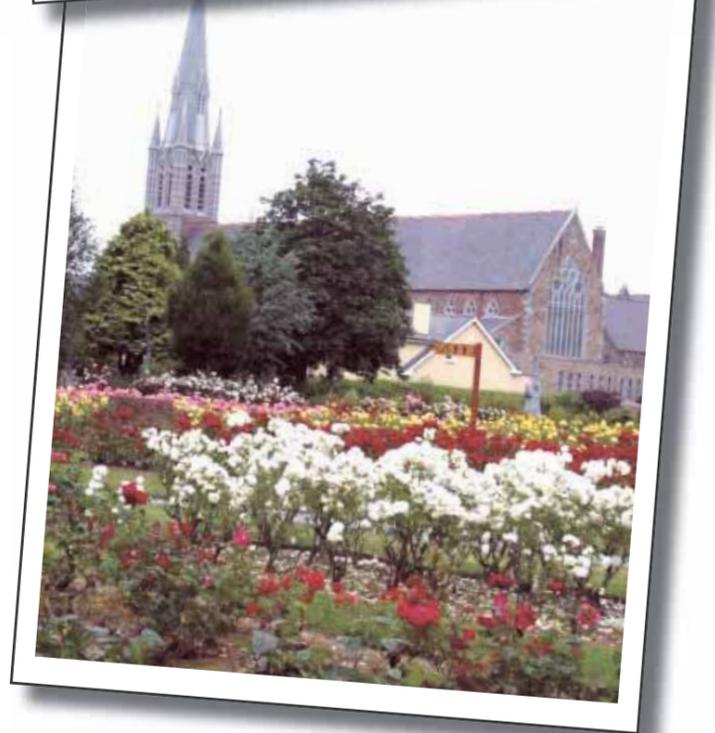
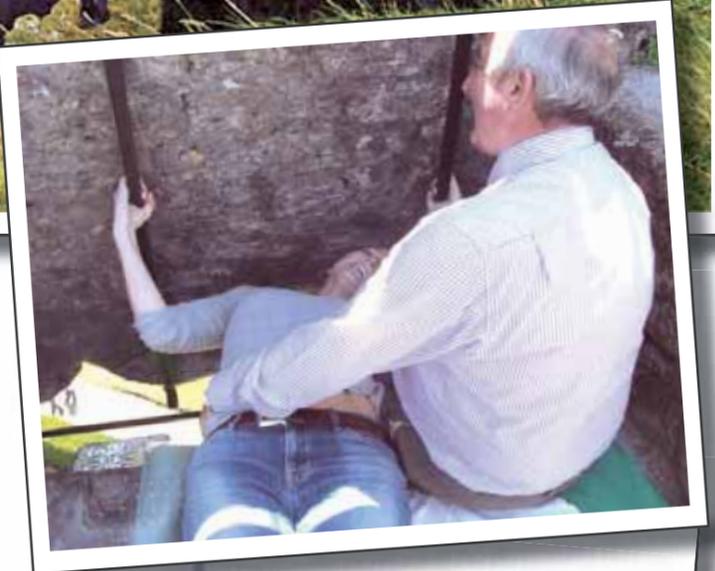
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Visit the Ireland you've always imagined in County Kerry



Story and photos by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Romanticising

In the mid-19th century waves of Irish immigrated to ports like Boston and New York in search of respite from the potato famine that gripped their homeland, forever altering American demographics.

More than 150 years later, millions of Americans claim to be of Irish descent and the romanticizing of Old Ireland in theatre, books, and movies has them longing to visit the birthplace of their ancestors.

Whether the majority of us who claim a connection to the Emerald Isle (myself included) actually have Irish blood running through our veins or not, a visit to Ireland is as magical as we've been raised to imagine.

Whenever friends tell me they are planning a visit to Ireland, I immediately ask where they plan to go. Most Americans living in Europe will plan to spend all or most of their trip to Ireland in Dublin, which I vehemently discourage.

Dublin is a wonderful city, and if you have time to travel across the country a stop in Dublin is a must. But at the end of the day Dublin is just that: a city, and therefore has a feeling similar to cities across the world.

If you only have a few days to spend in Ireland, Dublin simply will not give you the glimpse you crave into the Ireland most Americans are looking for.

To see the scenes most people picture when they think of Ireland, like small fishing villages and vibrantly green fields that reach up to meet a sapphire blue sky, a visit to Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula is a must.

Traveling

Getting to this county on the southwest side of the island could not be easier.

Search for flights arriving in either Dublin or Shannon. Though Shannon is just a bit north of Kerry and Dublin is on the other side of the country, it takes little time to travel between any two points in this small country, so either will do.

Once you arrive at the airport, decide whether you will take your

tour by bus or rent a car. Families with small children might prefer to rent a car, while those traveling with adults will find the bus system easy to use and a cheap, worry-free way to move around the country.

Buses travel between all points mentioned in this article. Schedules and tickets can be found at any bus station or tourist office.

Killarney

After deciding on a mode of transportation, start off your tour with two nights in Killarney.

A horribly touristy town, Killarney is still an excellent location to explore the Killarney National Park and a good starting point for other destinations in the area.

The 25,000 acre park is an easy 20-minute walk from the Killarney bus station and can also be reached by hiring a taxi or renting bikes.

During the summer bring your swimsuit, a lunch, and walking shoes and spend a day exploring this must-see landscape.

Walking and biking trails crisscross the rolling countryside that is covered with lush vegetation and wildlife. The park has three lakes for swimming and exploring with row boats available for rent.

If you can, swim out beyond the bays where the beaches form and explore the shoreline from the water. Occasionally, pale rocks rise from the clear water creating formations perfect for secluded sunbathing.

After exploring the park by land and by water, stop by one of the two historical estates in the park, Muckross House and Knockreer.

The 20-room Muckross house, built in 1843, has been converted into a museum displaying County Kerry folk life and features well-kept formal gardens. Admission is charged for entry into the house.

The Blarney ruins

On your second day in Killarney, take a trip over to Blarney Castle. The castle is in County Cork but is an easy jaunt and, let's face it, you cannot come this close without kissing the famous Blarney Stone.

Expectedly touristy due to the stone believed to bring luck to those who kiss it, the Blarney Castle ruins themselves are nonetheless worth the

trip and the country surrounding the fortress is breathtaking. Take a lunch to enjoy on the lawns and you'll avoid the overpriced restaurants in town.

After a walk around the ruins, hop back on the bus or in your rental car. You can be back in Killarney for dinner, or you may choose to spend the evening exploring Cork's hip shops and cafes.

Peaceful Tralee

The next morning, pack up your things and head north towards the coast and the town of Tralee.

A small town, Tralee is a perfect spot to escape the hordes of tourists and experience a friendly Irish town. Make sure to visit the rose gardens in the town park, the site of the internationally-famous Tralee Rose Festival held every August.

A warning though: don't expect to show up during the festival, one of the biggest in the country, and get a hotel room without booking months in advance.

Blennerville

A few miles down the road is Blennerville, home of Ireland's largest working windmill. You can reach it via a trip on the Tralee Steam Railway, a small steam train that moves through the fields between Tralee and Blennerville at a snail's pace.

Not expensive but also not impressive, skip the train ride and take a bus or bike unless you have small children who will enjoy the novelty.

Originally built in 1780 and restored in the 1980s, the Blennerville windmill sits on a port that was a major gateway to America during the mid-1800s. Visitors can take a guided tour of the five-story mill and view the milling process, as well as browse the database of the Famine Emigration Research Bureau that contains details of more than 1.5 million Irish that immigrated to America during the famine.

Finish off your visit to Tralee by attending a show at Siamsa Tire, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland. Stop in their box office at the edge of town or visit the tourist office to view the season's selections.

Dingle Peninsula

Last on your tour of Kerry is the Dingle Peninsula.

Listed in "1,000 Places to See Before You Die" as a place where "Celtic monuments to ancient Christianity still litter the rugged and spectacularly scenic coastline," the Dingle Peninsula is one of the most beautiful spots in Kerry and in all of Ireland.

Spend about 20 Euro per person on a two-hour archeological tour of the peninsula to see ancient ruins dating to pre-Christian times while learning about the region's fascinating Celtic history.

Stroll through the town of Dingle, stopping to sample the harbor's excellent seafood at one of the pubs and spend some time window shopping along the storefronts.

After a tour of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula stop by Dublin, but only if you have time. Even if you don't make

it to the city, you can leave the Island knowing you have seen the best of the Ireland you always imagined.

Clockwise from left: Traditional famine houses stand throughout the Irish countryside; Emerald green fields fall into the sea to form the quintessential Irish coastline of County Kerry; Blarney Castle holds the famous Blarney Stone that visitors must literally bend over backwards to kiss for good luck; Tralee boasts a large garden with seemingly endless varieties and colors of roses. Tralee hosts the Rose Festival, one of Ireland's largest celebrations.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

by **DUSTY HOLSO-HOLLENBECK**
Bamberg Health Clinic

In response to the rise in mild Traumatic Brain Injury among deployed soldiers as a result of serving in OIF and OEF, the US Army is standing up a comprehensive plan to address those who have sustained these types of injuries. Understanding the signs and symptoms of mTBI is crucial to receiving treatment.

What is Mild Traumatic Brain Injury?

Traumatic brain injury can significantly affect many cognitive, physical, and psychological skills. Physical deficits can include ambulation, balance, coordination, fine motor skills, strength, and endurance. Cognitive deficits of language and communication, information processing, memory, and perceptual skills are common. Psychological status is also often altered. Adjustment to disability issues are frequently encountered by people with TBI.

Brain injury can occur in many ways. Civilian traumatic brain injuries typically result from accidents in which the head strikes an object or an object strikes the head such as in a car accident or a fall down the stairs or from a high place. Other very common activities that can result in concussions and traumatic brain injury are sports, like football, hockey, and baseball. In fact most of what we now know about mTBI comes from sports medicine and injuries related to high impact sports. While brain injuries to service members can also come from those types of accidents and activities, they are currently likely to occur due to the blasts and shock waves that can come from Improvised Explosive Devices or other explosions seen in war.

Symptoms

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury is characterized by one or more of the following symptoms: a brief loss of consciousness, loss of memory immediately before or after the injury, any alteration in mental state at the time of the accident (often recalled as 'seeing stars' or flashes of light along with disorientation), or focal neurological deficits. In many mTBI cases, the person seems fine on the surface, yet continues to endure chronic functional problems. Some people suffer long-term effects of mTBI, known as postconcussion syndrome. Persons suffering from PCS can experience significant changes in cognition and personality, including a decreased sense of judgment and increased impulsivity. Dr. Alan Scheuermann, the clinical psychologist for the mTBI program in Bamberg, notes that "people often feel as though they've lost their identity, of who they used to be" after



Courtesy image

MTBI can significantly affect many cognitive, physical, and psychological skills. Understanding the signs and symptoms is crucial to receiving treatment.

sustaining a brain injury. He goes on to say that "often spouse's or buddies from rear detachment are the ones to see the changes after a soldier returns." Therefore, it is important that those in a soldier's life who see these changes encourage them to seek assistance as soon as possible.

Recovery

The good news is that with proper identification and treatment, recovery is possible. Particularly with mild levels of brain injury, improvement and recovery of cognitive functions such as memory and processing information can be accomplished through cognitive exercises and engaging in a variety of activities to improve those skills. "The brain is a pretty amazing organ," says Dr. Scheuermann, "you can relearn many of the tasks through focused practice."

Prevention

Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Brain Injury Association of America to reduce the chances of brain injury.

- Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle.
- Always buckle your child into a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt (according to the child's height, weight, and age) in the car.

- Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Wear a helmet and make sure your children wear helmets when:

- Riding a bike, motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle;
- Playing a contact sport, such as football, ice hockey, or boxing;
- In-line skating or riding a skateboard;
- Batting and running bases in baseball or softball;
- Riding a horse

- Skiing or snowboarding.

- Avoid falls in the home by:

- Using a step stool with a grab bar to reach objects on high shelves;
- Installing handrails on stairways;
- Installing window guards to keep young children from falling out of open windows;
- Using safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs when young children are around;
- Removing tripping hazards such as small area rugs and loose electrical cords;
- Using non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors;
- Putting grab bars next to the toilet and in the tub or shower;
- Maintaining a regular exercise program to

improve strength, balance, and coordination; and

- Seeing an eye doctor regularly for a vision check to help lower the risk of falling.

- Make sure the surface on your child's playground is made of shock-absorbing material, such as hardwood, mulch, and sand.

- Keep firearms stored unloaded in a locked cabinet or safe. Store bullets in a separate secured location.

When to call the doctor

If you or a family member has a head injury and you notice any of the symptoms on the list, call your local health clinic to schedule an appointment with your Primary Care Manager right away.

- Symptoms in adults

- Headaches or neck pain that won't go away
- Trouble with such mental tasks as remembering, concentrating, or decision-making

- Slow thinking, speaking, acting, or reading
- Getting lost or easily confused

- Feeling tired all the time, having no energy or motivation

- Mood changes (sad or angry for no reason)
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or having a hard time sleeping)

- Feeling light-headed or dizzy, or losing balance

- An urge to vomit (nausea)
- Increased sensitivity to lights, sounds, or distractions

- Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily

- Loss of sense of smell or taste

- Ringing in the ears

- Symptoms in children

- Feeling tired or listless

- Being irritable or cranky (will not stop crying or cannot be consoled)

- Changes in eating (will not eat or nurse)

- Changes in sleep patterns

- Changes in the way the child plays

- Changes in performance at school

- Lack of interest in favorite toys or activities

- Loss of new skills, such as toilet training

- Loss of balance, unsteady walking

- Vomiting

This information was provided by the Centre for Neuro Skills, <http://www.neuroskills.com>.

Act now

If you think you or a family member are experiencing the signs and symptoms of mTBI, your Primary Care Provider can refer you to a specialist within our Medical Treatment Facilities. For local resources contact the ERMC ANAM Office: DSN 314.476.4753, CIV 09662.83.4753

BDENTAC makes patient safety a priority

by **RALINDA EATHERINGTON**
Bavaria DENTAC

All across the world Patient Safety is a recognized priority in health care.

March 8-14 will be a time of increased awareness in the Bavaria Dental Activity. You may see us at the Commissary or PX. You may receive additional information in one of our clinics. You may even read about it in the local paper. Perhaps you'll pick up a copy of our newest publication, "Protecting You and Your Smile".

Let's chat about Patient Safety and what it means to you and your family.

Patient Safety is defined as: the freedom from accidental injury by minimizing the likelihood of errors and catching and reviewing errors when they do occur to prevent them from happening again.

National Patient Safety Guidelines have been developed to assist medical and dental facilities in providing a safe environment for patient treatment. Goals that apply to dentistry are listed:

1. Improve the accuracy of patient identification
2. Improve effectiveness of communication among caregivers
3. Improve the safety of using medications
4. Reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections
5. Accurate and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care
6. Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls
7. Encourage patients' active involvement in their own care as a patient safety measure
8. Identify safety risks inherent

in our patient population

9. Improve recognition and response to changes in a patient's condition.

These goals may sound scary or may have you shaking your head with worry or lack of understanding or confusion. Or you may look at these and think, "This is just good common sense!"

Let me explain how BDENTAC approaches these issues.

We ask you for two patient identifiers. When you are called back to the dental chair, the assistant or the provider should ask you for your full name and date of birth. If they don't ask, tell them about it, offer the information to them.

Communication is a problem for every organization and dental care is no exception. We consistently review record entries in an effort to improve the documentation in your file as this is how the dentist shares your treatment information with another provider.

When a patient arrives for any type of dental appointment, he or she should know why they are being seen. You may not know the dental specific terms, however, at a minimum, you should know the area of your mouth that is being treated.

DENTAC works with the same pharmacy as your health care providers. We are active participants in committees that review medication usage and we monitor all prescriptions written.

Handwashing is the No. 1 thing that can be done to prevent infections. When you are seated in the dental chair, do you see your dentist and assistant wash their hands?

If not, you should request them to do so. It's your body. It's your

treatment.

When you arrive at the clinic and are escorted back to the dental chair, do you remember anyone asking you about your current health status and medications?

If not, tell us what has changed since the last time you received treatment in your clinic. Your medication may not be "new" to you but if we don't have it documented – it's new to us.

We regularly assess our clinics for trip and fall hazards. We also are very careful about releasing patients who may be unsteady after treatment.

So when we are chatting with you after your treatment, we're also watching to make sure you are stable and capable of proper balance. Patients who have received any type of sedative or drug that relaxes them prior to dental treatment are always required to have an escort.

Upon arriving in our clinics, do you see brochures or pamphlets about different types of dentistry or oral hygiene? Well, this is part of what we provide to help educate you and what you can do to improve your oral health.

Our goal is to provide you with information that allows you to make an informed decision about your dental care.

Our latest publication, "Protecting You and Your Smile" will be hitting the streets during Patient Safety Week.

This four-page newsletter will be released four times a year and will have articles to provide you basic information on the dental specialties, good oral hygiene practices, dental terminology, and various other topics that should be important to you and your family.



Photo by Anne Torphy

Kids at the clinic

Samantha H. and Zedakiah W. share a moment with pediatrician Renata Lukezic (far right) and physician assistant Ms. Linda Sax (middle right) during a visit to the Vilseck Health Clinic Feb 13. Nine children from the kindergarten class at the Rose Barracks CDC toured the clinic on Feb. 13 in order to get familiar with different aspects of health care, teach healthy habits, and help them be comfortable with clinic visits.

When you visit the doctor, here are some important questions to ask:

- How long should I expect these symptoms to last?
- What should I do for this condition?
- Is it safe to get back to my normal daily routine, such as school, work, or playing sports and doing other physical activities?

Sheik works to improve community

Story and photo by
SpC. TIFFANY EVANS
172nd Infantry Brigade

Somber looking men gathered in a sitting room prepared to discuss matters in their village with a representative of the U.S. Army, Feb 21.

A toddler lightened the mood when he entered the room and headed straight for a distinguished man seated in the room with an air of authority.

Sheik Fadil Youssef broke into a brilliant smile and in clear English told the guests at his house that the boy is his grandson. Youssef went on to explain his children and grandchildren give him reasons to improve the village of Jurf as Sahkr.

"My children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews represent the future of Iraq. We must, here and now, work to improve their future," said Youssef, Sheik and Sons of Iraq contract holder for Jurf as Sahkr.

"We have a few problems and need help from the Coalition to fix them. I have worked with the Coalition forces throughout Iraq since 2004, and I am proud to call them friends and brothers."

During Youssef's three hour meeting with Capt. Brian Weightman, commander of B Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, he continually focused on the people of Jurf as Sahkr and their welfare.

"U.S. forces are working on leaving Iraq and changing their strategy on how to help the people of Iraq until forces leave," Weightman, a native of Eden Mills, Vt., said. "Even though

we will not be funding as many projects as we have in the past, we will work with the villages and towns in our area of operation to receive the necessary funding and help from the Government of Iraq."

Weightman explained how projects already approved are going to be finished before Coalition forces leave Iraq.

Youssef donated a parcel of land to the GOI, for a high school, which the Coalition agreed to build.

"At this time I can tell you the

money for the high school has been approved and now we are searching for a contractor," Weightman said.

Weightman told Youssef and the other guest that he understood their concerns and would pass them on.

Youssef voiced a few concerns about the SOI. Many are still waiting to hear about being hired by the GOI or if the government will help to find them other jobs.

The Sheik, who holds bachelor degrees in engineering, communications and education, told Weightman

that 95 percent of his SOI's are able to read and write. He went on to say how the people of Jurf as Sahkr are also highly educated.

Youssef discussed the recent provincial elections following lunch. No Sunni won a seat in Babil province, and Jurf as Sahkr is mainly a Sunni village.

"We are disappointed that the Sunni who ran for election did not band together, but we are pleased with the results. The elected officials are the right people to help secure Iraq and

keep the sectarian violence away," Youssef said. "Above all else, we want to be secure and stand on our own two feet. We will do our best to always do the honorable thing for our children."

Weightman asked Youssef and his visitors what else he could do to help them.

The captain listened to comments about a man's house destroyed by a bomb, a military vehicle involved in a crash with a local vehicle and all the men wanted Weightman to look into the arrest of a man accused of violence against many citizens of Jurf as Sahkr.

"I can not promise you that we can fix these problems quickly, but I will look into all of them," Weightman said. "I will also talk to the military police and Iraqi police to see where the accused man is and if he is being put on trial."

Youssef and Weightman left the meeting looking forward to working with each other soon, both Youssef and Weightman said.

Hope and cooperation fueled the process of healing in 1st Bn., 2nd Inf., Regt., area of operations.

"There is an old saying, that we may not accomplish all we set out to do, but if we work together and hold tight to hope things will be fine," Youssef said.

"I have to agree, when things get bad it's hope and faith that carries me and my people through those tough times."

"Added to our hope and faith is that of the American people and their fighting forces who continue to help stabilize and secure our country."



Sheik Fadil Youssef, Sons of Iraq contract holder and sheik for Jurf as Sahkr, speaks to Capt. Brian Weightman, commander B Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, at Youssef's home in Jurf as Sahkr Feb. 21. Weightman, located at Patrol Base Hamiya near Youssef's house, said the people of Jurf as Sahkr seek out Youssef for help and advice daily.

Babil Emergency Response Unit patrols Tunis

Story and photo by
Pfc. BETHANY L. LITTLE
172nd Infantry Brigade

Soldiers of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, worked together in a combined patrol with a Babil emergency response unit from Mahawil, Feb. 28.

The ERU, a special Iraqi police unit, can respond to almost any situation at a moment's notice.

"They have two main jobs," said Maj. Ahmed Kadhim Hamza, the Iraqi Police Chief of the Tunis Iraqi Police Station. "The first is to secure the area and the second is to respond to any emergencies that may arise."

Coalition Forces in the Babil area first started the ERU in 2006 to see if the unit could help improve the safety of the community in a small area.

"The first ERU was successful, and the unit divided into different areas across Babil Province," said Hamza. There are several platoon-sized elements of the ERU positioned in the Babil Province.

ERU members receive training on weapons, emergency medical care and other tactical skills during a three-month course taught by Coalition Forces.

"They are highly trained, disciplined and do not need much prompting," said 1st Lt. James Guglielmi, Platoon Leader of C Troop.

Members of the unit are like Iraqi Police, they conduct raids, joint operations and are willing to go out on a mission with U.S. troops.

"They're fantastic! They are always staged and are ready to react and move quickly," said Guglielmi, a Tampa, Fla. native.

This combined patrol is one of many that Soldiers and ERU members conduct together.

"We work with the ERU a lot, and they always do a great job," said Guglielmi. Soldiers and the ERU have been working together for the past six months.

Soldiers and ERU members have formed a bond through their combined efforts to keep the area safe.

"We have a really positive relationship right now, and we hope to develop a long term relationship with them in the future," Guglielmi said.



1st Lt. James Guglielmi walks with members of the Babil Emergency Response Unit from Mahawil, to ensure the safety of the area during a combined patrol Feb. 28. There are several platoon-sized elements of the ERU positioned in Babil Province.

Soldiers adapt to new way of doing business in Iraq

Story and photo by
SpC. TIFFANY EVANS
172nd Infantry Brigade

Throughout history, America's fighting forces continually adapt to their situations in conflict zones.

Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment,

172nd Infantry Brigade embody this change. Three years ago, as heavy sectarian violence broke out in Iraq many of these Soldiers, participated in heated firefights, received daily rocket attacks and ever-changing improvised explosive devices.

Now many of them spend their days visiting with village councils,

training Iraqi Security forces, advising senior ISF leaders, and taking a supporting role with the ISF on kinetic missions.

On Feb. 20, 1st Lt. Kirk Tooley, third platoon leader, his Soldiers and three Soldiers from B. Co., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion visited with the Abu Lukah village council at the village's secondary school.

"Members of Abu Lukah's village council wished to meet with us to see if we could help to renovate the school, help with village infrastructure projects and to question us about plans for village Sons of Iraq members," Tooley, a native of Canton, Mich., said. "Back in 2006 a prior CA battalion helped to update the school, but since then there has been an increase in student population and more rooms are needed."

Recently the village council and town members joined to raise money for a fence and an extra classroom, Tooley added. Even with the extra classroom, desks made for two stu-

dents have four students sitting at them.

"The school not only needs at least four additional classrooms, some minor repairs are needed in the previously built classrooms," said Capt. James Reed, a CA officer.

Both Reed and Tooley offered to help the leaders send proposals to the Iskandariyah council asking them to invest money into programs to help employ the people of Abu Lukah Sol, build up infrastructure, and build, repair and enlarge schools in the village.

Many council members told the Soldiers how safe they feel in their village now. The elders said they have complete faith in their local ISF to control security situations and are thankful to the Americans for helping to secure the area and train the ISF.

"We live on Patrol Base Hamiya around the outskirts of Abu Lukah and other villages," said Sgt. Brandon Waugh, squad leader. "As non-commissioned officers we are used

to training Soldiers, so training the Iraqi Army is second nature to us and training Iraqi Police to conduct presence control is also in our lane."

Soldiers of B Company, will learn military police techniques to continue perform in an advisory role for the IPs in their area.

Waugh's younger Soldiers, many just out of basic training, are now the instructors, which sets them up for future success as NCOs. He is genuinely glad to see the progress made in Iraq and shares his experience from previous combat tours with his younger Soldiers.

"Every now and then you'll hear someone say something about this not being our job," Waugh said. "We leaders are quick to interrupt and let them know that this is also part of being a Soldier. After my last tour, I never would have thought I would go this long without being involved in firefight or an explosion. I am here now and can honestly say Iraq is way on its way to being stable."



Abu Lukah village council members sit in the principal's office at Abu Lukah secondary school while meeting with American troops.

Military Saves program educates participants for financial success

Story and photo by
RONALD H. TOLAND Jr.
Bavarian News

Everyone is trying to stretch greenbacks lately and the Military Saves program in Ansbach showed 36 Soldiers and family members just how to do and build wealth with a variety of classes.

Army Community Service conducted five classes that impacted Soldiers' and families' financial lives Feb. 22 through March 1.

"If you are in debt, that puts your future in jeopardy," said Staff Sgt. Mark Hatcher, B Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, who attended the classes.

He said saving is important for a number of reasons.

"If you want to save for your kids' college, savings bonds, a home, a car—it limits you for the future if you are in debt."

Hatcher said that he wants to save for his son's college and remarry, but to do that, "I have to start by saving to get rid of the debt—get out of debt and manage my money better."

Hatcher said he learned about the major three credit reporting companies and how to obtain the reports.

"This class has given me more tips and insight on the importance of tracking my credit scores," he said.

He also learned about identity theft and to look out for that aspect as well.

But he learned something just as crucial to his financial stability from

a previous experience.

"The emergency fund—how you should have six to eight months saved up in case of an emergency—a lot of things can happen last minute," he said.

"A couple of years ago I had an incident where I had to cash in some bonds for an emergency. If I had the emergency account set up, I could have used that money and replaced it later," he added.

Another Soldier, a first time attendee of the class, explained savings another way.

"For me, savings is about retirement—I do not want to be a certain age and know I still have to work," said Spc. Steve Jenkins, E Company, 3-158th Aviation Battalion. "I have to save for the day when I will not be able to work anymore."

Jenkins said he plans on saving not only with his Individual Retirement Account, but with bonds, savings accounts, money market and an emergency account.

"These classes opened my eyes to the importance of saving—stuff I did not even know. I was really impressed," he said.

And the good news is that the classes are not just offered during Military Saves Week.

"These classes are very similar to the other ones offered regularly during the week for Soldiers and families at Army Community Service, but they are just longer and allow for more discussion," said Karen Bonheim, Military Saves coordinator.



Staff Sgt. Mark Hatcher and Spc. Steve Jenkins prepare to drop their saving pledge cards into the saver box with a little help from Anja Peter, Community Bank representative, and Karen Bonheim, Military Saves Coordinator, at Katterbach ACS during Military Saves Week.

In addition, she noted if a command wants to have one of the classes for the unit, it can be arranged.

The weekly classes are not all that's offered.

"Every month we offer an eight-hour class for enlisted Soldiers from E-1 to E-4," said Bonheim. "It's

mandatory for all first-term Soldiers. We also offer one-on-one individual appointments."

"Knowledge is key," said Bonheim in regards to saving in the military environment.

"It's a little different than in the civilian world. The more we can

educate people, the better off the whole community will be about saving—to eliminate debt, save for their future and their retirement."

For more information about the current schedule of classes and to sign up for a class, call Katterbach ACS at DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

Ansbach sophomore wins DoDEA Europe writing competition, money for college

by RONALD H. TOLAND Jr.
Bavarian News

"How do veterans help the youth of today?"

That was the theme of the 2008-2009 Veterans of Foreign Wars' Voice of Democracy—an audio-essay scholarship contest for high school students in grades nine through 12 that provides more than \$3 million in scholarships annually.

And scholarship money is just what Luis Figueroa, a sophomore at the Ansbach Middle/High School, was hoping for when he took pen to paper and composed his one-page essay that won first place in all of Europe for the Department of Defense Education System.

"It was easy scholarship money - college is really expensive," said Figueroa.

He said his father's service to his country and U.S. history influenced his essay.

"I made many references to my dad and what he did, and the history of America—how it prospered, how veterans helped and how

I made many references to my dad and what he did, and the history of America—how it prospered, how veterans helped and how major wars made us an independent nation.



Figueroa

major wars made us an independent nation," said Figueroa.

He will now move on to compete for the VFW's grand prize of \$30,000.

"I won \$1,000 for the regional Europe competition and if I win the national level - in Washington, D.C., April 4 - then (the) VFW will add to that \$29,000," said Figueroa.

According to the VFW Web site, "The first-place winner, who competes with all the

first-place VFW department winners, receives a \$30,000 scholarship that is paid directly to the recipient's American university, college, or vocational or technical school."

But Figueroa said that the money is not the only reason to write well.

"Writing helps us communicate," said Figueroa. "It expresses ideas, and writing is one of the best ways to express ideas—it is all about imagination, expanding vocabulary, and focusing

on and expressing details."

It made for a happy mom, too.

"I am very proud of him," said his mother, Elsie. "I know that whatever he wants to do he can do it. He is a good writer and is a very bright student."

She said that she urges him to submit for any competitions that can help him win scholarship money for college. "It all helps," she said. "He is the older one of three (children) and we have to save for all of them."

Figueroa will compete against 53 winning entrants when he attends the national competition in Washington, D.C. He will also tour Pennsylvania with the VFW before returning to Ansbach.

With two more years of high school, Figueroa said he has time enough to ponder where he wants to attend college.

"This is fairly cool - that I can succeed in many things. This is the first time I have entered and won a writing competition," he said.

Support comes full circle through Army Emergency Relief

by CONNIE SUMMERS
USAG Ansbach Public Affairs Office

Think nonprofit organization, think Army Emergency Relief, to actively help a fellow Soldier or neighbor who is suffering from a financial emergency.

This year's AER Campaign embraces 67 years of Soldiers helping Soldiers and their families, according to Sarah Amos, Yellow Ribbon Room Coordinator at Katterbach.

Amos, who handles the promotional aspect of the AER campaign within the garrison, said the 2009 AER Campaign will run March 12 through May 15.

Kick off ceremonies are scheduled for Katterbach tomorrow at noon at the dining facility.

At Storck Barracks, the AER Campaign starts at noon, March 17, at the DFAC.

"Because Soldiers, retirees, as well as civilians from U.S. military communities world-wide, contributed graciously in the past, we were able to provide much needed financial support to some 78 Soldiers and their families last year within the garrison," said Amos.

Amos pointed out that those funds made available by AER covered mainly the cost for car repairs and emergency travel to State-side locations.

However, AER is there to fund anything from dire, fundamental personal needs like food, rental and medical expenses to more mundane expenses, like undergraduate-level education scholarships for children of Soldiers and spouses, she added.

"Soldiers who want to contribute to the AER program either by cash, check or monthly allotment should contact their unit AER representative.

Anyone else who would like to support this beneficial program should contact the AER officer, at the local Army Community Services," said Amos.

Col. Christopher M. Hickey, commander of USAG Ansbach, believes in AER.

"Army Emergency Relief is an important program and a great way for people to help out their fellow community members," he said.

"When people support AER, they are ensuring that our community members will have somewhere to turn to when they experience hard times.

"And you never know, you may need to benefit from the Army Emergency Relief Program yourself some time," Hickey added.

Getting financial support is relatively easy.

The first step for financial assistance

is to contact a Soldier's chain-of-command. The first sergeant or company commander is authorized to approve AER loans of up to \$1,000.

The next step would be for a Soldier or spouse to contact the local AER representative, or in case there is none the local American Red Cross representative.

To apply for financial assistance a Soldier must have:

- A valid Identification Card
- The most recent Leave and Earning Statement
- Leave/PCS orders (depending on the type of financial support)
- Substantiating documents (i.e. rental agreement, medical bill, etc.)

In the absence of or deployment of a sponsor, a spouse will also need a valid Power of Attorney to apply for the financial emergency assistance.

AER is a private nonprofit organization incorporated in 1942 by the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff. AER's sole mission is to help soldiers and their dependents.

For more information on Army Emergency Relief, to make donations, or apply for scholarships, visit:

<http://www.aerhq.org/>

Online survey initiates action, seeks to improve installation, customer services

Story and photo by
SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Who do you call when customer service is bad?

ICE: Interactive Customer Evaluation, available for almost any department on the military installation, is available online for customers to give feedback about service.

"Without having surveys, comment cards, you don't know if you're doing the right thing," said Waldy Schill-Rueckert, Bradley Inn manager.

According to Tim Tanis, strategic planner for the garrison, the Bradley Inn on Conn Barracks has the one of the highest response rates for customer comments.

"We're more proactive in soliciting comments from customers," said John Jourdan, front desk supervisor at the inn, explaining one of the reasons why that is so. Surveys are available in individual rooms and at the reception.

Because of the comment cards, the Bradley Inn has accommodated with many improvements.

One of the most recent additions was the outside safe which allows for patrons to check in and get the key to their room when the reception is closed.

"Most of the time you can correct (problems) through some kind of action," Schill-Rueckert said.

The sooner issues are brought to the attention of management, the quicker the resolution. But it's up to the customers to say something.

"One very important thing is that the customer sees the changes," she said, explaining that customers who see results are much more likely to recommend the facility in the future.

The Bradley Inn is only one of the numerous establishments that could benefit and better their services to customers through the ICE survey online at http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=site&site_id=138.

The ICE link can also be found on the USAG Schweinfurt Home page at www.schweinfurt.army.mil.

"The perception often is that ... when you put in a comment there's a record or trail," Tanis said, explaining that, in fact, the surveys remain completely anonymous when it comes to expressing dissatisfaction.

The survey does ask for contact information, but that is optional, he said, and only needed if the customer expects a response about the issue.

"What they can expect is that the comment will be investigated," Tanis said, and if the issue can be resolved or rectified, it will be.

What (customers) can expect is that the (ICE) comment will be investigated.

Tim Tanis

USAG Schweinfurt Strategic Planner



Maria Theresa Kemp (right) fills out a hard copy of the customer evaluation form at the Bradley Inn reception desk while Justin Miller, a front desk employee waits to receive it. Getting feedback from customers helps all establishments on the installation better their services to their patrons.

ROCK ON

Bucky Covington, American country music singer, holds the microphone out to the audience to sing along to one of his songs. Covington, a finalist from the fifth season of the television show "American Idol," came to USAG Schweinfurt Feb. 21 to perform a country music concert at the Finney Fitness Center. His tour with United Service Organization took him to Kosovo; Netherlands; and Stuttgart, Kaiserslautern, and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

Photo by Sandra Wilson



PTA provides essential support

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

The Schweinfurt Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association can sometimes play a hidden role in the school setting, but some may be surprised at how deeply involved it is in fundraising and putting on events for the families in the community.

"The idea behind PTA is to have the involvement between the school and the community ... in support of the kids," said Robert Voce, SES PTA treasurer as well as the educational technologist at the school.

The SES PTA sponsors school-wide events like the "Read Across America." Other typical events with PTA backing are the spelling bee, science fair, and the Wilbur awards.

"As a parent with a child here, you're not aware of what the PTA is behind," said Rebecca Pelkey, SES

PTA president.

The organization not only sponsors events but also aims to fundraise to help out with supplies in the classrooms and cover costs of school activities.

"Everything we have here in fundraisers all turns around and goes back to the school or to the students through events that we provide," Pelkey said.

The individual and class photos serve as one of the most substantial fundraisers, Voce said.

A percentage of the photographer cost is returned to the PTA to channel into other activities and events.

The elementary school has also reserved a place for the PTA store which sells logo and mascot items on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:45 to 11 a.m.

Because of the long list of tasks that it undertakes, the PTA is always

recruiting volunteers.

Box Tops for Education are collected, Scholastic book orders for the school are made monthly, and planning for flea markets and bingo nights are also in the line-up.

"We can't do it without the bodies there to help us. The PTA is open to everyone, not just those with children here at the school. It's open to those also that don't have children that just want to get involved and be a part of the school," Pelkey said.

The SES PTA meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at the school starting at 2:30 p.m.

Attending meetings is a prime way to get started volunteering.

"I've enjoyed being a part of PTA. It's a worthwhile organization, and they do good not just for the kids; but for the whole community," Voce said.

Quartet inspires students

Story and photo by
SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Schweinfurt Middle School band students got a special treat Feb. 20 with a visit from the United States Air Force in Europe clarinet quartet.

"We prefer to do band students because they understand more what we do. They are the ones who would appreciate us the most," said Staff Sgt. Becky Schartz, part of the quartet.

Their whirlwind tour will take them to nearly 60 Department of Defense Dependent Schools throughout February and March playing a variety of classical, ragtime, dixieland, popular, and light jazz pieces.

"(The students) need more of this stuff to motivate them to practice," said Joel Helston, music teacher at both the elementary school and SMS.

"Here, four people come in and say the exact same things I've been telling them," he said, explaining how the quartet reiterated to the students the need to practice musical scales in order to improve.

"If you know your scales, you will have won half the battle with difficult music," said Master Sgt. Gail Tucker.

The quartet only had five rehearsals to prepare for the show, but anyone could have said they played masterfully. Even so, they emphasized the importance of practicing in order to get to that point.

"After the lesson, don't go home and watch TV— practice what he just told you," said Senior Airman Denise Cardona-Santos.

The quartet played 45 minutes of classical music, most tunes recognizable by the students, and then fielded questions and offered tips.

"Start out by at least practicing in 15-minute segments—a little bit every day— and play it slowly," Tucker said, when a student asked how they could "get as good" as them on the instrument.

Each musician in the quartet shared how they first started playing when they were young and what encouraged them to stick with it.

Now, as active duty military, they are "expected to be prepared," Tucker said. Travel takes them all over Europe to perform for various audiences. Some active duty military musicians even deploy to provide "a touch of home" to servicemembers that are away from their loved ones.

The quartet's visit to the SMS band students accomplished Helston's task of encouraging the students to aspire to higher heights in their instrument. Building music appreciation and pleasure in playing, or "music culture," is something, Helston said, that is helped along by professionals such as the clarinet quartet.

"There's the potential here— it just needs to be tapped," he said, and hosting visits from professional musicians is one of the first steps.



Members of the United States Air Force in Europe clarinet quartet play a classical music piece for the Schweinfurt Middle School band students Feb. 20.

Community members bolster bonds with bullets at shooting competition

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS
Bavarian News

Reiterswiesen Schutzenhaus boasts a quaint restaurant tucked away in the hills of Bad Kissingen. Plaques, trophies, and typical Bavarian style plates embellish the walls of the two rooms.

Follow the sounds of gunshots and find two indoor shooting ranges and floors lined with fresh bullet shells, walls decorated with targets, and the smell of gunpowder.

It is an ideal place for anyone looking to hone their shooting skills or just enjoy a day of sport shooting, and members of the Schweinfurt community did just that.

Whether for the competition, camaraderie, or just for fun, military police, health clinic staff, and other Soldiers took a trip Feb. 25 to the Reiterswiesen Schutzenhaus in Bad Kissingen to partake in a daylong shooting competition.

"This is a partnership event to formulate and strengthen bonds and friendships between the Soldiers, the community, and the Reiterswiesen Schutzenhaus," said 1st Sgt. Hassan Wilson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt.



Members of the Schweinfurt community aim their weapons at the targets while others wait their turn during a shooting competition in Bad Kissingen.

Garrison Schweinfurt.

The staff of the shooting club welcomed nine members of the community with smiles, coffee, and breakfast.

After a briefing of how the competition would be conducted, the group divided into two teams as they awaited their turn to fire off shots.

The competition comprised

of a 25 meter free standing M9 pistol shooting, a sports pistol target shooting, and a free standing machine pistol shooting.

Gunners were scored on their best

ten shots from each event. Awards were presented to the winning team.

"It's a new experience so I'm excited for the chance to do something fun and different.

"It's fellowship with the German community and a good way to get out and enjoy a different culture," said Spc. Jessica Simpson, lab technician at the health clinic, noting that this was her first time at the range and she looked forward to shooting different weapons.

"This is a big event ... we're real proud to be here. It's important because we're making cohesion with our partners and the German (police)," said Sgt. Jose Aviles of 1st Battalion 77th Field Artillery.

Arno Rooler, director of the Schutzenhaus, and Roland Sturmer who helped coordinate the event, expressed their excitement about the community involvement and hope to continue the partnership and further the bond.

"We've had Soldiers here before, but not during Aschermittwochschiessen," said Rooler, noting that "Aschermittwochschiessen" is a shooting event on Ash Wednesday, an exciting occasion for the club that is soon to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Schweinfurt visitor explains secret to EEO success

Story and photo by
MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

A special visitor carried a special message from Washington to Schweinfurt Feb. 19.

Lawrence Self, director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management for the National Institutes of Health, offered managers and supervisors in the USAG Schweinfurt a lesson in leadership.

"(Equal Employment Opportunity) is really a function of leadership," Self said to the assembled leaders of the garrison.

"If the leaders aren't involved, if they are not committed to this EEO process, then you have nothing."

Self, who worked with the Army for 14 years earlier in his career, made clear that the responsibility for creating positive and effective work environments rests squarely on leaders' shoulders.

"It has to work from the top down. It's not one of those programs that can work from the bottom up," he said.

"If the employee feels that they can trust their manager, if they feel that the confidence level is there, that that manager is technically proficient, and that manager will take care of them, they love coming to work," said Bennie Howse, USAG Schweinfurt EEO officer.

Educating leaders and developing them to deal with employees fairly is nothing new to the government service or the Army, according to Self.

"EEO's been effective since, I would say, back in the 70s. And the Army has been in the forefront in this process. They truly, truly have. There's no doubt about that," he said.

"At one time, that was the thought process," he said, of the notion that EEO only addressed concerns of women and minorities. "Then it becomes almost a cultural thing."

Managing and leading within the parameters of EEO laws and regulations is something Self called a "soft skill."

"We have to continue to keep this in front of (leaders). This is one of those soft skills. But that's fine," Self said.

Howse, who has known Self for more than 20 years and was instrumental in bringing the guest to Schweinfurt, noted a few critical points for leaders to follow.

"Treating everybody fairly is key. Being consistent in decision making is crucial—defining tasks based on that mission, and not on one of those non-merit principles," such as race, ethnicity or gender, he said.

Lawrence Self browses books the Ledward Library had on display for Black History Month during his visit Feb. 19.



Connecticut man, town adopts Schweinfurt Soldiers, families

by **SANDRA WILSON**
Bavarian News

When it comes to hometown support for deployed Soldiers and their families, Weston, Conn., is probably not the first place that comes to mind.

But truly, it should be, as one man has made it his mission to get involved in military support while encouraging his hometown to jump on board as well.

In a phone interview from the states, Gil Sanborn, the driving force of support to first the 2nd Brigade Combat Team "Dagger" and now the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate) "Blackhawks," explained the pivotal moment that turned his focus towards those who "selflessly serve."

"I was a direct witness to the attacks in New York ... I was looking up at the first burning tower when I saw the second plane come in right above me and literally blow through the second tower," Sanborn said.

"It really was a life-changing event for me ... I took both the attack personally, and I took the rescue personally and felt that I needed to step back and look at my life and what the implications were."

Never having served in the military, and regretting it as an adult, I wanted to find a way to somehow make some small compensation for that. It gives me great pleasure.

Gil Sanborn, Military Supporter

That experience fueled his desire to give back in appreciation, starting with the rescue workers of Sept. 11.

When American Soldiers began to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, he "adopted" a deployed Soldier and sent numerous packages with no response from the receiver.

In subsequent days, his assistant at the financial firm where he was employed had a brother deploying with a platoon. Sanborn began sending packages that way.

"It was such an enjoyable experience, and really what I wanted to do was to develop a personal connection with military personnel who were deployed rather than just writing checks to an organization," Sanborn said, explaining the relationship formed with this second "adopted" Soldier.

Through the connection with this second Soldier, he was referred to the Dagger Brigade in Schweinfurt, whose leadership helped Sanborn,

his family, and the community of Weston to develop a plan of support for the brigade.

"It's really amazing the efforts that one group, one hometown, one organization can make," said Capt. Joshua Buchanan, commander of Company D, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment.

The Weston soccer club did a soccer ball drive and collected nearly 150 balls to send to deployed platoons for distribution.

The senior citizens made cooling scarves for the deployed Soldiers to use during the hot months in Iraq.

"The Kiwanis club really is the main sponsor of the community support," Sanborn said explaining how they set up call-ins so that the community could hear directly from Soldiers in the war and family members, with their challenges living overseas.

Sanborn and his community continued their mission of support by hosting holiday parties in Schweinfurt for family readiness groups and also

by making it possible for the Soldiers to celebrate Christmas in Iraq.

When the Dagger Brigade redeployed, a winter festival was put on for the entire community sponsored by Sanborn and his home town.

In addition, airline mileage and money was donated for Dagger families and wounded Soldiers in the states to reunite with the brigade in Schweinfurt and attend a memorial ceremony.

Support continues to the Blackhawk Brigade in similar ways and in new ways with things like the storytellers concert which took place at Schweinfurt Elementary School March 5.

"We have all this huge support network that we're tied into in America. That means a tremendous amount to the families here in Germany," Buchanan said.

"Gil gives us a lot of support ... It really makes our job easier as the rear detachment, because it's not just us supporting them."

To Sanborn, the opportunity to give back is pure enjoyment.

"Never having served in the military, and regretting it as an adult, I wanted to find a way to somehow make some small compensation for that," he said. "It gives me great pleasure. For me, it's a hobby."

Hohenfels students earn national ranking, make school history at JROTC competition

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

After competing against the 14 top teams in the country, the Hohenfels High School all-female rifle team brought back the school's first ever national ranking with their fifth place finish at the Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Service Championship Feb. 13-14 in Camp Perry, Ohio.

"We're the first athletic team from Hohenfels to go to a stateside competition, and not only did we do well, we brought home some bacon," said coach 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Bruce Andrews.

Second-year-shooter Jessica Walloch, whose scores both days were her highest ever in competition, finished twelfth overall out of 62 shooters.

Her three teammates, Katelyn Bronell, Emily Adams, and Sarah Adams, all ranked within the top 30 competitors.

With 13 consecutive conference titles and four European Championship titles under their belt, the team said they were ready to prove themselves in a more competitive environment.

"We were confident going in," said Bronell. "We don't crack under pressure. We got through it with each other."

"The kids asked me before we got there how we would do. I told them if we shoot up to our capability we can finish in the top half, possibly even on the podium," said Andrews, who explained that because of the high level of competition first to fifth place teams won a spot on the podium, a trophy, and medals for each student.

"For a little school, we do well," said Andrews.

"No," interrupted Bronell, "we do awesome, not well."

Though Hohenfels is consistently one of the top European rifle teams, their spot at the competition this year was uncertain after Patch, who finished seventh at Camp Perry, beat



Photo by 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Bruce Andrews

From left to right: Emily Adams, Sarah Adams, Katelyn Bronell, and Jessica Walloch shoot in kneeling position Feb. 14 during the second day of competition at the Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Service Championship in Camp Perry, Ohio. The foursome from Hohenfels High School finished fifth against the 64 best Army JROTC rifle teams in the country.

Hohenfels by two out of 1,500 points in the European Championship, and earned the Department of Defense Dependents Schools slot to the Service Championship.

Having placed fourth overall of the 64 teams that competed to qualify for the championship, Hohenfels petitioned to attend in place of another team from 2nd Brigade Army Cadet Command.

They were granted the petition,

and with support from Hohenfels Community and Spouses Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10557, Hohenfels Booker T. Washington Lodge, and Mayer's Deutsche Kantine, went on to beat Patch in Ohio by 22 points of the possible 4,800.

"It hit me today that we beat out teams that shoot all year," said Emily Adams.

Hohenfels, who compete in just six matches throughout their season,

beat teams that had already entered 15 to 20 matches this season by the time they made it to Camp Perry, said Andrews.

"The average shooter in the states by May (at the end of one season) has had as much competition experience as our kids have when they graduate," he said.

All four girls, of which not one has more than three years of rifle experience, agreed that it is their

teamwork and concentration that allowed them to do so well.

"We're like sisters. We know each other without thinking about it," said Bronell. "We have jokes and laugh all the time. I could see some of the other teams were too stressed out. Once we're off the range we're back to our normal selves."

"You know that even if you do badly, your team still has your back. It helps knowing they are behind you," said Emily Adams, adding that if someone sees her teammate getting too stressed out, they know how to snap her out of it.

Andrews said part of their success comes from practicing how to not over think when they're on the range, to let their subconscious go where it wants to go. He said he also teaches the girls not to focus on their score, but on getting the best possible shot they can each time.

"I used to write down scores at every practice. I haven't done that in three years," he said.

"We never count on the scores," said Emily Adams, "we're just thinking about the next target. Each one is its own mini-match."

Still, it certainly is not that the team takes competition lightly.

"It takes dedication. When you come to practice, school, friends, family matters all have to go away. You have to give it your full attention," said Sarah Adams.

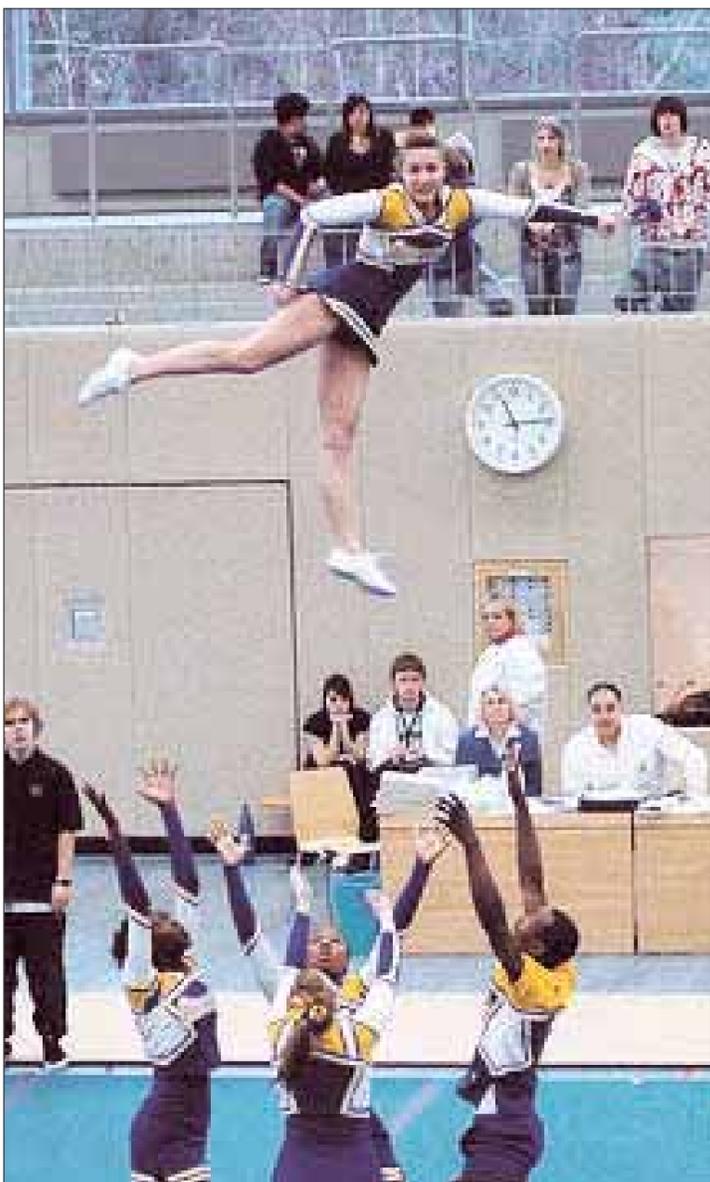
Though rifle gets their full attention at practice, school work is never put on the back burner.

The girls joked with Andrews for making them sit in "study hall" at their hotel all day Wednesday before the match Friday.

"They are all on the honor roll, and we like to keep them there," said Andrews.

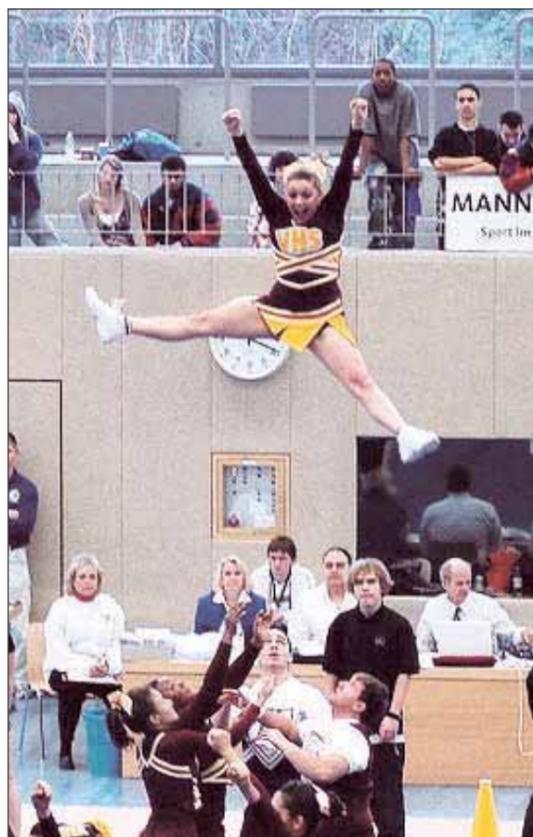
While concentrating on finishing the school year, the team said they are already looking forward to next year's competition.

"We'll get 'em good next year," said Sarah Adams, "first place."



Ansbach Middle/High School soars into second placed in Division II with their enthusiasm and performance.

BRING IT ON Cheer competition takes squads to new heights



Cheer squads from all over Europe compete in the 2009 European Cheerleading Championships, sponsored by the Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe, in Mannheim Feb. 24. Vilseck High School (left) captivates the crowd with a high-flying basket toss. Hohenfels (below) clinches third place in Division III with their herkies, stunts and cheers.

Photos by Kelli Bland



USAREUR CSM reaches out, opens cyber portal for questions, concerns

by Sgt. Maj. LISA HUNTER
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

Since taking on his position as the U.S. Army Europe command sergeant major, one burning question Command Sgt. Major Ralph Beam says he has been asking himself is how he can best communicate with USAREUR Soldiers.

He said the answer came from his nieces and nephews. "My nieces and nephews are all online. They all want me to check out their MySpace and Facebook pages," Beam explained.

"I realized that most of our younger Soldiers are getting their news and information online," he said. "They are communicating the same way. So, if I want to communicate with them, I need to be online, too."

Beam decided to make his cyberspace debut with a blog on the USAREUR Web site.

He chose a blog because he said he wants to receive feedback and answer questions, as well as share information with USAREUR Soldiers, Family members, and civilian employees.

His blog gives him a conduit to do

that without all the barriers involved in traditional means of communication.

When the Command Sergeant Major Blog went online Feb. 26, Beam's first order of business was to lay out the ground rules for the forum.

"I plan to answer or get the answer to any question you have that's within my purview. Also, I'm going to post your comments, both positive and negative," Beam wrote in his first post. "But, this blog is not a substitute for your chain of command."

The sergeant major said his blog will remain professional, and will not publish personal attacks or anything that violates operations security. Everything else is fair game, he said.

"I'm expecting to get some routine questions and some tough questions, too," he said.

"That's Okay, I'm a very informal person. I will tell them what I think right should look like. It's as simple as that."

So far, the USAREUR senior enlisted advisor has fielded questions ranging from GPS addresses for USAREUR installations, to the

smoking policy for government buildings, to authorized uniform headgear.

While he has responded to all of them, Beam said he doesn't claim to have all the answers, and relies on the "smart people around him" to get the right answers as soon as possible.

Beam added that because he realizes Soldiers today want to read something that's new and different -- not the "same old, same old" -- he will host a "guest blogger" from time to time.

Guest bloggers he has lined up thus far include the USAREUR Commanding General, Gen. Carter Ham, and Installation Management Command-Europe senior enlisted advisor Command Sgt. Maj. Tracey Anbiya.

Beam's Web page and blog can be found at www.hqsareur.army.mil/institution/Leaders/CSM/default.htm.

Cyber-surfers can submit questions or comments at that page by clicking the "Ask the CSM" button, or by sending an e-mail to askthecsm@eur.army.mil.



Command Sgt. Major Beam makes his cyberspace debut Feb. 26, reaching out to Soldiers and answering questions in his blog.

Officials confirm Cobra King's identity, past

continued from Page 1

of naming vehicles with the first letter of their companies' designations. Cobra King went into battle with tankers from Company C, 37th Tank Battalion.

One longtime U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr civilian employee said the tank has been in place at Rose Barracks for at least 10 years.

Sgt. Brian Stigall of the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery said he drove past the tank many times while training on Rose Barracks, but normally paid little attention to it. But after Stigall attended a historical reenactment of the Battle of the Bulge, the Jumbo by the base's back gate suddenly stood out in his mind.

The road to discovery

A historical marker outside a still-standing bunker on the outskirts of Bastogne displays images of Cobra King that reminded the air defense artilleryman of the tank in Vilseck.

After a tour of duty at Fort Bliss, Texas, Stigall said he returned to Germany and began a mission to track down the vehicle's history.

He started his quest with Steven Ruhnke, the 1st Armored Division museum curator in Baumholder, Germany, who introduced him to U.S. Army Europe staff curator Gabriele E. Torony.

Torony knew just who to enlist to get to the bottom of Cobra King's identity -- Charles Lemons, curator for the Patton Museum at Fort Knox, Ky. Lemons is considered the Army's top authority on tanks, she said.

Lemons' research and expertise shed more

light on the background of the Army's Shermans and unveiled details that suggested the tank in Vilseck might indeed be Cobra King.

Identifying the King

Cobra King is one of only 254 M4A3E2 Jumbos built by the Fisher Tank Arsenal, starting in June 1944. The first versions of the 42-ton Jumbos carried a 75mm main gun, two 50-caliber and one 30-caliber machine guns. Cobra King was later upgraded to 76mm in 1945, according to Lemons' findings. The upgrade was ordered by 3rd Army commander Gen. George S. Patton to make Cobra King a more effective anti-tank weapon, Lemons said.

"The tank was simply 'up-gunned' -- a simple process that was done at the order of Gen. Patton in March to April 1945," Lemons wrote in an e-mail to USAREUR historians.

Stigall said Baltimore historian Joe DeMarco pointed out several more clues that helped the sergeant identify the tank: mismatched road wheels, reversed return and tension rollers.

DeMarco's records also show the vehicle's location from the end of World War II to today. Ruhnke said it was part of the 1st Armored Division's historic vehicle collection through the 1980s and was transferred to the 3rd Infantry Division museum in 1989.

Strong evidence

The historians also provided the strongest evidence of the tank's identity -- information on its serial and registration numbers.

"Records show the tank in question had a registration number of 3083081 and Cobra King's number (is) 3083084, as seen in the

famous photo from Bastogne," Stigall said.

Torony said the current number was incorrectly painted on the tank's turret during periodic maintenance.

DeMarco's records pointed out several additional keys to the tank's identification, Stigall said.

Digging deeper

Torony and her husband traveled to Rose Barracks in late September to scrape corrosion off the tank's tow hooks to reveal its serial numbers, which she photographed and sent to Lemons at the Patton Museum.

"I had my doubts that this was the tank; however, when Charles Lemons confirmed the serial numbers that we had scraped on the tow hooks, I knew then this was the authentic tank."

Tank turrets and hulls have unique serial numbers welded onto them, Lemons said.

Stigall and Ruhnke went to Vilseck to dig deeper, comparing the numbers on the tank's road wheels, hull, and turret with numbers in their records.

"If you look at the photographs you will see the mold number is visible on the left side of the turret on Cobra King," he said. "That same number is visible on the M4A3E2 at Vilseck. The mold numbers are most certainly unique identifiers, as I have not seen any duplication in Sherman Jumbo tanks I have seen."

"There was a lot of little stuff for us to look for," Stigall said. "We got a perfect match."

With the facts all pointing to Cobra King, USAREUR historians and curators confirmed the tank's identity and lineage Dec. 24, 2008.

Cobra King has now been officially recognized by Department of the Army museum curators as a highly significant piece of World War II history, Torony said, and is expected to go on display at the National Museum of the U.S. Army, scheduled to open in 2013 near Washington, D.C.

A significant find

"This is the most significant Sherman that I can imagine being available for inclusion in the planned World War II gallery for NMUSA," Kenneth Christmas-Smith, the museum's chief design curator, told Torony.

"The incredible provenance of this tank certainly would supersede using one that had been selected previously."

"This tank needs to be protected and restored," Torony said. "The most suitable place for this historical tank is inside ... (the NMUSA) ... where the tank will be viewed by our veterans and their children for generations to come."

While Torony said Cobra King can't be restored to operational status because of its aged condition and Army museum regulations that prevent old parts from being replaced, Stigall said he feels the tank should be displayed where USAREUR Soldiers can learn more about their heritage and World War II, before it goes to Washington.

"This is a very rare piece of our military history. She and her crews fought through one of the biggest battles of World War II and then continued to fight till the end of the war," he said. "Our past is so often forgotten, and having a piece of our history that people can stand next to and touch is a great way to connect to the past."

RESET marks 2SCR transition to training

continued from Page 1

This RESET is significant because it is the first time it has ever been performed in Germany.

Traditionally the program has been conducted at Fort Lewis, Wash.

It was last completed there for 2SCR in 2005.

The Stryker vehicles, during repair at Vilseck's Rose Barracks, undergo a thorough cleaning and initial inspection and road tests.

Damaged parts are then fixed and vehicles undergo upgrades to the communication systems, armor, and other technologies.

They are then put back together, painted, and go through a final quality inspection.

The RESET is a four-month process for the entire Stryker fleet, lasting from February through May of this year.

When completed, these vehicles will return to their units and are ready for platoons and squads to begin training with them.

While the RESET is most recognized for refurbishing Stryker vehicles, approximately 38,000 pieces of equipment are going through a refit. This also includes weapons, night vision devices, and more.

Now that we're back from Iraq, this is our priority.

Maj. Jon Pendell
2SCR PAO

'Yes we can' attitude brings honors, awards to History Day competitors

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"Women's Liberation Movement" during the 1970s.

These students emerged from a group of 25 individuals who originally entered the competition at NMS.

Dr. Elizabeth Childs, the principal of the new school, is "very proud of the accomplishments of these students. They are the first groups of NHD students to win honors for the Netzaberg Knights."

Joe Amabile, NHD sponsor, is proud of these NMS students as he watched them dedicate hours of thought, time, and effort on their respective projects. "Mr. A," as the students call him, said, "The students had the 'Yes! We can' attitude and proved it!"

This year's national theme is "An Individual in History: Actions and Legacies." The national NHD competition will attract over 500,000

students and 40,000 teachers. The national finals will be held June at the University of Maryland at College Park, Md.

The 35-year-old history competition evolved from a simple one-day competition to a yearlong nationwide competition that builds research and critical thinking skills for students while bringing real-life meaning to history in the classroom.

President Obama wants America to regain its leadership role in producing top-performing students, and the skills they develop during the NHD competition help them achieve that goal.

Mike Thompson, district superintendent, coordinated the Bavarian NHD competition with six district schools.

The competition was the first step towards the DoDDS European NHD competition to be held in Wiesbaden

next month.

The DoDDS European winners can potentially advance to the June National Competition at College Park held in conjunction with The History Channel.

NHD competitors from across the nation gather for a convention-like event that crowns first and second place winners in seven educational categories.

As this competition ends, students and teachers will already be setting their sights on the 2010 theme, Innovation in History: Expression, Ingenuity, Enterprise.

DoDDS Bavarian District is committed to growing the NHD competition, and notes that it aligns with curriculum standards across all learning disciplines by developing critical thinking skills for students that will not only help them succeed in college, but in their future lives.