

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Soldiers of the 123rd Main Support Battalion cheer to celebrate their homecoming during a ceremony in Dexheim July 22.

No Soldier left out from 123rd homecoming

Story and photos by
Karen Edge
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the 123rd Main Support Battalion came home to cheering crowds and homecoming banners after a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

But welcome home ceremonies can be bittersweet for the single Soldier. Knowing that, 123rd MSB rear detachment Soldiers and family members worked to make the ceremonies more welcoming for those returning without family waiting for them. Days before the Mighty Main's return, Soldiers gathered care packages donated by many organizations and placed them in barracks rooms. Barracks rooms had previously been cleaned and painted. Household goods were placed in the rooms, and all was ready.

Meanwhile Soldiers downrange built support networks and surrogate families with those they served with.

"We've been a family out there for a long time. Tonight our families are going home to their husbands, wives and children. It's tough, but we'll look out for each other," said 1st Sgt. Frank McQueen while riding a bus with fellow Soldiers from Rhein Main Airbase to the small casern that houses the 123rd. "As a single man, I'm going home alone. No one is there waiting for me. During the welcome home ceremony I'll be keeping an eye on my single Soldiers instead of thinking about myself."

Before the deployment few of the Soldiers knew each other. Many deployed to Iraq before having a chance to settle in Dexheim. But friendships sprung up from barren grounds. Once strangers, they are now brothers and sisters in arms.

"We learned to get each others' backs out there," said one female specialist, "that's for sure. You can never let your guard down out there. That's when they'll kill you."

Living daily in life and death circumstances forged bonds between these men and women that



A Soldier naps on the bus before arriving in Dexheim.

won't soon be broken. They are aware of each others' emotional well-being and are watching out for each other. Single Soldiers saddened by the idea of going home to empty houses and barracks rooms helped each other put things in perspective by focusing on being out of Iraq and coming home together.

The bus ride from Rhein Main airport to Anderson Barracks was

quiet. Whispered conversations reflected the anticipation of going home. Sleeping Soldiers began waking as the buses approached Anderson Barracks. They were greeted by screaming families, banners and yellow ribbons. But it would be a couple more hours before they could join the festivities. As the night stretched into early morning, tired Soldiers once again packed up

their gear and dragged it off the bus, lining up to turn in weapons.

It was finally time to march the short distance that separated them from a festival tent at the entrance of the post where families, friends and rear detachment members waited. They marched in, and the crowd cheered. After a few words of wisdom from the unit's sergeant major they were ordered to drop their gear. Almost 300 Soldiers erupted in cheers, and dropped their gear. As they jumped up and down the realization of being home finally sank in. The order finally came to disperse, and to their families they ran. Others however looked for an escape route.

Single Soldiers hastily headed for the doors. As they made their way out, their first sergeant wasn't far behind — and neither were there friends. After taking a few moments with their own families, many Soldiers went looking for their comrades. There were welcome home hugs and greetings for everyone.

The 123rd MSB was home as one family.

Home at long last Soldiers begin reintegrating after 15-month deployment

By Karen Edge
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the 123rd Main Support Battalion, 1st Armored Division, stationed at Dexheim's Anderson Barracks, returned from a 15-month deployment last month. Their taut faces reflected the weariness of war.

They have returned to wives and girlfriends, husbands and boy-

friends, and to new babies born while they were deployed. They have returned to families who lived in fear of the news and could not stop following it. They have returned to face emotions they expected and others they did not.

Soldiers who had grown used to mortars whistling overhead, dropping to the ground and rolling into trenches or behind bunkers were now asking each other how long it

would take to adjust to life outside a war zone.

The 123rd MSB provided direct support, maintenance and supply, transportation and combat health support to divisional units operating in the division rear area. The battalion provided field services and reinforced direct support to the forward support battalions, putting them constantly in the line of fire.

They knew they were home, but many were dubious as to their safety. The Soldiers couldn't wait to be with their families again, and at the same time they only wanted to be alone.

"I want time to put it all in perspective," said one female specialist who asked not to be identified. "I just want some down time, time to myself without taking orders or looking over my shoulder."

These Soldiers have spent hours daydreaming about coming home, what they would do first, having a cold beer, renewing intimacy with their wives and husbands and spending time with their children. It will happen, but not as quickly or naturally as they had anticipated. These worn-out Soldiers were ready for Western comforts.

The Soldiers had hoped to be enjoying those comforts earlier this year, but in the spring morale plummeted as the division's return was ordered, and then delayed. It became an issue that reverberated from Baghdad to Germany. They carried on. Spouses and Soldiers took the 90-day extension in stride. Now they are finally home. But homecomings aren't as simple as stepping off a plane and getting back to life the way it was before the war.

The Army knows that. Even before they left Iraq, the battalion's Soldiers were screened for symptoms of combat stress, and those with signs of it were referred to psychologists for further evaluation. They have also been required to attend sessions where they were encouraged to air their feelings after months of keeping them in check.

With sand still in their eyes, they were ready to reintegrate. Reintegration is what the Army calls the process of taking war veterans and helping them adjust to everyday life.

Soldiers must attend seven days of briefings aimed to make their



Photos by Karen Edge

Soldiers wave to friends and family members while waiting to get off a bus at Dexheim. More than nine busloads of Soldiers arrived at Anderson Barracks in the early morning hours July 22. Bottom right: A couple embraces while standing on a fest table to get out of the crowd of Soldiers, friends and family members during a homecoming ceremony.



Photos by Cassandra Kardeke

Wendy McClendon embraces her husband, 2nd Lt. Scott McClendon, upon his return from Iraq after having searched through a crowd of Soldiers and family members at a homecoming ceremony at Anderson Barracks to find him. Photo below: 123rd Main Support Battalion Soldiers stand at attention for the "Star Spangled Banner" during a homecoming ceremony July 22.



transitions easier.

One specialist, home for only one day, said the reintegration classes have helped him learn how to take things slowly, step away from a frustrating situation and be patient with "outsiders," people who weren't downrange.

"I've already been asked twice if I killed anyone while I was in Iraq," he said. "What kind of question is that? I mean, I don't want to talk about anything I saw down there. I just want to get back to life as it used to be."

Many Soldiers are finding life will never be the way it was, but they are working to make it be the best it can be.

"The first night I was home, I couldn't sleep," said a first sergeant. "The second day I was able to sleep, but woke up at every sound. I didn't hit the ground when doors banged shut in the morning, but I was up and ready to move."

Wives and husbands accustomed to doing things their own way for more than a year are learning how to be patient with each other as well. They too have had reintegration classes.

Having trained Soldiers to fight, the Army is now taking huge strides at bringing Soldiers home and teaching them how to adjust to civilian life.

The Iron Soldiers are home and hopefully soon, their taught faces will reflect all the relief their homecomings have brought to so many who were left behind.



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Building begins at airfield

Story and photo by
Cassandra Kardeke
 221st Base Support Battalion
 Public Affairs Office

Many changes have taken place at Wiesbaden Army Airfield since units deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom over a year ago.

Several more are to come including a new fitness and child development center. A ground-breaking ceremony was held last month kicking off the construction of the two facilities.

“Because of the work of many gathered here today, the new fitness center will serve the soldiers, civilians and family members in the Wiesbaden community for many years to come,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Franks, 221st Base Support Battalion commander during the July 1 ground-breaking ceremony.

Scheduled to open in March 2006, the 86,000 square-foot fitness center will be located across from the dining facility. The \$19.5 million project will provide a state-of-the-art fitness facility which includes an indoor running track, boxing ring with lighting effects, 1,800 seating capacity basketball court, three indoor volleyball and soccer courts, 12 exercise areas, juice bar and cafe, two racquetball courts and many more features.

“This truly will be the best fit-



Children currently cared for at 221st Base Support Battalion child development centers break ground for a new 300 capacity CDC.

ness facility in all of USAREUR,” said Jean Morrison, community recreation chief for Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Following the fitness center ground breaking, a group of little ones with shovels in hand and hard hats on their heads waited to dig into the topsoil behind the Community Activity Center — the future location of a 26,000-square-foot child development center.

“We’ve asked those who will benefit the most from this new center to help us break ground,” said Franks, regarding the eight 4-year-olds who eagerly stood by.

“This much-needed center will accommodate 300 children, almost doubling the total child care capacity of all the centers in the Wiesbaden community,” Franks said.

Slated to be complete in December 2005, the new facility, located

behind the Community Activity Center, will provide a reception area, administrative space, an isolation room, staff lounge, commercial grade kitchen and a laundry. There will also be infant space with a separate crawl area, toddler rooms and school-age rooms.

“You know what they say, ‘when mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy,’” said Brig. Gen. Vincent E. Boles, 3rd Corps Support Command commander during the ceremony. “You just don’t know how hard it is on a deployed soldier when he calls home and his wife’s had a bad day or the kids have had a bad day or she says she can’t get child care. When a soldier calls and his wife is happy and the kids are well cared for, his morale is heightened and he can keep his mind on his mission.”

Both projects are being managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Community happenings

Aug. 3 – Rock climbing or trip to the Fasanerie with Outdoor Recreation; National Night Out

Aug. 4 – Kontakt Dexheim meets at the Single Soldier Lounge; Wiesbaden Kontakt Club meets at Kleinfeldchen Restaurant

Aug. 5 – Trip to Frankfurt wave pool with Outdoor Recreation; free bowling

Aug. 6-8 – Swiss Adventure Weekend with Outdoor Recreation

Aug. 7 – Paintball in Dexheim or biking with Outdoor Recreation

Aug. 8 – Bingo at Community Activity Center

Aug. 11 – Fall Fashion Show at Flyers Theater; Wiesbaden Kontakt Club meets at Kleinfeldchen Restaurant

Aug. 12 – Free bowling in Wiesbaden and Dexheim

Aug. 15 – Bingo at Community Activity Center

Aug. 16 – Welcome to Wiesbaden orientation at American Arms Hotel

Aug. 16-20 – Vacation Bible School at Hainerberg Chapel

Aug. 18 – Wiesbaden Kontakt Club meets at Kleinfeldchen Restaurant

Aug. 20 – Wiesbaden Health Clinic closed

Aug. 22 – Comedy After Dark at Community Activity Center



Photo courtesy of the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Fire Department

Joint fire display in Hofheim

It doesn’t matter where you are from or what language you speak — young and old alike enjoy the wonders of a fire truck. The Wiesbaden Army Airfield Fire Department took the opportunity to show off their “stuff” in Hofheim July 10-11. Several fire departments throughout the Wiesbaden area participated in the joint fire exhibit, just a short drive from the airfield.

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Community news notes

National Night Out

Team 221st and the Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program host a community National Night Out Aug. 3 from 6-8 p.m. at the Wiesbaden Middle School playground. Come out for free food, games, music, a K-9 dog show, bike rodeo and much more.

Jewish services offered

Jewish religious services are offered every Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Mainz-Kastel Housing. For more information call mil 337-5180 or civ (0611) 705-5180.

Free lunch program

Applications are now being accepted for the free and reduced school lunch program at the 221st Base Support Battalion School Support Office. To find out if your children are eligible for the program call mil 337-7004 or civ (0611) 705-7004.

Vo-tech courses offered

Central Texas College Wiesbaden offers **Emergent Literacy for Early Childhood** and **Legal Aspects of Law Enforcement** courses in the upcoming term. Both courses are classroom-based and apply three credits to an associate in applied science degree. Registration for CTC is Aug. 9-20. Classes start Aug. 23. Stop by the Wiesbaden Education Center for more information or call mil 337-5561, civ (0611) 705-5561. Visit the CTC website at www.europe.ctcd.edu.

Boot camp sessions

The Tony Bass Fitness Center hosts beginner and advanced boot camp sessions beginning Aug. 30. To sign up stop by the fitness center or call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

Reimbursement available

Military personnel who travelled while on Rest and Recuperation leave from Operation

Enduring Freedom of Operation Iraqi Freedom may be eligible for reimbursement of airline costs incurred during onward commercial airline travel between Sept. 21 and Dec. 8, 2003. To find out if you are eligible call mil 337-5563 or civ (0611) 705-5563.

School physicals

The Wiesbaden Health Clinic will conduct school physicals Aug. 17 from 1-5:30 p.m. at the Youth Services gym. Parents must be present and bring the child's shot records.

Belly dancing workshop

Sign up now for an introduction to belly dancing with the USO Aug. 28 from 3-6 p.m. Cost for the class is \$9. It will be held at the USO Cottage in Hainerberg Housing. For more information stop by the USO office at Hainerberg Shopping Center.

Bundespost office closed

The German Post Office at Wiesbaden Army Airfield is permanently closed. Residents wishing to mail letters or packages to off-post locations throughout Europe may use the Wiesbaden Army Post Office or the Bundespost office across from the main train station in Wiesbaden.

Family inprocessing

Spouse and family member inprocessing training is conducted by the 221st Base Support Battalion. Learn about services and activities available in the community and life in Germany. Sessions are held every Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. Call mil 337-5034/5754 or civ (0611) 705-5034/5754 to sign up.

FCC providers needed

Join the 221st Base Support Battalion Family Child Care program. Stay at home with your children while building a career. Providers receive free training and nationally recognized accreditation. For information call mil 338-7729 or civ (0611) 380-7729.

Balloon Shop open

An all occasion Balloon Shop is now open at the Community Activity Center with over 200 mylar and latex balloons to choose from. To order a balloon bouquet stop by the shop or call mil 337-5750, civ (0611) 705-5750.

Comedy night

Need a good laugh? Come on out for Comedy After Dark at the Community Activity Center Aug. 22. Doors open at 7 p.m.; show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets can be purchased for \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. For more information call mil 337-5750 or civ (0611) 705-5750.

EFMP support

Join the Exceptional Family Program support group the first Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 22 at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Victim support offered

If you are a victim of domestic violence, help is available. Contact the Victim Advocacy Program coordinator at mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Clinic closure

The Wiesbaden Health Clinic will be closed Aug. 20 for their Organizational Day. Sick call will be available until 9 a.m. for military personnel only.

Dance classes

Army Community Service hosts line dancing, Latin, country-western and popular dance classes Aug. 3 from 10 a.m. to noon. To sign up or for more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Positions available

Andrews Federal Credit Union seeks a loan specialist for its headquarters office at

Wiesbaden Army Airfield. The position requires three years of office experience including one year in lending. For details call mil 337-5681 or civ (0611) 978 7535. The **Rhein-Main USO** seeks to fill a full-time accounting position in its Hainerberg Housing office. Applicants must be ID card holders or ID card eligible, have at least an associate degree in accounting or comparable experience and be familiar with Excel and automated accounting systems. Send resumes via email to uso.jeterf@t-online.de by Aug. 13.

Graduation DVD available

2004 graduates of Gen. H.H. Arnold High School may pick up a free DVD of the school's graduation and videoteleconference at the main office. The DVD is a free gift provided by the 221st Base Support Battalion commander.

Flea market

The Wiesbaden Community Activity Center now hosts indoor flea markets the last Saturday of each month. Doors open at 11 a.m. Sellers can rent a table for \$10. The next flea market will be held Aug. 28. Call mil 337-5750 or civ (0611) 705-5750.

Free bowling

Spouses and families of deployed Soldiers can bowl for free at both the Wiesbaden and Dexheim Bowling Centers every Thursday from 3-6 p.m. during Iron Family Bowling. Shoe rental is also free. Contact your Family Readiness Group leader to obtain your special programs pass.

School registration

Registration for the upcoming school year is ongoing at all Wiesbaden schools. Even if your child is currently a student, you must re-register for the coming year. Limited registration is also available online at www.registration.eu.odedodea.edu.

Hours of registration for all Wiesbaden and Dexheim schools during the summer will be from 8 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Registration at Aukamm Elementary School will only be held in the mornings. For information call mil 337-7004 or civ (0611) 705-7004.

Breastfeeding support

La Leche League is an international organization dedicated to helping breastfeeding mothers through mother-to-mother support and information. The Rhein Main area LLL meets the fourth Friday of the month at 10 a.m. at the USO Cottage in Hainerberg Housing. Call civ (06134) 188 825 for information.

BOSS meetings

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers meets every Thursday at 2 p.m. at the BOSS Center, Building 1052 on Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

222nd BSB – Baumholder, Neubrücke, Strassburg

Education

New semester

A new college term is just around the corner and Baumholder's Education Center is now accepting registrations for that as well as Adult Education Program Courses.

Baumholder's Adult Education Program offers Conversational German I, Conversational French I and Introduction to Russian beginning Aug. 23. The cost is \$40. Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8891 for more information.

The University of Maryland is currently registering for the upcoming college term at Baumholder. A variety of courses are offered including Concepts of Biology with laboratory, Introduction to Business Management and Introduction to Psychology. Call Deirdre Martin or Stacie Welsh at mil 485-6178 for more information.

Central Texas College is currently registering for the following classes: Automotive Electrical Systems, Intro to Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice Systems and Children with Special Needs. Register now at the Baumholder Education Center.

Sports

Racquetball

A racquetball tournament is scheduled for Aug. 12. Participants should sign up one week in advance.

Several categories including men's open, women's open and doubles open are available. A minimum of four participants are required in each category. Call the Baumholder Sports Office at mil 485-6671/7176 to sign up.

Clubs

Bud night at Shooters

Band and Bud Night is Aug. 13 starting at 9 p.m. There will be games, prizes and giveaways.

Beach party

A beach party with band will be held Aug. 28 starting at 9 p.m.

Games, prizes and giveaways are planned. Food and drink specials are also on tap. Wear your swim suit and get a free prize. It's a pool party.

Rocking rib fest

A rocking rib fest country night with band is scheduled for Sept. 17 starting at 7 p.m.

There will be specials on barbecue platters and good old country

Baumholder happenings



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Grand opening

Customers queue at Toyland during its grand opening July 15. The facility has undergone extensive renovation and now features roomier aisles and additional shelf space in an open, well-lit shopping environment. Opening day featured John Nuyens, in background, folding, bending and tying balloons into an array of shapes for the amusement of young and old.

music. Call mil 485-6345 for details.

Bowl for free

Strikers has free bowling every Thursday from 3-6 p.m. for all families.

Bowling specials

Bowling specials include Monday Night Madness 5-11 p.m.; Tuesday Nifty Fifties Night 5-11 p.m.; Wild Wednesdays starting at 5 p.m., \$5 cover charge and 25 cent games; Early Birds Bowling on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Thursday Color Pin Bowling from 6-11 p.m.; Friday Kids' Night Out from 6-11 p.m.; Saturday Cosmic Bowling from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.; Sunday Family Bowling from 1-9 p.m.

Rudy's

Grab Bag Night is offered every Thursday from 5-10 p.m. For every purchase of \$5 or more you can grab at a chance to win a prize.

Golf course

Rolling Hills Golf Course offers Thursday night golf scrambles. Sign up in the Pro Shop from 3-5:30 p.m. Shotgun start is at 6 p.m. Entry fee is \$10, and nonmembers pay greens fees.

Recreation

Big wine fest

Trips to the Bad Dürkheim Wine Festival are scheduled for Sept. 11 and 18. Experience Europe's largest

wine festival. More than 150 wine selections at 50 booths will be available. The bus departs at 3 p.m. and the cost is \$35. Reserve your seat today. Call mil 485-7182 for details.

Free swim night

Teens can enjoy a refreshing swim for free every Tuesday and Thursday from 1-8 p.m. at the Baumholder indoor pool.

Take advantage

Single Soldier Advantage Cards are available at the MWR table in the Any Day Tent during reintegration. With this card, single Soldiers can take advantage of free and reduced services.

Free shuttle

A free shopping shuttle to the Ramstein and Vogelweh exchange facilities is offered by Outdoor Recreation.

Advance reservations are required and may be made by calling Outdoor Recreation at mil 485-7182.

Trips are offered to Ramstein on Tuesdays and to Vogelweh on Thursdays.

Call Outdoor Recreation for departure times. A coupon for 20 percent off purchases and a coupon for \$2 off lunch will be offered to 14 people per trip.

Express shuttle

A free Saturday express shuttle is offered to families of deployed Soldiers. Call mil 485-

6115 beginning the Monday before the trip.



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

Change of command

Soldiers of the 47th Forward Support Battalion look on as Lt. Col. Paul C. Hurley passes the unit colors during a change of command ceremony. Lt. Col. Jeanne Smith-Hooper took command from Hurley on the Rheinlander lawn July 21.

ACS

Reservations

Reservations for the following classes may be made by calling mil 485-8188.

Rest of your life

A series titled The Beginning of the Rest of Your Life is designed to provide young couples with the needed skills to build a strong and lasting foundation. It is offered at ACS. Call mil 485-8188 or civ (06783) 6-8188. for details.

Tot group

Parents and Tots Playgroup (birth to pre-school) meets every Monday, 10-11:30 a.m., at Iron Kids Play Group Room in Building 8222.

Nurturing parents

Empowering Nurturing Parents is a group for nurturing graduates to continue the learning process and meets every Tuesday from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Iron Kids Play Room in Building 8222.

Coffee break

Spouse's Coffee Break offers support for all military spouses and meets every Wednesday and Friday from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Iron Kids Play Room in Building 8222.

222nd BSB – Baumholder, Neubrücke, Strassburg



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

A Soldier from the 90th Personnel Support Battalion explains the different targets to German soldiers during a partnership qualification shoot.

28-year-old partnership strengthens friendship

By LeAnne MacAllister
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Thanks to a long-standing German-American military partnership, 30 German reserve soldiers from the R.K. Westrich army reserve unit had the opportunity to qualify on the American M-16 A2 rifle and M-9 pistol.

They were hosted by the 90th Personnel Services Battalion at Baumholder on July 17.

The R.K. Westrich reserve and 90th PSB have participated in a partnership for 28 years. Weapons training and PT programs are held periodically. The weapons qualifications program is just one example of this

successful relationship.

1st Lt. Brendan Howton, the partnership liaison officer for the 90th PSB, explained that the units arrange multiple social gatherings in addition to the various combined training programs.

"This partnership is a great thing. The program boosts our friendship as it exposes our Soldiers to different military systems and cultures," said Howton.

The 90th PSB and R.K. Westrich units gathered upon completion of the qualifications program to present awards. The German soldiers are now wearing the American weapons qualification badge on their uniform as they carry the units' friendship into the future.



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Pfc. Kimberly Hendrix has her weapon's sight adjusted by Spc. Yeri Barcia.

90th takes aim to qualify

Soldiers from the 90th Personnel Services Battalion recently took up arms and pointed them downrange — down Baumholder's M-16 outdoor range and 9-mm indoor range that is.

When the Department of the Army started requiring all Soldiers to qualify on their primary weapon twice a year instead of once, Soldiers from the 90th PSB returning from Iraq were technically not qualified on their weapon.

Command Sgt. Maj. Divina Bobb ex-

plained that, "in the past, only combat arms units were required to qualify twice a year to maintain proficiency and be effective in the battlefield. With operation Iraqi Freedom, they've discovered that no matter what MOS you're in, you are a warrior, so therefore the standards should be the same for all," she said.

"So instead of making non-combat arms units only qualify once a year, they now have the same requirement as combat arms Soldiers," said Bobb.

Reintegration helps Soldiers ease back into garrison life

By Spc. Todd Goodman
Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Public Affairs Office

Want some practical advice for families of downrange Soldiers who are on their way home for 30 days of block leave?

"Tell your children, 'Kids, now is not a good time to sneak up on daddy,'" said Lt. Col. Francis Bannister, Baumholder Health Clinic commander.

The first step for returning 1st Armored Division Soldiers is the Baumholder Reintegration Facility for a seven-day reintegration program, which began July 10.

"We are here to help ease you back in to garrison life and help you adjust to the changes associated with coming from a hostile environment," said Bannister. "Even something as simple as a change in climate can take some time to get used to."

Many of the incoming Soldiers have no significant health problems, but about 10

percent of them are experiencing low-level anxiety and sleeplessness from being in combat, a condition which is to be expected, said Bannister. Returning Soldiers are also suffering various aches and pains from 15 months of pounding the ground in extreme heat.

Soldiers returning to Baumholder have blood drawn, undergo health screenings, receive information on communication sessions and participate in various legal and safety briefings before being released for the block leave they have earned. Many of the reintegration activities take place in temporary facilities marked Day One through Day Seven.

"There are all kinds of things to consider ... such as alcohol," said Bannister. "These guys are coming from 15 months in a dry country. A low tolerance for alcohol combined with a low tolerance for frustration can equal disaster."

That is the reason Bannister asked the

Soldiers to raise their right hands and promise to keep their hero status intact. They are asked to promise four things.

- ❖ I will not drink and drive.
- ❖ No matter how hard it gets, I will not quit. Suicide is not an option.
- ❖ I will count to six before attacking any person, place or object.
- ❖ I will not take any shortcuts during the seven day reintegration process.

The program will handle about 300 Soldiers per day until August, and has thus far operated very efficiently, said Bannister.

Soldiers have taken notice.

"I think this system allows us to get through our paperwork very rapidly," said Lt. Col. Theodore Williams, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-6th Infantry. "It really helps our junior enlisted Soldiers get reintegrated. The staff here has made us feel very welcome. Nobody wants to stand in line and move through various stations, but it has run



Photo by Spc Todd Goodman
Chaplain (Maj.) Daniel E. Wackerhagen, has a blood sample drawn July 10 during his first day of reintegration. The program lasts seven days.

more smoothly than I had imagined. Morale has been very good."

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Wait is over — friends, families reunite

By **LeAnne MacAllister**
222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

The Hall of Champions has hosted welcome home ceremonies for the heroes of Baumholder nearly everyday throughout the month of July.

Spouses and children, comrades and friends have gathered with teary eyes, balloons, flowers, signs and open arms to celebrate their

return.

All Soldiers are expected home by the first week of August.

Families are reunited. Fathers and mothers embrace spouses and children they haven't seen for a year or more, while others look into their babies' eyes for the first time.

In anticipation of their arrival, friends and family meticulously covered the post with banners of praise and pride. Occasionally one could

find a spot that seemed passed over by the welcome home linens. It didn't stay that way for long. Another spouse, child or friend would make one more sign until hundreds upon hundreds of signs echoed across this post "our heroes have returned."

Helen Williams, Family Readiness Group adviser for the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, reflected on why FRGs spent so

much time preparing the post.

"There are a lot of Soldiers who do not have family to come home to here. We want to make sure our guys, married and single, know how much they are loved and appreciated. We want them to know we are happy and proud to have all of them back. So we are making banners and decorating continuously."

Lisa Box, an FRG leader, added that the beautification and celebration at Baumholder is an ongoing effort. "We don't really have an end date, because when one falls down we put another one up. Our thought is you can never have too many banners, and we will decorate and hang them as long as needed."

Along with family and friends, the 222nd Base Support Battalion

ensured the base was ready to welcome home their Soldiers.

Many of the dining facilities, barracks and housing areas have been renovated in anticipation of their return. Shooters and Strikers have also been remodeled in quality of life initiatives.

Heading downtown, the town of Baumholder has come back to life. Soldiers fill the stores, restaurants and bars celebrating their well-deserved rest.

Members of the Baumholder communities have worked hard to ensure the Soldiers of Baumholder, Neubrücke and Strassburg receive the welcome they deserve. Judging from the Soldiers' reactions around post, their efforts have been well received.



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

A returning Soldier is overcome by tears of joy as his children hug him after the welcome home ceremony. Above right: a husband and wife share their joy after being reunited at the Hall of Champions. Below right: just a few of the hundreds of "linen messages" decorating the Baumholder community.



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Welcome back ... we missed you
We are extremely proud of all you have done. You truly are America's heroes.
Sir Wilfred Grenfell once said, "Real joy comes not from ease or riches or from the praise of men but from doing something worthwhile."
The service that our Soldiers have provided for the world is both worthwhile and remarkable. Your contributions have been immeasurable.
— A message from Baumholder Army Community Service

Medical Soldiers participate in infantry crash course

By LeAnne MacAllister
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Soldiers from the 464th Medical Company Dental Service participated in a three-day infantry field problem taught by the 1st Armored Division's 2-6th Infantry. Held July 12-14 for 49 participants, the program is the first of its kind.

Maj. William "Jay" Greenwood of the 464th Med. Co. determined that medical companies need infantry basics, especially if they are going to be deployed. Such basics include convoy procedures and the handling of weapons. Realizing the need, he looked for an infantry unit to assist the unit. The program began just three weeks after contacting Capt. Ryan Bromenschenkel, 2-6th Infantry rear detachment commander.

"My goal was to establish relations with an infantry unit that just returned from combat and to form an ongoing relationship in which their Soldiers would teach the 464th Med. Co. realistic infantry basics," said Greenwood. "This program is



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

Pfc. Jessica Merkle assembles a SAW M-249 mounted on a vehicle. Merkle won the weapons assembly competition hands down.

like a pearl. The 464th Med. Co. has never done this before. We needed more than book training and med training. This is what we needed—2-6th Infantry has done a phenomenal job."

The Landstuhl Medical Company soldiers received the hands-on, out-of-the-book, realistic training Greenwood was looking for. Thirteen Soldiers from 2-6th Infan-

try, most of whom recently returned from Iraq, created and led the three-day program.

Day one was spent covering basic infantry, tactical battle and weaponry skills, while days two and three covered convoy training, convoy operations and urban tactics. Lt. Col. Thomas R. Tempel, commander, 464th Med. Co., was especially pleased with the empha-

sis on convoy procedures, citing that units are highly vulnerable when moving.

The 464th Med. Co. Soldiers were tested on the skills that were learned, which included assembly and disassembly of weapons such as the SAW M-249 and the 240B machine guns. "This course is very helpful. We need this information downrange. We've learned a lot down here in only three days," said Pfc. Jessica Merkle, the first to complete the weapons test successfully.

"We want to give the 464th Med. Co. a combat focus to prepare them in case hostile situations arise. It is very probable that these dentists may be attached to the 1st AD or another infantry unit during a deployment. Having them prepared will in turn benefit their infantry counterpart," said Capt. Matthew Graham. Graham, who led the 2-6th Infantry team, also said the program was beneficial in developing his NCOs' and junior enlisted Soldiers' ability to teach infantry basics.

The 49 Landstuhl participants rotated through various learning

stations presented by the 13 members of the 2-6th Infantry team. Stations in the rotation included mortar attacks, snipers, hostile/friendly crowds, Improvised Explosive Devices, fixed obstacles, small unit ambushes, movement through cities, room clearing and other applicable combat scenarios.

"It's fun for us and good training for them. Plus it's worthwhile because they may need to use it downrange," said Spc. Gary Wirtz of Company B, 2-6th Infantry.

"The Med. Co. was not able to identify the necessary training until the infantry showed us what we need to know," said Greenwood. "Now they can take this experience back and use the hands-on lessons to repeat training on individual tasks and scenarios in a more realistic fashion."

Looking forward, Greenwood added that he hoped to incorporate this program in the deployment preparation process for all Soldiers going downrange.

"The Med. Co. needs this training. This program should be made a standard," he said.