

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen



Col. Michael S. Tucker, former 1st Brigade commander, and Michael Keller, Friedberg deputy mayor, discuss the town's military past. Photo right: A historical view of the Friedberg casern when it was occupied by German troops with garden plots located near military headquarters buildings.



Detailing Friedberg's military past

Former 1st Brigade commander, deputy mayor enlighten citizens about town's military history

Story and photos by Petra Roberts
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

While the citizens of Friedberg have long recognized the presence of American Soldiers in their city, many are unaware of the town's century-long military past.

Col. Michael S. Tucker, former commander of 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade and now the executive officer to U.S. Army Europe's commanding general, spoke about the history of Ray Barracks to members of the Friedberg Historic Association in February. Using the theme, "Far Away, Yet so Near," Tucker shared his historical knowledge with about 130 guests at the Friedberg public library.

Michael Keller, Friedberg deputy mayor, described a German military presence in Friedberg, dating back to before

World War I. Friedberg received an infantry battalion with the expansion of the German army leading up to the start of World War I.

One of the first military buildings built on what is now Ray Barracks is today's Headquarters building, the building which now houses the clinic and the gymnasium. While the parade field has long existed, German Soldiers once maintained vegetable gardens nearby.

In 1938 members of the infantry regiment moved out of Friedberg to take part in Nazi efforts to dominate Europe and beyond. Throughout World War II, other German army units were trained and stationed in Friedberg. During bomb attacks by Allied forces which destroyed surrounding areas (Friedberg Fauerbach was hit hard), the military buildings did not suffer any damage, and therefore could be taken over in a good condition by American troops after the war.

Tucker, who delivered his remarks in fluent German, described how the U.S. Army in Europe's mission after 1945 was to control the German population, weed out Nazi influ-

ences and to facilitate the development of democratic institutions. He mentioned that one of two constabulary regiments was headquartered in Bad Nauheim and commanded by Gen. George Patton.

"The U.S. Army in Europe proudly remains vigilant today as it has since 1945, standing beside our NATO and coalition partners in the global war against terror," said Tucker.

Listeners thanked Tucker for his contribution to the evening, telling him they learned a lot of things they did not know before. "Not being affiliated with any military makes it hard for outsiders to understand," said Gabriele Barwicki from Friedberg-Reichelsheim.

"The casern is a status symbol for Friedberg, but nobody has any knowledge about it," said 19-year-old Benjamin Keller after the lecture. Keller also pointed out that mixed German-American families in the area attest to the long tradition of close German-American ties. "To date, more than one third of all marriages in Friedberg are between American Soldiers and German ladies," he said with a smile.

Helping improve services

Customer feedback drives BSB train

By Jane Wingate
284th Base Support Battalion strategic plans and programs officer

The 284th Base Support Battalion pursues a variety of customer-focused feedback mechanisms to collect input for its planning and improvement processes.

These include customer contact walkabouts, Town Hall Meetings, Employee Town Hall Meetings, the Army Family Action Plan process, ICE comment cards and the commander's call line (mil 343-9999).

Complaints, suggestions and input from each of these processes is reviewed, consolidated and systematically included in the BSB Improvement Plan. Results are reviewed monthly.

The BSB has identified five focus areas for improvement in the community:

Family housing area environment and

facilities

The BSB commander has initiated efforts to develop guidelines and policies to manage pet waste in the housing areas.

The BSB command sergeant major and Area Support Team staff have begun to put signs in housing area stairwells to remind pet-owning residents of their responsibilities.

Customer service and operating hours

A Customer Service Challenge Workshop is being provided for every member of the BSB work force. Two workshops per week are presented to BSB personnel.

Over 100 participants have attended the Customer Service Challenge Workshop.

The BSB has begun an "In Your Face" information campaign. LCD screens will be located in high traffic locations around the BSB to provide up-to-date information to

customers. Selected locations include the PX, commissary and dining facilities.

Infrastructure maintenance and repair

Sign work at Butzbach Army Community Service has been installed.

Friedberg community building signage and repairs are under way.

Transportation needs

In accordance with Army regulations, the shuttle bus system is designed as transportation for Soldiers. Family members may ride the shuttle bus as space allows.

The Directorate of Logistics will encourage drivers to assist passengers with bags and packages; however, their assistance cannot be mandated. The drivers' job description describes only driving the bus, and there are liability issues to be considered.

Stopping in the housing areas to let family

members off at their apartments raises safety issues. The BSB will confer with the Safety Office and Installation Management Agency-Europe to see if it is possible to make this service available.

Work force morale and suggestions

An Employee Town Hall was held in Giessen March 4 and one in Friedberg recently. The suggestions made and issues raised at these forums have been incorporated as actions in the BSB Improvement Plan.

Lt. Col. Bart U. Shreve, 284th BSB commander, visits BSB organizations every week to ask his managers, face to face, what they need in order to improve their service to the customer. Customers are encouraged to help the BSB improve services by continuing to supply feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Dan Crow entertains Butzbach youths

Noted performer shares educational songs with elementary school students

Story and photo by Mary Ann Ernst
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Noted children's entertainer Dan Crow raised his voice in song at Butzbach Elementary School March 15.

With titles such as "Homonyms," "Preposition Blues," and "Madam, I'm Adam" — a song about palindromes — Crow managed to teach and entertain the children at the same time.

The fun-loving and gentle entertainer seemed to know instinctively what children like. Trained as a teacher, he grew up writing songs and decided to use his talent to help his students learn.

"My first song was actually written when I was about 11 years old and had an argument with my sister. She called me a brat and I made up a song I called "Brat." I sang it to get back at her — over and over again. To this day, when I call her on the phone and sing the first word, it still gets her."

Crow got his start as a singing teacher when colleagues admired the effect his songs

had on his students, and began asking him to perform his songs for their classes as well. His part-time songwriting really took off when he wrote songs for the Disney Channel and Disney Studios, among them songs sung by Winnie the Pooh and the theme song from *Milo and Otis*.

Crow's work with Disney led to other projects, including several CDs. He has learned to tailor his songs for different age groups, from preschoolers to preteens, combining silliness and information that appeal to all ages. He performs at schools across the United States and at military installations in Europe several times a year.

"I tap into my inner child and get down on the kids' level," said Crow. "They get to see an adult acting silly and it helps to relieve their stress by making them laugh."

Crow's feeling for his audience was clear at Butzbach as students clapped, sang along and called out responses during his performance.

Crow's appearance was sponsored by the Butzbach Elementary School Parent Teacher Association.



Educator and acclaimed singer/songwriter Dan Crow wows the crowd at Butzbach Elementary School March 15.

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Community spotlights ... Community spotlights

Storytelling trips

In recognition of the Month of the Military Child the Giessen Library will sponsor storytelling trips every Saturday morning in April. Children will enjoy stories at the Giessen Library and then travel to sites in the Giessen area to hear an additional story. Trips are two to three hours long, and destinations are a surprise. Trip sign-up is through March 31 at the library. Phone registrations are not accepted. First priority for enrollment is children in grades one to four who may participate without an accompanying parent. Second priority will be given to children not yet in the first grade who can participate with a parent or guardian. Last priority will be given to children in grades five and six. For more information contact the Giessen Library at mil 343-1740 or civ (0641) 402-1740.

Library, Outdoor Rec hours

Starting April 5 the Friedberg Library will be open Sunday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information call mil 343-7713. Starting April 5 Giessen Outdoor Recreation will be open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call mil 343-8202 for more information.

Camp counselors wanted

The Butzbach and Giessen School-Age Services and Youth Services are looking for camp counselors. All applicants must be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or General Education Degree. College students are welcome. The positions run from May 27 to July 14, July 1 to Sept. 3 and May 27 to Sept 3. Pay is \$8.32 per hour. Employees work 30-40 hours per week. Call mil 343-8619 or civ (0641) 402-8619 for application information.

FCC providers sought

Family Child Care providers are in great demand in the 284th Base Support Battalion. If you enjoy working with children you can start a career in your home. Schedule your own working hours and let your children enjoy the company of other children. For more information and to register for the FCC providers training class call mil 343-7626 or civ (0641) 402-7626.

Volunteers sought

Summer volunteer positions as instructors are available at Butzbach School-Age Services. Teach children sewing, music, art, gardening, woodworking, cheerleading and other interests. Applicants must be at least 18 years old. Child care may be provided. Apply at CLEOS, CYS Central Enrollments located in Building 3 on the Giessen Depot. For more information call mil 343-8619 or civ (0641) 402-8619.

Parents Night Out

The Butzbach Child Development Center sponsors a Parents Night Out April 16. Reservation and payment deadline is April 9. Children must be CYS registered and age six weeks to 11 years old. Call CLEOS for more information at mil 343-7028 or civ (0641) 402-7028.

Onsite registration

The Central Registration Office provides on-site registration for children April 6 at the Butzbach Child Development Center, April 7 at the Bad Nauheim CDC and April 8 at the Friedberg CDC. For details call mil 343-7028/8216 or civ (0641) 402-7028/8216.

Bulk trash pickup

The next bulk trash pickup day is April 8. Pickup includes furniture, appliances, mattresses and the like. Items should be placed next to the regular trash container the night before the pickup.



Photo by Petra Roberts

Thanks for Soldiers' efforts

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, chat with members of the Bad Nauheim ice hockey team after a game. The Hessen State Chancellory teamed up with the city of Bad Nauheim to make free ice hockey tickets available for Giessen and Friedberg Soldiers to show their appreciation for their efforts in fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

Outdoor Rec trips

Giessen Outdoor Recreation goes **shopping in Poland** April 2-3. The cost of the trip is \$49 per person. A **shopping and sightseeing trip to Bruges, Belgium** (Cathedral of the Holy Blood and lace shopping) takes place April 10. The cost of the trip is \$69 for adults. Children age 6-12 pay \$49. The cost for children under the age of 4 is \$19. For details and to sign up call Outdoor Rec at mil 343-8202 or civ (0641) 402-8202.

ACAP classes

The Army Career and Alumni Program sponsors a **Veterans Affairs benefits briefing** April 7 from 9-11:30 a.m. A **Job Assistance Workshop** takes place April 20-21 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Soldiers and their spouses may begin the ACAP counseling process two years before retirement or one year before ETS. For more information call the ACAP office at mil 343-9332. ACAP is located in Building 7, Room 141 on the Giessen Depot.

Friedberg Bowl update

The Friedberg Bowling Center changed its name to the Spare Time Lanes and Lounge. Spare Time Lanes has a new bar, pool tables, dart boards and an Internet cafe. Prices for open bowling have increased. The cost for adults is \$2.25 and \$1.75 for children. Shoe rental is \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for children. Every Thursday the Spare Time Lounge hosts a quiz night. Answer the most questions and win. Come in any time of the day and play 45 second rounds on the official quarter bouncers court. The highest score from each week wins a T-shirt, hat or duffel bag. Winners also have a chance to win an MP3 or CD player in the monthly tournament. For more information call mil 324-3270/3104 or civ (06031) 81-3270.

Community mailroom update

The Community Mailrooms are overflowing with mail. Everyone is reminded to check their mailboxes. Space is needed for mail of redeploying soldiers.

SAS Spring Camp

School-Age Services host a Spring Camp April 5-9 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Butzbach SAS. Events planned include trips to Warner Brothers amusement park, Bad Nauheim swimming pool, IMAX, Europapark and a cookout. Shuttle buses are available between Giessen SAS, Friedberg SAS, Bad Nauheim Housing and Butzbach SAS. Hourly child care

is also available. Children who want to participate must be CLEOS registered. The cost is based on the total family income. Call CLEOS for details at civ (0641) 402-7028. For more information on the Spring Camp call civ (06033) 65961.

National Youth Service Day

School-Age Services invites families to participate in the National Youth Service Day April 16. Youth groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Torch Club and others may also participate. A list with eligible activities and the registration packet are available at the Giessen SAS. Families and youth groups must sign up and drop off registration packet by April 12. For more information call Rizza Asuncion at mil 343-8619 or send an email to asuncionr@104asg.mwr.army.mil.

'Secrets To Be Kept'

A local theater group holds auditions April 2 from 6-9 p.m. and April 3 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the African-American musical drama "Secrets To Be Kept." Needed are two men and four women. Applicants must be able to sing and act. Auditions will be held in Building 6521, Apartment 4G in Butzbach's Roman Way Housing. Call civ (0175) 8902 507 for details.

Fire safety at work

If a fire started in your office or in the building where you work would you know what to do? You should know: * the location of the fire exits, * the location of the nearest fire alarm pull station and how to use it, * how to call 1-1-7. If you discover a fire: * Leave the area immediately closing all doors behind you. * Take keys with you. * Go to the nearest exit and leave the building. * Call 1-1-7 regardless of the size of fire. Never assume the call has already been made. * Give the correct address, location and your name. Don't fight a fire: * if you have not been trained on how to use the extinguishers, * if you are unsure of the type of fire, * if the fire is large or spreading.

Reunion training for spouses

Family Readiness Group leaders are encouraged to contact their local Army Community Service Center to register for reunion/reintegration training. Classes are scheduled nightly to ensure maximum participation. Reunion training provides family members with resources they may need for personal reintegration after Soldiers return from deployment. The training highlights changes associated with redeployment, expectations, communication and signs and symptoms of distress. For more information call Deborah Gantt in Giessen at mil 343-7618/6039, civ (0641) 402-7618/6039 or Martha Pinion in Friedberg at mil 324-3465/3710, civ (06031) 81-3465/3710.

Auditions at Keller Theater

The Giessen Keller Theater will hold auditions for "Baby" a musical comedy April 26-27 at 7 p.m. Needed are singers, dancers, musicians, backstage and technical assistance. Participation is open to all community members. No theater experience is necessary. For details call mil 343-6515.

Outprocessing briefing

The next locally held PCS/ETS outprocessing briefing will be held April 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Building 4, ITC classroom on the Giessen Depot. Soldiers must attend a briefing 75-90 days before leaving the service. Spouses are encouraged to attend. For more information call mil 343-8077.

Pilgrimage to Lourdes

The 46th annual military pilgrimage to Lourdes, France, takes place May 14-16. For more information visit the Lourdes website at <http://www.lourdesfrance.com/bonjour.htm>, call Chaplain Dennis W. Madtes at mil 370-6506, civ (0151) 1425 208 or send an email to Dennis.Madtes@us.army.mil.

Soldier who knew Elvis returns to Giessen

Former artilleryman returns to Giessen 45 years later

By Petra Roberts
284th Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

An American veteran of the Cold War returned to Germany four decades after serving there.

"I am very happy to be back in Germany," said Bennett Pitre when he arrived in Giessen, the place he left 45 years ago. From 1957-1959 Pitre served with the 92nd Artillery Regiment in the former Rivers Barracks.

When his daughter's family planned a trip to Germany it did not take much to persuade him to join them. Three generations packed their suitcases and started their trip from their homes in Texas. Bennett Pitre, his wife Carolyn, their daughter and son-in-law, Amy and Jimmie Price, along with their granddaughters Erica and Ashley took the trip down memory lane together.

The trip was also a return to

Germany for the Prices. Jimmie was stationed with an engineer unit in Heilbronn until 1991, and his daughter Erica was born there. "When we were stationed in Germany we loved it. We did not want to leave," Price said.

Getting ready for the trip, Jimmy pulled together as much information about the Giessen area as possible. He wanted the trip to be a total surprise to his father-in-law; and absolute discretion, a family-wide operational security posture, was necessary.

Price contacted the 284th Base Support Battalion's Public Affairs Office to arrange a visit to Giessen Depot and the former Rivers Barracks. Once the family landed in Frankfurt they picked up their rental car and headed north to Giessen. It was not until they were approximately 10 minutes outside of Giessen that Bennett was told where



Photo by Petra Roberts

Helmut Schulz (right), a CARE Museum volunteer, describes the exhibits at the Giessen Depot museum to Bennett Pitre.

they were heading.

Their arrival was a complete surprise to him, said Price. The travelers were greeted at the Civilian Association of Retired Employees Museum at the depot gate. Helmut

Schulz, one of the museum's active volunteers, hosted the families and gave them one of his unique, entertaining tours through the BSB history.

"I remember Giessen in ruins

and blocked off areas downtown because live mortar and mines were still found in a lot of areas," Pitre recalled.

He recounted to his hosts the high dollar to Deutsche mark rate when he was stationed here. "Considering that I only made \$66 per month, and later earned up to \$110, it was OK. When I received \$110 I felt like a rich man," he said.

"I remember the German beer and the parks. There was always a lot of greenery around," Pitre said he also knew Bad Nauheim's most famous resident of the era.

"I knew Elvis Presley. We would receive special passes to see him perform," he recalled. Presley was stationed in Friedberg and lived in Bad Nauheim from 1958-1960.

"It is good to be back in a reunified Germany. I saw the Wall being built; my daughter and son-in-law saw it come down," Pitre said.

From Friedberg the Pitres and Prices traveled to Braunfels and other parts of Germany to visit old friends.

Combat engineers help build democracy in Iraq

By Maj. Donald Walker
16th Engineer Battalion executive officer

For decades Iraqi civilians living on the outskirts of Baghdad had no representation in the governance of their communities. Many residents were considered squatters and denied government services such as power and water.

For the past several months Soldiers of Company B, 16th Engineer Battalion, have helped residents move toward democratic self-governance by forming and organizing an advisory council in the neighborhoods north of the city's Kadhimyah District.

The area consists mostly of farmland and several industrial complexes including a power station, a liquid and natural gas factory and a large concrete factory. More than 30,000 people live in several villages in the area.

"The first step in organizing the residents was to understand the terrain," said Capt. Mike Baim, Company B com-

mander. "We met with several villagers over a period of a few weeks and tried to figure out the names of the villages and locations of boundaries. From there we asked the residents to identify the key leaders in the area."

Baim, working with his executive officer, 1st Lt. Dion Mancenido, met with North Kadhimyah leaders weekly. In December they held their first neighborhood meeting with local leaders to discuss and present a short-term community improvement plan.

The plan included organizing a formal Neighborhood Advisory Council and establishing their representation in the next highest rung of political organization, the Kadhimyah District Advisory Council. The engineers also introduced an aggressive humanitarian assistance program and worked with community leaders to improve security.

The North Kadhimyah NAC made contact with Hazim Al Suhail, an adviser from the Coalition Provisional Authority

to the Kadhimyah DAC. With that important link established, the North Kadhimyah NAC was at last integrated into the governing structure of metropolitan Baghdad.

With the support of Bravo Company, the NAC has planned and completed humanitarian projects, such as making improvements to eight local schools and repairing several sewage systems that make a real difference in the quality of life of the formerly neglected citizens they represent. The NAC and its Soldier partners are moving forward to deliver better roads, electrical and water systems to residents.

"As more and more project funding is approved, confidence and support from the NAC leaders greatly increase," said Mancenido. "We are now developing plans to organize local village councils and unarmed neighborhood watch programs," Baim said. "Looking back on our last year in Iraq, we have truly made a positive impact on the lives of the Iraqi people living in North Kadhimyah."

'Beans and bullets': Friedberg-based 501st Forward Support Battalion Supply Support Activity keeps Soldiers supplied in Baghdad

Soldiers of the 501st Forward Support Battalion and Iraqi civilians are working side by side in Baghdad completing missions that influence the readiness of every unit within the 1st Brigade Combat Team. The 501st FSB's Supply Support Activity is responsible for receiving, processing, issuing and storing parts for the brigade's fleet of vehicles and providing food and water to the BCT's Soldiers. The SSA's wartime mission differs vastly from its garrison mission because it has the task of providing "beans and bullets" to Soldiers dispersed throughout Baghdad.

Because of the magnitude of the



Workmen prepare a pallet of tires for shipment.

mission, the command has hired 15 Iraqi employees to ease the Soldiers' workload. The augmentees work in every section of the SSA

issuing, receiving, processing and storing parts.

Employees are taught how to identify an item, the documentation accompanying that item, how to validate the quantity and how to check for damage.

Once the customer verifies parts are correct, employees help to complete the process by loading the customers' trucks with the supplies.

There are also Iraqi employees

working in the battalion's Storage Section to ensure items are placed in the correct location to prevent loss or damage. They verify what needs to be stored before placing the item in its location and conduct an inventory of all items at that location before turning in the record to the storage section's NCOs.

The battalion has also hired two Iraqi forklift drivers. Not only do they load and unload the products, they also teach other workers how to operate the forklifts.

During one recent week's work, Soldiers and their Iraqi coworkers processed 4,819 Material Release Orders. In these transactions 24,125

parts were issued to Ready First Brigade units and 4,255 parts were stored for future issue.

The battalion has also hired local Iraqi carpenters, electricians and other craftsmen to repair concrete floors, rebuild and install doorways and lights. A crew of workers handles these and other projects alongside FSB Soldiers to enhance the working environment for all.

At times language difficulties make communication difficult, but neither Soldiers nor the employees let that deter them from their common goal of completing the mission. (Courtesy of the 501st Forward Support Battalion)



Community notes ... Community notes

Parent University

Educate yourself at the Parent University April 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hanau High School. There'll be classes for parents with children of all ages including classes on baby massage, stress management, Mommy and Me activities and Daddy and Me Training. It's free to attend and there'll be prizes and gifts for everyone. For information call mil 322-9664 or visit the New Parent Education and Support Group in Building 514 at the Wolfgang Shopping Center.

Anne Frank House tour

Visit the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam on April 23. The bus tour departs from Fliegerhorst Fitness Center at 2 a.m. The €30 fee includes transportation and the museum admission. Children under age 5 can attend free. Payment must be received by April 9. To join the tour contact Sgt. 1st Class Gayden at mil 323-2012 or by email at donna.gayden@104asg.army.mil.

Employment Orientations

Just arrived and don't know where to begin your job search? Army Community Service offers Employment Orientations April 6, 13 and 27 from 10-11:30 a.m. in Building 9, Room 104 on Pioneer Kaserne. For more information call mil 322-9191.

Dress for Success

The Army Community Service Employment Readiness Team will host a Dress for Success seminar April 14 from 10-11 a.m. in Building 9, Room 104 on Pioneer Kaserne. For more information call mil 322-9191.

Train the Trainer

Train the Trainer is an Army Family Team Building workshop that will be held March 30, 31 and April 1 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wolfgang Outreach Center, Building 514 at the Wolfgang Shopping Center. The workshop is for people interested in becoming AFTB instructors or for those interested in attending professional development training. The workshop teaches participants to develop presentation skills, speak on their feet, manage a class-

Engineers clean up around Hanau

By Jayme Loppnow
130th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Office

Soldiers in the 565th Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade, have taken the stateside program "Adopt a Highway" and modified it into "Adopt a Piece of Land."

A group of 39 Soldiers volunteered a Saturday to clean up a piece of land owned by the city of Hanau across from Sportfield Housing.

The 565th's Command Sgt. Maj. Jose Dorame said he came up with the idea after having to look at the eyesore every day. "The area over there wasn't looking very good so I took it upon myself to adopt it," said Dorame.

He took his idea to the battalion and found quite a few Soldiers willing to give up a Saturday to clean up the area. The group cleaned up trash, brush and debris filling several large garbage containers. "The engineers were like termites clearing out the place," he said.

In the end Dorame said the Soldiers had a sense of pride and accomplishment for what they had done, and he hoped other units would follow their example. "I challenge any other unit out there to adopt a piece of land. It starts with just one unit to make a difference."



Photo by Jayme Loppnow
Spc. Richard Liebsly cleans up public property in Hanau.

room and maximize instructional aids. Call mil 322-5308 or civ (06181) 88-5308.

Welcome home parties

Club i on Fliegerhorst Kaserne hosts a welcome home party April 30 at 6 p.m. Enjoy free food, entertainment, sumo wrestling and karaoke. Call mil 322-7509.

Youth week

Andrews Federal Credit Union will sponsor a National Credit Union Youth Week April 18-24. If you're under age 18, deposit your savings during Youth Week and you'll be part of the National Youth Savings Challenge. As a reward 10 young savers from credit unions nationwide will each win \$100.

College and Career Day

There will be a College and Career Day at Hanau High School May 7 from 1:30-2:50 p.m. The high school is looking for graduates of two and four-year colleges and technical schools to represent their alma maters. Volunteer to talk about your school and career. For more information contact Janice Martin at civ (06181) 906-9939, by email at Janice_Martin

@eu.odedodea.edu or Colleen Fleming at civ (06181) 906-9963, email Colleen_Fleming@eu.odedodea.edu.

AAFES jobs

Are you looking for a job with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service in Hanau? U.S. citizens can apply directly online by browsing to www.aafes.com. If you're a local national you can visit the Human Resources office at the Wolfgang Shopping Center (next to Popeye's) or call civ (06181) 958 4403. The office is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is closed U.S. holidays.

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. Individuals 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 a space-available basis. Contact an educational counselor to determine eligibility

and placement. For information call the Pioneer Education Center at mil 322-8380. The next FAST class will be held April 12-30 from 1-5 p.m.

Community softball

The Hanau Hornets Men's Community Level Softball Team started spring training on Pioneer's softball field. Call Mike Strickland at mil 322-8412/8793.

Deploying to the Middle East?

Try Arabic Headstart, a Middle East Orientation Program. Learn basic information about the Middle East, its culture, people and language. The course is conducted once a month for 16 hours over a two-day period. The class is free and limited to 20 students. To enroll call the Pioneer Education Center at mil 322-8380/9600.

Easter service

Attend the Protestant Easter Sunrise Service April 11 at 6:30 a.m. at Pioneer Chapel. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Randy Dolinger of the 130th Engineer Brigade will speak. An Easter Sunrise Breakfast will be served in the chapel after the service. Child care will be available. Everyone is welcome. Call mil 322-1570/9598.

Roller Rink fixup

The Illusions Roller Rink closed

at the end of March while construction is under way to transform the rink into a Kids Korner. The opening date for the Kids Korner is expected to be around the end of May.

University of Phoenix degrees

The University of Phoenix offers masters degree programs in Business Administration and several educational programs. The University of Phoenix office in Building 11 on Pioneer Kaserne is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays. Call mil 322-5416 for more information.

Central Texas College registration

Registration for Central Texas College summer classes is from May 24 to June 4. The courses offered in Hanau include EMT Basic, EMT Clinical, Fundamentals of Criminal Justice and Introduction to the Hospitality Industry. Call mil 322-5410 for information or visit the Central Texas office in Building 11 on Pioneer Kaserne.

Embry Riddle

Embry Riddle Aeronautical University's offices moved to Building 11 on Pioneer Kaserne. Call mil 322-5436 for a class schedule and information.

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

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Implications of Military Family Act New tax law benefits Soldiers selling homes

By Capt. Brian P. Adams
Hanau Tax Center

On Nov. 11 President Bush signed into law the 2003 Military Family Act. The Military Family Act contains several provisions of particular importance to service members and their families. One section of the act changes slightly the tax implications for service members who sell their homes.

Under existing law a single taxpayer can exclude up to \$250,000 on the sale of a home provided the taxpayer owned and used the home as his principal residence for two years at anytime within the previous five-year period ending with the sale date. For joint filers the exclusion amount doubles to \$500,000 as long as either spouse meets the ownership requirement and both spouses satisfy the use requirement. The exclusion of a gain resulting from the sale of a principal residence can only be claimed once every two years.

The 2003 Military Family Act allows taxpayers to extend the five-year period up to 10 years. In order to extend the five-year period, service members must first be on qualified official extended duty, meaning extended duty while serving at a duty station which is at least 50 miles from the property, or while residing under government orders in government quarters. Extended duty means any period of active duty pursuant to a call or order to such duty for a period in excess of 90 days or for an indefinite period. Only one piece of property at a time may be designated

for waiving the five-year period. To date the Internal Revenue Service has not provided any specific guidance on how to make the extension.

For example a Soldier buys a residence at Fort Hood on July 1, year one, and uses it as his principal residence until June 30, year two. In year two the Soldier goes on qualified official extended duty in Germany until June 30, year eight. At the end of his Germany tour the Soldier returns to his Fort Hood residence and uses it as his principal residence until July 30, year nine.

If the Soldier has made the election to suspend the five-year period and sells the residence on July 30, year nine, the five-year period, for purposes of determining whether he is eligible for the exclusion, will not include the six years of his qualified official extended duty. Thus the Soldier is eligible to claim the exclusion for up to \$250,000 because he used the residence for at least two years in the relevant five-year period.

The suspension of the five-year period is retroactive to 1997. For service members who think they may qualify for a credit or a refund because of this change in tax law, the act does afford the opportunity to file an amended return for the respective year in which the principal residence was sold. However, this chance to amend a return expires on Nov. 10, 2004. For more information concerning this change in the tax law or other general tax questions consult your local tax center or legal office.



Photo by Dennis Johnson

Comfort, security for guards

New permanent protective structures are being built at each of the 414th Base Support Battalion's caserns to replace gate guard tents that have been used in the past. Bundeswehr Soldiers will be able to inspect vehicles in shady comfort this summer. They will also have concrete overlook positions from which they can secure installation entrances. The new fixtures will be heated and air-conditioned with bulletproof walls and glass.



Photo by Dennis Johnson

Edwin Torres checks on the renovation of Büdingen's Community Activities Center.

Torres takes over as new Büdingen base operations manager

By Dennis Johnson
414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

He's no longer be running the fitness center at Pioneer Kaserne, but now he'll be running the whole show at Büdingen. Edwin Torres, Pioneer Fitness Center director, has been named the base operations manager for the Büdingen and Gelnhausen communities.

"Lt. Col. Ehmann [414th Base Support Battalion commander] wanted a person on the spot who could communicate issues from these satellite communities directly to the BSB headquarters," said Torres.

"I'm here to work for you, but I need your help to make these communities be the best they can be," said Torres to resi-

dents of Büdingen and Gelnhausen. "Bring any Army issues concerning the community — housing, office buildings, maintenance, recreation, grounds, all support services — to my attention and I will address your issues to the appropriate facility and work for a solution."

Torres' role will be to act as a liaison for the BSB with the 1-1st Cavalry, coordinate for community events, oversee force protection and to coordinate redeployment support. His goals are to improve the appearance of the community and the quality of life for all residents, and ensure community information is reaching everyone, he said. If you have any issues you'd like to bring to his attention call mil 321-4845/4755 or civ (06042) 80-845/755.

Images of Iraq



Photos by Dennis Johnson

A little welding keeps Soldiers safer

With the amount of small-arms fire aimed at U.S. forces in Iraq and the proliferation of improvised explosive devices, greater protection while traveling in ground vehicles can save lives. The standard Humvee was not designed to withstand gunfire, its doors being made of plastic or cloth, and the body of fiberglass. In Balad the 1032nd Transportation Company of Gate City, Va., at-

tached to the 181st Transportation Battalion from Mannheim, performs body work to help protect the bodies of American Soldiers. The company takes a standard Humvee and uses lightweight armor plating called Armox to create improvised armored Humvees. "It's amazing stuff, it'll stop bullets and even shrapnel," said Lt. Mitch Bierl of the 1032nd. Armored Humvees from the factory,

with bullet-proof windows are rolling on Iraqi roads, but there is a need for many more. The 1032nd cuts the Armox sheets to replace the standard doors and build up a protected area around a machine gun which they mount in the back. "It's a normal Humvee to start with, and we're converting it into a gun truck," said Bierl. "When it's done it'll be a bulletproof Humvee."



Time out for shopping and volleyball

The airbase at Balad, Iraq, is so large Soldiers need to use a bus system to get around. After a tough day of shopping at the PX, these Soldiers wait for a bus to take them home. They don't have to buy a ticket at least. Photo right: Soldiers of the 249th Engineer Battalion from Fort Lewis, Wash., relax with an afternoon game of volleyball at LSA Anaconda, Balad.

