

Fire safety crucial during holidays

Every year hundreds of fires resulting in injuries and deaths are caused by acts of carelessness. Smoking in bed, unmonitored cooking and misuse of supplemental heating equipment account for many of these fires.

Simply learning to be more diligent and practicing fire safety can eliminate the needless loss of property, serious injury and even death. Special care must be taken during the holiday season to prevent fires and their potentially hazardous consequences.

Christmas trees

* When purchasing an artificial tree look for a "fire resistant" label. Although it does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and can be more quickly extinguished.

* Check for freshness when purchasing a live tree. A fresh tree is green. Its needles are hard to pull from their branches and do not break when bent. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin. When tapped on the ground a fresh tree will not shed large numbers of needles.

* Set up a tree away from heat sources at home. Place it at a distance from fireplaces or radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

Christmas lights

* Whether indoors or out, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory to ensure conformity with safety standards. Use only lights equipped with fused plugs.

* Check each set of lights, whether old or new, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bared wires and loose connections. Throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned out bulbs promptly and replace only with bulbs of the same wattage.

* Use no more than three standard size sets of lights per extension cord. Make sure extension cords are rated for their intended use.

* Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights. Someone touching a branch could be electrocuted.

* Before using lights outdoors, read the attached labels to ensure they have been certified for outdoor use.

* Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls or another firm support to protect them from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place. Never use

nails or tacks. Alternatively, run strings of lights through hooks.

* Turn off all decorative lights when you go to bed or leave the house. They could short out in your absence and cause a fire.

Decorations

* Use only noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles made from plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if they are ingested by children.

* Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreen decorative items. Always use nonflammable holders and place candles where they cannot be accidentally knocked down.

* Parents of small children must take extra care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Keep trimmings with small, removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid potential swallowing or inhalation. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that could tempt a child to eat them.

* Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin contact while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow product use directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

In addition, year-round fire safety practices must not lapse during the holidays.

Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the number one cause of home fire deaths in the United States. Never smoke in bed.

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires in the United States, killing hundreds and injuring thousands annually. Supervise all kitchen activities and never leave cooking unattended.

Home heating equipment fires are the second leading cause of home fires and related deaths in the United States each year. Properly maintain heating equipment and use supplemental heating appliances such as portable and space heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves with extreme caution. Be advised that these types of devices are prohibited from use in all government facilities.

Smoke detectors save lives. All Army Family Housing units within the 104th Area Support Group have hard-wired smoke detectors installed. If you live off-post an investment in smoke detectors is an absolute necessity.

Escape plans should be part of every family's overall home fire safety plan. Practice home fire drills with the entire family at least twice a year.



Photo by David Ruderman

Laural Miller (right) and Chritina Thrutchley, 123rd Main Support Battalion family members from Wiesbaden and Dexheim, respectively, examine ceramic ware at the Wächtersbacher Keramik factory outlet in Brachtal-Schlierbach.

Day trips for holiday weekends

Shop for pottery in Wächtersbach; go hiking on the Felsenmeer

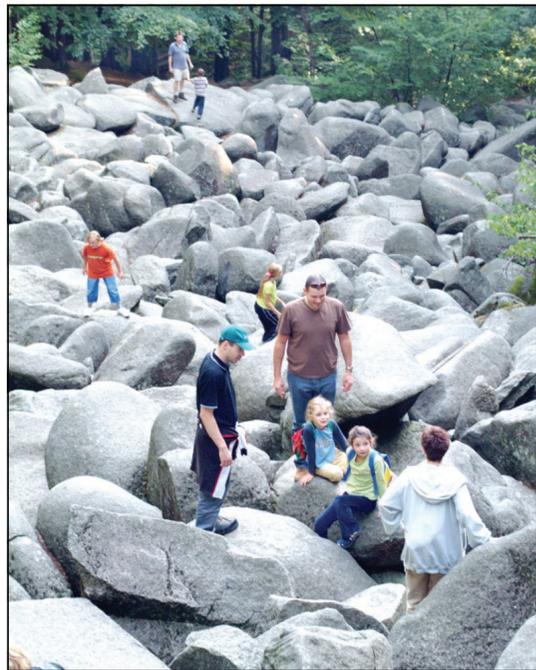


Photo by Karl Weisel

Young and old get a workout while navigating their way through the Felsenmeer, or "sea of rocks," in the Odenwald.

By David Ruderman
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

With Thanksgiving upon us and Christmas just around the corner, here's a tip on decking out your holiday dinner table without spending a fortune.

Check out the Wächtersbacher Keramik factory outlet, about a half-hour drive from Hanau, for quality plates, platters, bowls, cups and saucers of at close-out prices. The ceramic works, founded in 1832, has been a mecca for American shoppers for decades, offering quality tableware with slight imperfections, discontinued lines and remainders at less than half their common retail price.

Is it really a deal? "Absolutely," said 123rd Main Support Battalion family member Laural Miller, who drove up from Wiesbaden with a friend on a recent weekend to check out the stock. "It's not too expensive, but thoughtful. It makes great presents for teachers and stuff — amazingly so. I want it all."

Call your Outdoor Recreation or USO office to see if there's a trip scheduled or make the pilgrimage yourself. If you drive don't waste time roaming the streets of Wächtersbach looking for the outlet — you won't find it there. The factory and attached retail branch are actually about five miles away in the village of Brachtal-Schlierbach.

Exit Autobahn 66 at Wächtersbach

and continue straight ahead on B 276. Continue on the priority road past Wächtersbach and through Hesseldorf till you reach Schlierbach. Turn right toward Udenhain on Fabrikstrasse and cruise slowly. The factory is about two blocks down on the left.

The outlet is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Staff members speak English and will accept Tax Relief Office forms.

For information call Wächtersbacher Keramik at civ (06053) 80122.

'Sea of rocks'

Young and old will enjoy exploring the Felsenmeer, or "sea of rocks" in the Odenwald, near the town of Reichenbach, southeast of Darmstadt.

Once a giant quarry for Roman settlers, one can still find columns among the giant boulders which seem to flow down through the surrounding forest — a reminder that the Roman Empire once extended far into northern Europe.

Be sure to wear good hiking shoes and try to pick a day when the boulders are not too slick as climbing can be treacherous.

The Felsenmeer is located about 10 kilometers from the Bensheim (between Darmstadt and Heidelberg) exit of A-5. From Bensheim follow signs to Reichenbach and look for signs to Beedenkirchen and the Felsenmeer.

Chapel holiday schedule

Services, tree lightings, concerts fill season with joy

221st Base Support Battalion

Hainerberg Chapel holiday events

Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Mass	10-11 a.m.
Nov. 30	Advent wreath workshop	5-6:30 p.m.
Dec. 5	Community tree lighting	5-6:30 p.m.
Dec. 7	Children's choir program	4-7 p.m.
Dec. 9	USAREUR Band/Chorus concert	3-9 p.m.
Dec. 12	Home school Christmas program	5-10 p.m.
Dec. 13	Christian concert with Dan Meyer	6-10 p.m.
Dec. 24	Candlelight service (Protestant)	7-8 p.m.
	Midnight Mass	11:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Dec. 25	Children's Mass	10 a.m. to noon
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Mass	10 a.m. to noon

Wiesbaden Army Airfield Chapel holiday events

Dec. 3	Community tree lighting	4-4:30 p.m.
Dec. 20	Gospel youth Christmas	1-6 p.m.
Dec. 31	Gospel Watch Night service	11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Dexheim Chapel holiday events

Dec. 11	Community tree lighting	4:45-5:45 p.m.
Dec. 24	Children's Mass	5-6 p.m.
	Service of carols and readings	6:30-7:30 p.m.

222nd Base Support Battalion

Community-wide

Nov. 26	Thanksgiving service (Chapel 1)	11:30 a.m.
Dec. 5	Christmas tree lighting program	4:30 p.m.

Roman Catholic (St. Michael Chapel 2)

Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Mass	11 a.m.
Dec. 8	Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation	6 p.m.
Dec. 24	Children's Mass	6 p.m.
Dec. 25	Christmas Mass	11 a.m.
Jan. 1	Maternity of Mary Holy Day Mass	11 a.m.

Christian, All (Chapel 1)

Dec. 3, 10 and 17	Christian Advent evening (prayer service, light supper)	6 p.m.
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Collective Protestant (Chapel 1)

Dec. 14	Advent festival of readings/carols	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 21	Children's Christmas program	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve candlelight service	5 p.m.
	Christmas Eve fellowship (drinks, finger food)	6 p.m.

Lutheran (Chapel 1)

Dec. 24	Christmas Eve fellowship (drinks, finger food)	6 p.m.
	Christmas Eve candlelight communion service	6:30 p.m.

Gospel service (Chapel 1)

Dec. 31	Watch Night service	10 p.m.
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(Chapels 1 and 2 are located on Smith Barracks in Baumholder). Call the 222nd BSB Ministry Team at mil 485-1570 or civ (06783) 6-1570 for more information. For information about other religious services call:

Eastern Orthodox, Chaplain Sahady, mil 480-5753

Jewish, Rabbi Cohen, mil 480-6149

Muslim, Chaplain Al-Mubarak, mil 489-6859

284th Base Support Battalion

Giessen Catholic holiday program

Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Mass (fellowship afterwards)	9 a.m.
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving	
Nov. 30	First Sunday of advent, bless Advent candle	
Dec. 8	Feast of Immaculate Conception holiday Mass	7 p.m.
Dec. 18	Penance celebration	6 p.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Mass	4 p.m.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	9 a.m.



Photo by Christine Kümpele

Community members worship at Fliegerhorst Chapel.

Jan. 1 Feast of Mary, Mother of God holiday Mass 11:30 a.m.

Friedberg Catholic holiday program

Nov. 30	First Sunday of Advent, bless Advent candle	
Dec. 8	Feast of Immaculate Conception holiday Mass	5 p.m.
Dec. 16	Penance celebration	5 p.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Mass	8 p.m.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	11:30 a.m.
Jan. 1	Feast of Mary, Mother of God holiday Mass	9 a.m.

Giessen Protestant holiday program

Nov. 30	Advent	10 a.m.
Dec. 7	Advent	10 a.m.
Dec. 14	Advent	10 a.m.
Dec. 19	Christmas caroling (all services)	7 p.m.
Dec. 21	Advent	10 a.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve candlelight	7 p.m.
Dec. 31	Gospel Watch Night	8 p.m.

Friedberg Protestant holiday program

Nov. 30	Advent	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 7	Advent	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 14	Advent	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 21	Advent	9:30 a.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	7 p.m.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day	noon
Dec. 31	New Year's Eve	9 p.m.

414th Base Support Battalion

Hanau's Pioneer Chapel

Nov. 27	Thanksgiving service	10:30 a.m.
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve community service	7 p.m.

Catholic services at Fliegerhorst Chapel

Dec. 7	Parish Reconciliation service	6 p.m.
Dec. 8	Holy Day of Obligation Mass	6 p.m.
	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	
Dec. 24	Children's Christmas Mass	3 p.m.
	Midnight Christmas Mass	midnight
Dec. 25	Bi-lingual Christmas Mass	12:45 p.m.
Jan. 1	Holy Day of Obligation Mass	noon
	Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God	

Christmas tree lighting

Dec. 11	On Fliegerhorst Kaserne by the AAFES Shoppette	5 p.m.
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