

Butzbach's Rock and Read a hit

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Students at Butzbach Elementary School love December not only for the holidays, but also because it's the time of the year for the Rock and Read Program. As part of the program adults read favorite stories to students from preschool to sixth grade.

"It's the third year we are offering the program, and every year more and more parents volunteer to read to the students," said school reading specialist Pat Sands. "This year we had a good response from the community. Twenty-seven parents and community members signed up to read to students. That means that each class has one adult reading to them this week, and some classes even have two adults reading a story to them."

Having more people reading to them is good for the students, she said.

Parents agree with Sands and support the program.

"I think more parents would like to participate and read to the kids if they had the opportunity to do so. Very often they can't come to school because of their jobs and other obligations," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Sudduth of the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment.

Sudduth spent the last day of his Rest and Recuperation leave at the school reading to his daughter's class.

"My daughter encourages me every night to read to her. I am glad she enjoys reading and listening to stories, because I think it's important. I also enjoy reading to the kids, not just because my daughter is in that class. It's a way of reaching out to the kids and giving them the message that somebody is out there who cares for them," Sudduth said.

"Reading to the kids is inspiring especially when you see their attentive faces hanging on to every word. It makes you remember that our youth of today are definitely our future. And I think the future looks bright," said Lt. Col. Bart Shreve, 284th Base Support Battalion commander, who also volunteered for the program.

But Rock and Read is more than just a change in the class routine.



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Sudduth of 1-37th Armor reads a story to second-grade students of the Butzbach Elementary School during the Rock and Read week Dec. 8-12.

"I like it when adults read to us because you get to hear different stories. Miss Sands read 'How Santa Has Lost His Job' to us and it was really funny. At home I read 'Captain Underpants' books. I think adults should come to school more often and read to us, because then we know that we are important to them," said fourth-grader Michael Hines.

"I like both — reading books and having someone reading stories to me," said Leandra Tims, a Butzbach fourth-grader. "It's nice when the class sits together and listens to the stories. We can talk about that later or get the book and read it again. The Christmas stories are nice, but

I like fiction better."

"I like it a little bit better if I can read by myself because I can get more details and I can read over a sentence again if I don't understand something. But when an adult reads to me it is relaxing. I like that," said Frankie Thumhart, another fourth-grader.

"It's great when adults read stories to us because then we don't have to read. My favorites are Christmas stories," said fourth-grader DeMarcus Jones. "I think parents should come more often and read to us, because then we know that they care about us."

Commander's corner

Happy and safe holidays to all

By Lt. Col. Bart Shreve

284th Base Support Battalion commander

Command Sgt. Maj. Keith Francis and I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone in the 284th Base Support Battalion community a happy and safe holiday season.

I also want to thank all the members of the community who have assisted with holiday events such as the Thanksgiving dinner, tree lighting ceremonies, photos with Santa Claus or one of the many Angel Trees. Your efforts have helped bring some additional holiday cheer to our community during this challenging time.

I ask that each of us take a moment and look around the community to see if there is someone who needs a helping hand or little bit of cheering up during this season of giving.

Once again have a very happy holiday and prosperous new year.

Command Sgt. Maj. Keith Francis und



ich möchten die Gelegenheit nutzen, um allen in dem 284. Base Support Battalion eine frohe und sichere Vorweihnachtszeit zu wünschen.

Ich möchte mich auch bei all den Mitgliedern unserer Gemeinde bedanken, die bei der Vorbereitung und Durchführung der verschiedenen Veranstaltungen wie zum Beispiel das "Thanksgivingessen", das Beleuchten des

Weihnachtsbaumes, Bilder mit Santa Claus oder die "Angel Trees" geholfen haben. Ihre Bemühungen haben dazu beigetragen etwas mehr Weihnachtsstimmung in dieser schwierigen Zeit in unsere Gemeinde zu bringen.

Ich möchte jeden von uns bitten sich die Zeit zu nehmen und darauf zu achten, ob es in der Gemeinde jemanden gibt der Hilfe oder in dieser Zeit des Gebens etwas Aufmunterung braucht.

Ich wünsche Ihnen nochmals frohe Festtage und ein erfolgreiches Neues Jahr.



Photo courtesy of Giessen Elementary School

Care Bears spread holiday cheer

Kierra Tate (from left to right), Nick Hernandez, Trey Darby, Nick Hunter and Louis Martinez of Giessen Elementary School show off items community members donated to support the school's Operation Care Bear. This service project was initiated by the School Advisory Committee in association with the school character education program and is designed to help students spread holiday cheer downrange. The school collected enough snacks, games, toiletries and reading materials to send 26 boxes to units from Giessen.

Battlecat Soldiers get own song

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Christmas songs will have a different flavor for 13 Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment this year.

Care packages containing a special audio-visual compact disc with video messages from their loved ones and a song written for the Soldiers of the Battlecats Company have been sent to the Soldiers in Iraq.

"I wanted to have something special to send downrange for Christmas and I came up with the idea of doing a CD with the voices of their wives to give them a feeling of home while they are separated from their families," said Sophia Caulwell, Company B Family Readiness Group leader.

"Initially I had planned to do it VTC-style. VTCs are kind of new to us because we didn't have the first one until late October, so it is nothing that we are very used to. However when we do have a VTC they are often very short, the time is limited and you cannot really talk personally as all the other Soldiers are hearing the message too. I thought if we could record our own messages we could have a little bit more privacy," said Caulwell.

"I told my friend Jeffrey Hannah about the idea and asked him if he could help our FRG. We used to take German classes together and I remembered that he and his friend Heiko Hübschmann own a sound studio in Friedberg. Jeffrey asked me to come to the studio so the three of us could talk about what I want and how to do it," she said.

"I suggested that we do an audio-visual



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Heiko Hübschmann (left to right), Sophia Caulwell, Katharina Lowe and Jeffrey Hannah relax in the studio after recording compact discs for Battlecat Soldiers.

CD because I've learned that often there is a limit on available laptops or computers downrange to look at the videos. But in the suggested format the guys could still take the CD and listen to it in their Discman," said Hübschmann.

"I was really excited about the project because now we had a chance to record our personal video messages in a very good quality as well as a song describing how we

feel and that we will always support them," Caulwell said.

Thirteen spouses in Caulwell's FRG decided to have a personal CD produced for their deployed Soldier.

"As we started working on the project we had more ideas. Jeffrey and I wrote the song 'We Support Ya,' which is in a hip-hop format. While Jeffrey is singing, we mixed in company commander Capt. Geoffrey

Wright's Christmas message. He called us from downrange so we could record it. We also mixed in some of the children's commentaries while they were in the studio," he said.

"I was really impressed with Sophia's idea and I was glad we could help her. Not everyone likes hip-hop music, but I am sure that the Battlecats will like this song. I was deployed to Kosovo for five months before I got out of the Army. The Soldiers hear so many protests about them being in Iraq though they don't have a choice. On this CD the spouses express their feelings and let the soldiers know that they are supporting them. Whenever they feel lonely they can just listen to the CD and have a message from their family," said Hannah, a former 1-37th Armor medic.

"Each spouse had to spend 35 euros for her CD because the studio had to get certain equipment like the camera. It would have been less if we had more spouses participating, but after all I think it's money well spent because our husbands will have this CD forever and it's a great memory," said Caulwell.

"I was thrilled when Sophia told me about the idea. I got married in February, and this is our first deployment. My husband was home for R&R leave when we recorded the CD, so he has already heard it. He loved it and he was very proud of us," said Katharina Lowe, whose husband, Sgt. Richard Lowe, is a member of Company B.

Anyone interested in listening to the song or recording a CD can contact Caulwell at battlecats2003@yahoo.com, the Stereoblue Music Studios in Friedberg at civ (0631) 771 029 or by sending an email to info@stereoblue.de.

New support group prepares teenagers for redeployment

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Teens Talking Together—or T³—is a new program that will be offered in January at Giessen Middle and High School to help teenagers cope with the stress of redeployment.

"The program is a continuation of the Reaching Out Teen Support Group sessions we sponsored in the summer, helping the students to deal with the stress of the deployment," said 284th Base Support Battalion Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Service counselor Billy Wray.

"It's designed for all ages, but the main focus is on middle school students," he said.

As the emphasis of the Reaching Out Teen Support Group was on preparing youths for the year-long deployment, the T³ group will deal with the stress of the redeployment.

"With the redeployment the

teenagers have to adjust to another role change and they have many questions. Maybe dad used to be the one always bringing out the trash and with the deployment the teenager had to assume the chore. So what's going to happen when dad returns? Who will be doing what? The entire situation of not knowing what's going to happen creates stress.

"You can tell there is a lot of stress by the way they are acting out in the classrooms or act out at home. Teenagers do not talk about the stress they are having, they rather act in a different way," Wray said.

T³ is providing a tool to identify the causes of stress, to talk about them and to learn healthier coping strategies, he said.

"It's important that they see that they are not alone going through this stressful time, and that they can also learn from each other and talk about how they feel and why they are acting a certain way," said

Wray.

"The curriculum was created by the students. Most of them participated in the Reaching Out program, but there are a few new students in T³," he said.

The program includes topics such as self-confidence and self-improvement, decision making, substance abuse, violence and the media, coping with anxiety, communication skills, social skills and conflict resolution.

"We also include reintegration skills such as relying on others and readjusting to understand the reintegration process the entire family has to go through," Wray said.

"The session is open-ended, which means that the students will decide when the program is no longer needed. And it is on a voluntary basis, no one has to attend," she said.

"We just want to let them know that we are here for them, helping them through a stressful time," Wray said.

Army Community Service workshops

Tea time in Butzbach

The Butzbach Outreach Center hosts Tea Time every morning from 8:15-9 a.m.

for tea, coffee and conversation. Everyone is welcome. For details call civ (06033) 925 329.

Translator service

The Butzbach Outreach Center offers translator service for those mind-boggling letters or to call local vendors such as the phone company every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. For details call civ (06033) 925 329.

Care providers sought

The Exceptional Family Member Program seeks respite care providers for families with special needs (children and adults). Anyone interested

may call Florine King at mil 343-7618.

Movie Day

ACS hosts Movie Day, a learning activity for children age five and under Jan. 13 and 27 from 10 a.m. to noon at the conference room at ACS in Giessen. This activity is free of cost. For more information call Deborah Gantt at mil 343-6039.

Sponsorship training

A sponsorship training class will be held Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. at the ACS in Friedberg. The class is open to all military personnel, family members and Department of Defense civilians. For details call Christina Daily at mil 324-3789.

Story time

Story time for children will be held every Wednesday at the Butzbach Outreach Center from 1-2 p.m. For details call civ (06033) 925 329.

Community spotlights

Holiday banking hours

The Giessen Community Bank will be open from 9 a.m. to noon Dec. 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 27 and 9 a.m. to noon Dec. 31. The bank remains closed Dec. 25, 26, 28 and Jan. 1. The Friedberg Community Bank follows the same schedule, but will also be closed on Dec. 27. Andrews Federal Credit Union will be closed Dec. 25.

Giessen Commissary holiday hours

The Giessen Commissary opens Dec. 23, 24, 26 and 31 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Dec. 27 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The store remains closed Dec. 25, 30 and Jan. 1. The staff wishes their patrons a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Youth sports season opens

The 284th BSB Youth Sports season begins Jan. 3 with the basketball and cheerleading season. Departing YS sports director Charles Horne wishes the community happy holidays and thanks all parents, coaches, volunteers and children who participated in the program, and encourages them to continue to build success for the children.

WIC-O services

The Women, Infants and Children-Overseas program in the 284th Base Support Battalion offers free nutrition assessment and education, supplemental foods and community referral information for military families. Pregnant and postpartum spouses or spouses with children under five years of age probably qualify for WIC-O services. For information call Mary Shrank in Butzbach at civ (06033) 925 736 or Sharon Messinger in Giessen at civ (0641) 4027 448.

Thrift Shop update

The Butzbach Thrift Shop will be open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Friedberg Thrift Shop opens every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The shops will be closed for the holidays until Jan. 5. The three thrift shops in Giessen, Butzbach and Friedberg seek volunteers for various positions. Applications are available at the stores.

Housing Office closed

The Housing Offices will be closed Dec. 24-26, 31 and Jan 1.

Outprocessing briefings

The next community outprocessing briefings will be held in Giessen in Building 4 in the ITC classroom Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. and in Friedberg at the Old Ironsides Theater Jan. 27 at 10 a.m. Spouses of deployed Soldiers scheduled to outprocess within 75-90 days are invited and strongly encouraged to attend. Attendance is mandatory for Soldiers outprocessing within the next 75-90 days. For details call mil 343-8077.

Bulk trash pickup

The next bulk trash pickup date is Jan 9.

Christmas tree pickup is included. Place trees and bulk trash items next to the refuse container the night before the pickup.

Newcomers Orientation

Giessen Army Community Service sponsors a Newcomers Orientation Jan. 20-21 at 9 a.m. The event is designed to inform participants about the local area and community agencies available. Free child care will be provided if registered in advance. For more information call Patricia Harper to register at mil 343-6910.

Recycle cleaning products

Both Self-Help Stores in Giessen and Friedberg accept partially used household cleaning products and reissue them free to other housing residents. When you move, bring your cleaners to the Self-Help Store rather than throwing them in the garbage (it's illegal and bad for the environment).

Tax Centers open in January

The Giessen and Friedberg Tax Centers will open in late January. If you are filing taxes for a Soldier deployed to Iraq, a current general power of attorney is required. A tax center is planned in Baghdad and in Balad for Soldiers who do not have spouses in Germany. Soldiers who are deployed have 180 days after they return to file their taxes without penalty or interest. This automatic extension also applies to their spouses. All other Soldiers in Germany have until June 15 to file their taxes.

Bowling alley specials

A Family New Year's Eve Party takes place at the Ironsides Lanes Dec. 31 from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. including bowling, shoes, favors, breakfast buffet, children's events, story hour and karaoke. Cost is \$10 per person. The Americana Diner will offer dinner specials from 7-9 p.m.

Ironside Lanes hosts a Dr. King's Birthdays special Jan 17-18. Bowling is \$1 per game and shoe rental is a dollar all day long both days. A Point Bowl contest takes place from Jan. 15 to Feb. 15. Prizes will be awarded for the highest total pins and the bowler with exactly 2004 pins on Feb 15. For details call mil 343-6172.

Outdoor Rec trips

Outdoor Recreation sponsors an overnight New Year's trip to Berlin Dec. 30 to Jan 2. A Frankfurt ice skating trip is scheduled for Jan. 3. The cost is \$20 for adults, \$12 for children age 4-11 and \$5 for children age 3 and under. A skiing trip to Winterberg takes place Jan. 10. The cost is \$49 and includes equipment. A skiing or sightseeing trip to Garmish is scheduled for Jan. 16-19. Cost of \$169 includes equipment. A skiing trip to the Brocken Mountain takes place Jan. 24. Cost of \$59 includes equipment. For more information call Outdoor Rec at mil 343-8202.



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Greetings to Dad

Five-year-old Aubree Estep (left), and her five-month-old brother Jonathan pose for a photo with Santa Claus to send to their deployed father, Staff Sgt. Robert Estep from the 16th Engineer Battalion, at this year's tree lighting ceremony in Giessen Dec. 4. For the first time the 284th Base Support Battalion also conducted tree lighting ceremonies at Roman Way Housing in Butzbach and Alvin York Village in Bad Nauheim. The ceremonies, marking the beginning of the holiday season, included a visit by Santa to Giessen and Friedberg. Family Readiness Groups and units in Giessen also sponsored a variety of activities for children, including photos with Santa and face painting.

Town Hall Meeting

The next Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for Jan. 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Giessen High School. Residents of Giessen housing areas are invited to attend and address their issues of concern to the leaders of the community.

High school wrestling

A high school wrestling meet takes place Jan. 17 at Giessen's Miller Hall Fitness Center at 1 p.m. This event is free and open to the entire community.

Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program

The 284th Base Support Battalion Provost Marshal Office Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program coordinator seeks volunteers. SNAP is a U.S. Army Europe-wide effort to support existing force protection using the eyes and ears of neighborhood volunteers. SNAP volunteers observe and report to the Military Police and let the MPs

do the rest. Being a volunteer is as simple as taking a walk in the neighborhood. Be a part of neighborhood safety, become a SNAP volunteer. The SNAP office is located on the second floor of Building 5 on the Giessen Depot. Call mil 343-6500 or civ (0641) 4026500.

Holiday services

Catholic holiday program: A Christmas Mass will be held Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. in Giessen and at 8 p.m. in Friedberg. A Christmas Day service will be hosted Dec. 25 at 9 a.m. in Giessen and at 11:30 a.m. in Friedberg. A Feast of Mary, Mother of God Mass is scheduled for Jan. 1 at 9 a.m. in Friedberg and at 11:30 in Giessen. **Protestant holiday program:** Christmas Eve Candlelight service takes place Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. in Friedberg and Giessen. A Christmas Day service is also held Dec. 25 at noon in Friedberg. A Gospel Watch Night is scheduled for Dec. 31 at 8 p.m. in Giessen and a New Year's Eve service takes place Dec. 31 at 9 p.m. in Friedberg.

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Working together to provide mobility in Baghdad

Story and photo by Capt. Jason Railsback
Company C, 16th Engineer Battalion

Giessen-based and Oregon engineers have been making a difference in Iraq. Members of Company C, 16th Engineer Battalion, and the 671st Multi-Role Bridge Company from Oregon worked together to repaired the Al-Muthana Bridge.

As the northernmost bridge in Baghdad, the Al-Muthana Bridge is important to the economic vitality of the city and critical to the support of military operations in the city, officials said.

The bridge consists of two Mabey-Johnson bridges that were replaced by the U.S. military in June. A British company has developed the bridge as a quick emplacement bridge that is easier to assemble. One of the ramps was severely deteriorated. A large split in the ramp deck threatened to fail completely or at least seriously damage a car or truck.

"The 671st Multi-Role Bridge Company helped install the bridge we are repairing back in June," said

Lt. Col. John Kem, 16th Engineer Battalion commander. "They were the lead with Company C for the installation of a bridge across the large canal near Taji back in September."

After a thorough reconnaissance, the 671st MRBC convoyed in November to Camp Anaconda to the "bridge park" to get the parts needed for repair.

Excited about the mission and ready to start, the Soldiers didn't want to wait until the next day to initiate repairs. Headquarters and 1st Platoon and Company C's maintenance team joined forces with the 671st MRBC to re-establish a functioning bridge. The mission was completely done at night, from 9-11 p.m., said Kem.

"Since the repair materials arrived at 7 p.m. they all wanted to start immediately," he said. "Additionally, doing it at night was better because there was much less traffic, so that made the mission easier to control."

The 671st MRBC provided traffic control and on-site security.

Traffic flow was diverted to the northbound bridge.

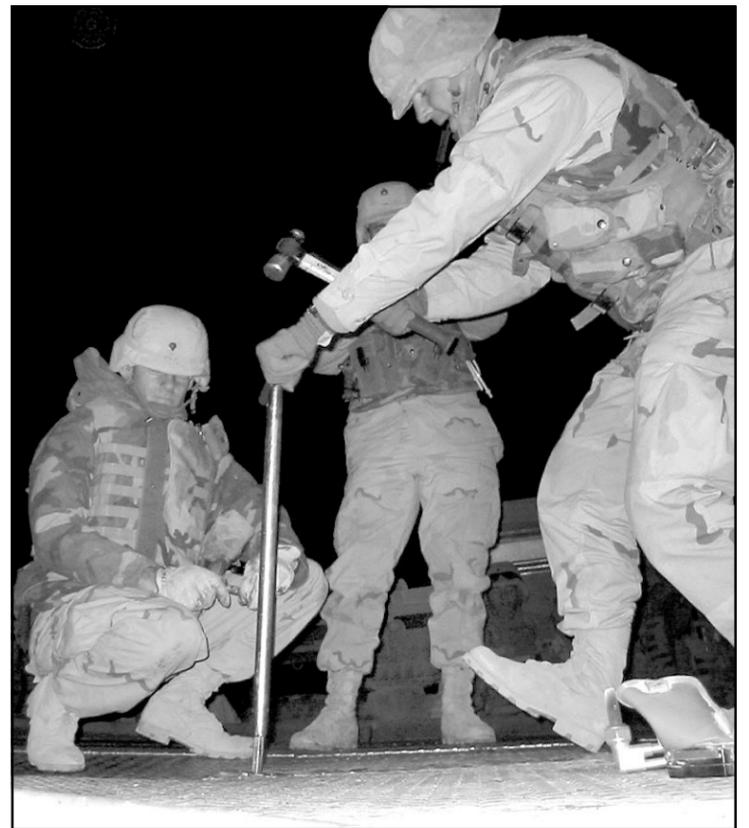
The engineers hauled replacement panels for the bridge ramps and the necessary bolts to the work site. A "contact truck" carried tools and acetylene torches.

Repairs first required using an acetylene torch to cut away damaged decking and deck bolts. Once complete, the two damaged deck panels were removed and replaced.

The repair project allowed his Soldiers to work on repair techniques, Kem said. "For example, they had to analyze how to cut out damaged portions where the bolts were too damaged to remove with tools."

"The Al-Muthana Bridge is key to all movement in and out of Baghdad to the north," said 1st Lt. Charles Sleeman, 1st Platoon leader of Company C.

"We, as engineers, will continue to keep this line of communication open day and night and support the good Iraqi people, causing as little disruption as possible to their daily lives."



Combat engineers from the 671st Multi-Role Bridge Company (Oregon National Guard) and Soldiers from Company C, 16th Engineer Battalion, remove a damaged section of the Al-Muthana Bridge.

Ready First Combat Team sends 16-year-old Iraqi Olympic hopeful to U.S. marathon

By Sgt. Mark Bell
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

An Iraqi teenager lived out his childhood dream when he competed in a major U.S. marathon, thanks to the commander of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and his brother.

Sponsored by the Ready First Brigade Combat Team, Ali Hashim Hamdan Al-Bahadly, age 16, from Amara Misan, Iraq, competed in the 21st Annual California International Marathon in Sacramento Dec. 7, where he finished in 3 hours, 16 minutes.

The race was a 26-mile, 385-yard point-to-point race that began at Folsom Dam and ended at the state capitol in Sacramento.

First to compete internationally

Ali is the first Iraqi citizen to compete in an international sports competition since the liberation of Iraq. He left Dec.



Photo courtesy of 1st Brigade

Col. Peter Mansoor (from left), Ali Hashim Hamdan Al-Bahadly and Ahmed Al-Samarrai pose for a photo.

3 for California where he competed against more than 5,000 marathon runners from around the world.

The Oakmont High School cross country team in Roseville, a suburb of Sacramento, sponsored Ali. While at Roseville he met with several Arabic-speaking American families and high school students.

To help the process of obtaining Ali's visa, Col. Pete Mansoor, the Ready First commander, contacted the U.S. embassy in Amman, Jordan, to arrange for expedited processing of his application.

"He deserves this opportunity to compete on the world stage as the representative of a free Iraq," Mansoor said. Ali and Mansoor met briefly for the first time Dec. 3, before international media interviewed Iraq's most promising marathon competitor for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.

The Sacramento marathon was Ali's fourth marathon and most challenging to date. Since the CIM is known as one of the fastest marathons in the United States the young runner had his work cut out for him, said Mansoor.

"I hope to finish well," Ali said with a smile, before leaving. "I want to do good so I have a chance to qualify for the Olympics."

Ali's running career started as a hobby during his pre-teen years, but for the past four years, he has been training to become an international competitor.

More than competing in the race, Ali said that going to America to compete brings hope to other young athletes around Iraq.

"Maybe as I compete in this race, it will inspire other young athletes to try harder to be given a chance to compete at the international level too," he said. "I want all of Iraq and the world to know that we are not bad people; but like so many Americans, we love our sports."

"By happy coincidence, the offices of the Interim Iraqi Olympic Committee are in my zone," Mansoor said.

In September Mansoor's brother, John, race director for the CIM, asked his brother if he could find an Iraqi marathoner who would be eligible to participate.

"I got this idea after watching the participation of the female athlete from Afghanistan in the World Track and Field Championships this summer in Paris," said John Mansoor.

Col. Mansoor arranged a meeting with the Olympic committee chairman, Ahmed Al-Samarrai, who took the proposal to the Iraqi Sports Federation.

"When Ali participates in this important event, that will help Iraqi sports in general," said Al-Samarrai. "And it will show the world how good and kind are the relations we have between Iraq and the States, and (that) it is different from what the media is showing."

After winning the regional half-marathon race in southern Iraq and the Baghdad Marathon in early October, Ali was selected by the Iraqi Sports Federation as their choice to run in Sacramento.

"He is young and therefore represents the future of sports in Iraq," the colonel said.

Mansoor said athletic, scholarly and cultural exchanges bring Iraqis and Americans closer together and give them a different view of each other apart from the daily contact of U.S. Soldiers on patrol in a combat zone.

"Sports in Iraq were decimated under the evil regime of Saddam Hussein and his band of thugs," he said. "Women's sports in particular were almost completely wiped out."

"We are very excited that the CIM will be the first athletic event in the world to host an athlete representing the new Iraq," said John Mansoor. "Ali represents the new face of Iraq — hopeful and optimistic. His country is ready to be an active member of the world athletic community again."

According to Col. Mansoor, reports from California said Ali "was a great representative for Iraq — very well spoken for a 16-year-old." Ali may not have won the race, but his efforts have opened the door for other hopeful Iraqi athletes.

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Community notes ... Community notes ... Community notes

Holiday greetings to all

By Lt. Col. Amy Ehmann
414th Base Support Battalion commander

Over the past six months since I arrived I have seen tremendous things happen in the Hanau and Büdingen communities. I have watched, in awe, a community unite during a time of war. I have witnessed wonderful acts of kindness and charity by the people who comprise our small piece of America overseas. Indeed, the spirit of

joyous giving is part of our culture all year round, which makes me sincerely proud to be a member of this military community.

We've had a difficult year. Our Soldiers deployed to bravely fight the war on terrorism. Our families have courageously taken on the immense burdens of single-handedly raising children and running households. We've had our moments of great sadness, but together we have persevered and held tightly to our hope.

We have much to do in the coming year. Together we will bring our Soldiers safely home and effectively reintegrate them into our community. Let us have a great holiday season, in peace, with good will toward others and thankfulness for all we have achieved in 2003. Go forward with confidence that 2004 will be another great year.

I wish you and your family a very happy holiday and peaceful new year.



Pioneer Fitness classes

Due to the Christmas holidays, aerobics, spinning and yoga classes have ended and will resume their normal schedule Jan. 5. Call mil 322-8197 or civ (06181)88-8197.

Child Care job

Family Child Care is quarters-based child care provided by an authorized military family member who has met certification requirements before providing child care. Care may be full-time, part-time, hourly or extended and overnight care. Certification requires completion of background checks, training, home inspections and a health assessment. Visit FCC at Pioneer Kaserne, Building 3, Room 218 or call mil 322-8458, civ (06181) 88-8458 for more information. An orientation will be held Jan. 15.

Redeployment training required

Attending a redeployment briefing is required by the 104th ASG. Soldiers will not be cleared to PCS or ETS until they have taken this briefing. The briefing is about an hour long and is held every Friday at 9 a.m. and at 2 p.m. in the ACS conference room, Building 9 on Pioneer Kaserne. Briefings can also be scheduled for units at their convenience. For more information call Pam Belanger or Mike Hamm at mil 322-8965.

Reconnecting with your Soldier

Military spouses should attend

the Reconnecting with Your Soldier Workshop about a week or two before their Soldiers return. If they want to attend the workshop before then, that's fine too. The workshops are held in the ACS conference room, Building 9 on Pioneer Kaserne. ACS can bring the workshop to your FRG too. Workshops are scheduled



for Wednesdays. For more information call Pam Belanger or Mike Hammatmil322-8965.

Job Fair Jan. 16

The 414th BSB Army Community Service is hosting a job fair on Jan. 16 at the Pioneer Fitness Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Several on-post and off-post organizations will be participating. Bring copies of your resume to submit. For more information call the ACS Employment Readiness Office at mil 322-9191 or civ (06181)88-9191.

Functional Academic Skills Training

Functional Academic Skills Training is a 60-hour academic course to provide Soldiers with on-duty instruction in reading, mathematics and language skills. The FAST class is limited to 20 students.

The class is four hours each day for three weeks, Monday to Friday. Personnel with a GT Score below 100 and non-high school graduates are advised to take advantage of this program.

The class is free to all logistically supported personnel and their family members, who may enroll on

R&R return schedule

Check the list for the day you must return to Iraq. The report time is 3 a.m. at Rhein-Main's tent city.

Arrived	Return
Dec. 23	Jan. 09
Dec. 24	Jan. 10
Dec. 25	Dec. 11
Dec. 26	Dec. 12
Dec. 27	Dec. 13
Dec. 28	Dec. 14
Dec. 29	Dec. 15
Dec. 30	Jan. 16
Dec. 31	Jan. 17
Jan. 01	Jan. 18
Jan. 02	Jan. 19
Jan. 03	Jan. 20
Jan. 04	Jan. 21
Jan. 05	Jan. 22
Jan. 06	Jan. 23

a space-available basis.

Contact an educational counselor to determine eligibility and placement. For information call the Pioneer Education Center at mil 322-8380. Classes are scheduled for Jan. 8-30, 1-5 p.m.; Feb. 2-24, 8 a.m. to noon; March 8-26, 8 a.m. to noon.

Nutrition nuggets

Join the Women Infants Children staff every third Tuesday of the month from 12-12:30 p.m. at the Wolfgang Outreach Center, Building 514 on Wolfgang Kaserne, for discussions on hot topics in nutrition. Bring your lunch and a friend.

Jan. 20 — "Nutrition and Smoking Cessation" Quit smoking without putting on the pounds.

ASG phone book

The new 104th Area Support Group phone book is available. Pick up a copy at Army Community Service, the Community Mail Room and where you see *Connection* magazine.

AFAP needs ideas

Army Family Action Plan needs your ideas. AFAP is a grassroots program to resolve issues affecting Army quality of life. The annual 414th BSB AFAP conference will be held Feb. 10-11 at the Community Activity Center, Building 1351 on Fliegerhorst Kaserne, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you have an issue you would like to address or would like to be a conference volunteer call Rick Krenz at mil 322-5308.

Credit Union

Andrews Federal Credit Union will be open Christmas Eve from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and New Year's Eve from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ID card office moves

The ID card, DEERS, passports and Installation Access Control System offices moved to Building 21, Rooms 8a and 8b on Pioneer Kaserne. For information call mil 322-9371 or civ (06181)88-9371.

ACAP briefing

An Army Career and Alumni Program Preseparation Briefing is required no later than 90 days before a Soldier's separation date. Take this briefing on a computer at the ACAP Office in Building 11, Room 325 on Pioneer Kaserne, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call mil 322-8356/8308.

ACAP job workshop

Learn job-search techniques, financial planning, how to write resumes and cover letters, interview

techniques and how to transfer your military skills to the civilian world at a job assistance workshop. Sign up for the next workshop at the Army Career and Alumni Program office in Building 11 on Pioneer Kaserne or call mil 322-8356/8308.

Army Learning Center academic tutor on call

The Pioneer Education Center is offering free academic tutorial assistance in preparation for GT improvement, academic test, basic skills, general college courses and prerequisite study for service schools. The tutor is available on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6-9 p.m. Family members are welcome. Call the Pioneer Education Center at mil 322-8380 for additional information.

Force Protection Training

Force Protection Training, Level 1, is required for all U.S. military and civilian employees, U.S. dependents at least 14 years old and all local national employees and contractors. Training can be scheduled for after-duty hours or on weekends for units and civilian groups if properly coordinated. For more information call mil 322-8455.

Vehicle Registry

The Hanau Vehicle Registry, Building 48, Pioneer Kaserne, will be closed for Christmas, Dec. 25-26, and New Year's, Jan. 1-2.

Concert tickets

Tickets for concerts, theater performances and sports are available at CD Tickets, Hanau, Marktplatz, civ (06181)258555. For information, go to www.cd-tickets.de. For more information point your Internet browser to www.hanau.army.mil.

Get the latest news online at www.hanau.army.mil

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Army steps up effort to prevent suicide

By Dennis Johnson

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Alarmed by the number of suicides among Soldiers in Iraq, the Army has sent a team of mental health experts to study the incidence of suicide and depression in the troops downrange, said officials.

At least 11 Soldiers and three Marines have committed suicide in Iraq, and about a dozen other deaths are still under investigation. Most of these suicides have occurred since the end of major hostilities in May.

Another 500 soldiers have been sent home for mental health reasons. In previous wars many Soldiers would have been treated in the war zone, but the Army doesn't have enough resources in Iraq to treat many of these cases, said Army officials.

Mental health experts said the harsh and dangerous living conditions in a war zone will often heighten an existing depression. The easy availability of weapons makes a passing thought a potential tragedy. It only takes a second to pull out a weapon and use it.

Army suicide facts

The overall military rate of suicide is about eight to nine suicides per 100,000 people, with the Army usually being higher at 10-13 per 100,000. The rate in Iraq is running at about 17 per 100,000, but in that high-stress environment, that should be expected, officials said.

The Army's total number of suicides declined each year from a high of 90 in 1993 to a low of 58 in 1997. The Army then saw a dramatic rise to 73 in 1999. The Army responded to this significant 26 percent increase in suicides by active duty soldiers by implementing a suicide prevention program in 2001. The numbers declined in 2000 and 2001, jumped up to 68 in 2002 and have declined again in 2003.

The Army suicide rate matches the rate for the same age groups in the civilian population, officials said. Of all Soldiers, active duty Soldiers are at the highest risk. Eighty-nine

percent of all Army suicides are Soldiers on active duty; only 7 percent are reservists and 4 percent National Guardsmen.

The greatest number of suicides occurred at Fort Hood, Texas, but Germany was second in the total number of suicides.

Suicide does not affect all ranks equally. The rate of suicide is highest for privates and decreases through the ranks up to master sergeant. Sergeants major, warrant officers and lieutenants had no suicides in 2003. There were four suicides of captains and majors and none in the higher ranks.

Age plays a role in the suicide rate too. There were 18 suicides in the 21-25 age group, followed by 12 suicides in the 18-20 age group, 10 in the 26-30 age group, six in the 31-35 age group, five in the 36-40 age group and three in the 41 and over age group.

The suicide rate for married versus unmarried is just about even. The rate of suicide between the races seems to be about equal throughout the population. Of all successful suicides 96 percent are by men; but many more women attempt suicide. Suicides peak between Friday and Sunday with a low on Wednesdays. Firearms account for 67 percent of suicides. Twenty-six percent are by asphyxiation and the remainder are by drugs, poison, vehicle "accidents" and other methods.

A mental health professional is rarely in the barracks or military housing when a depressed person slides toward thoughts of suicide. Usually the only person to help is a spouse, roommate or unit leader. That's why the 414th Base Support Battalion Chaplain's Office offers Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, a method of intervention with someone actively contemplating suicide. This training is recommended for all unit leaders, supervisors, health professionals and Family Readiness Group leaders.

ASIST teaches basic intervention for those who may encounter a person contemplating suicide.

The method consists of: * Engaging the person in serious conversation. * Identifying if the person has thoughts of

suicide. * Inquiring about the reasons for and against suicide. * Estimating the risk of suicide. * Contracting to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. * Implementing the plans in the contract.

These steps are to be used only by someone who has completed the ASIST training.

Holiday depression

According to 414th BSB Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Aupke, the greatest risk for suicides is not during the holidays, but just after. "The more you train people to recognize people's emotions, the more likely you are to prevent suicides," said Aupke. "We need to train our key leaders. You leaders are care givers whether you think so or not. You're sitting in your office and a Soldier walks in with a problem. You're the one who must intervene if you think he or she may be thinking about suicide."

Aupke is fond of saying, "Pay me now or pay me later. If you pay me later it's going to be during a time of crisis." So pay now, set up ASIST training for your group by contacting the Chaplain's Office in Building 1 on Pioneer Kaserne or by calling mil 322-1570/8925, civ (06181) 88-1570/8925.

For emergency assistance call the Military Police at mil 323-2321/2749 after duty hours and they will contact the duty-chaplain.

Website resources

American Association of Suicidology — www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention — www.afsp.org

National Institute of Mental Health — www.nimh.nih.gov

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Goals and Objectives for Action — www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention

National Suicide Prevention Strategy — www.sg.gov/library/calltoaction.



Photo by Dennis Johnson

Empty boots, dog tags, inverted rifles and helmets represent fallen Soldiers at a memorial service held Dec. 2 at Armstrong Kaserne in Büdingen.

Büdingen remembers Soldiers killed in Iraq

By Dennis Johnson

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Members of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, and members of the Büdingen community gathered at the Armstrong Kaserne chapel Dec. 2 to remember two Soldiers killed in Iraq.

Cpl. Robert D. Roberts and Pfc. Damian S. Bushart were killed in Iraq Nov. 22 in a vehicle accident.

After the singing of the national anthem, the memorial was presided over by Chaplain (Col.) Michael Walker who gave the invocation to begin the service.

Sgt. Ryan Yaun spoke about the two Soldiers he knew. "Cpl. Roberts always took the extra time to learn his job well. You never had to worry if he would give 100 percent. While in Iraq he became one of Apache Troop's handymen. When the electricity would go off in the middle of the night, we'd call on him to fix it," said Yaun. "Bushart was highly interested in his job. He would give 110 percent and was well liked by all his fellow Soldiers."

The poem "Freedom Isn't Free" was read and Walker's brief memorial meditation took the theme, "Don't ever let them forget."

"1-1st Cavalry has a tradition that a cross is placed near the flagpole for a fallen Soldier, and we'll do that today," said Walker. "As long as these traditions continue, they will be remembered."

The roll call was taken and the two missing Soldiers' names were called out three times each, with no response, while everyone stood at attention and a baby softly cried. The roll call was followed by the sounding of taps and the benediction. "May the Lord give you peace at all times and in every way."

The official party filed out of the chapel followed by 104th Area Support Group commander Col. George A. Latham II and 414th Base Support Battalion commander Lt. Col. Amy Ehmann.

A reception was held after the memorial service at the Army Community Service Family Outreach Center with food donated by S&K, the commissary food vendor.

Roberts was born Feb. 7, 1982, and graduated from Oviedo High School in Oviedo, in Florida in May 2000. He enlisted in the Army in July 2001 and arrived at the 1-1st Cavalry in January 2002 where he served as a 19K10 tank crewman for Apache Troop. Roberts is survived by his wife, Jillian R. Roberts, and son, Jacob Daniel Roberts.

Bushart was born May 27, 1981, and graduated from Waterford High School in Waterford, Mich., in May 2001. He arrived at 1-1st Cavalry in January 2003 where he served as a 19K10 tank crewman for Apache Troop. Bushart is survived by his wife, Megan Bushart.

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Christmas events in the community



Casey Doerer, age 3, sits on a reindeer while her brother Camden, age 6, has his photo taken with Santa Claus.



Young German dancers are rewarded with gift bags from Santa Claus after their performance at the Büdingen Burgerhaus Christmas party. Top photo: Students from the Georg-Büchner Schule sing at the Fliegerhorst Christmas Tree lighting.



Santa lights the Fliegerhorst Christmas tree.

Americans and Germans celebrate Christmas together

Americans joined Germans to ring in the Christmas season throughout the 414th Base Support Battalion.

On Dec. 13 the city of Büdingen hosted an afternoon party for the Americans of Armstrong Kaserne at the city Burgerhaus before the Christmas tree lighting ceremony. There were homemade traditional German sweets and holiday music by the Glauberg Town Youth Band. Youth dance troupes performed and St. Nicholas appeared with gift bags for all the good kids, including the young German dancers.

At the Christmas Bazaar on Dec. 6 people enjoyed breakfast with Santa, and children sat for photos with St. Nick. Shoppers then browsed the stalls of vendors from all over Europe.

In a program conceived by Anemone Rueger of the 104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office, local German citizens were invited to bring gifts to send to the Soldiers downrange. About 65 packages were collected at Cardwell Housing and in Büdingen and shipped off in time for the holiday.

At the tree lighting ceremony on Fliegerhorst Kaserne, Dec. 11, a chorus of German students from the Georg-Büchner Schule sang Christmas carols accompanied by keyboards and guitar. Santa arrived on a firetruck to light the Christmas tree with just a wave of his arms.

Photos by Dennis Johnson



Left: Friedrich Daudistel pops the cork from a bottle of wine to be used for Glühwein at the Fliegerhorst Christmas Bazaar. Right: Young Lucas from Hanau brings a box of Christmas goodies to be sent downrange.