

Soldiers return with personal issues

Need respect, understanding from loved ones as they decompress from deployment

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

They may have returned to their home bases weeks ago, but psychologically it's still a long way home for Soldiers returning from Iraq.

Returning Soldiers are dealing with a range of issues as they settle into life as they used to know it, said officials. Many are processing their yearlong experiences in the war zone, coming to terms with personal traumas and adjusting to changes that have taken place in their absence. While many readjust with no outward sign of turmoil, others are often on edge and quick to lose their tempers over seemingly minor matters.

"So far I have not heard about any arguments going on between Soldiers and community members, but I know there are fights among Soldiers who went downrange and Soldiers who stayed here," said Tom [not his real name] who returned recently to Friedberg from Iraq.

"Often it's we who pick on the ones who stayed here because they keep asking, 'What happened downrange, what happened?' Lots of guys are still tensed up and when they hear noise they jump and get on the ground."

Fortunately no Soldier has to deal with the situation alone. Soldiers go through a week of briefings upon their return, and psychologists and social workers are on hand so they

can talk about their experiences downrange and reactions to being home.

"Providing counselors is a good idea, but you must realize that people who do not want help will not get help," said Tom. "I know some people who are close to the flip point, and it's good to know that help is available. It shows that somebody cares for us Soldiers."

Being confronted with violence, death and the sight of severe injuries downrange was not as traumatic for Tom as it was for other young Soldiers, he said.

"I am a medic and sometimes you see bad things even when you are not deployed. But I know that some of the guys in the tank battalions were confronted with pretty rough situations and it will take a while to get over them," he said.

"The deployment was a challenge, and you do change while you are down there. The hardest part of being over there is that people die over stupid things," said Shirley [not her real name], another Soldier who just returned to Friedberg. "I know now I will appreciate the small things. I will not take everything for granted anymore."

Holding on to the good memories of Iraq helps her transition back into normal life again, she said.

"I try to remember only the good things. We did make a difference in the lives of so many children. I visited orphanages and saw those poor children, and I saw the smiles in

their faces. Regardless of what the media is saying, I know that if nothing else we did help the children of Baghdad. I'll try to remember just that and leave the negativity downrange.

"Of course it's not easy because I lost friends in Iraq and I lost my favorite command sergeant major — he was like my father — but I try to go on with my life. I have a six-year-old daughter, and throughout the deployment I wanted to come home to my baby. That kept me going, so I don't want to be miserable now," she said.

"My husband's changed and I don't like it," said Tina [not her real name], the spouse of a Giessen-based Soldier. "He's different towards our two children. He says he has a hard time respecting the German

guards and the guys who stayed in the rear because all they did was protecting a safe post. He's rough and short-tempered, and I hope he will change because we don't know how to handle him. I want my husband back, the guy that I said good-bye to over 15 months ago."

"Every Soldier who went downrange has his or her own story. They can't just come back and forget about all the compartmentalized feelings they had to put on hold for so many months while maintaining focus on the mission. These emotions will resurface over and over again in so many negative ways if we don't work to understand and resolve them," said Daniel Adams, a social service worker with the 284th Base Support Battalion's Army Community Service. As a member of the BSB reintegration team, Adams held briefings advising Soldiers on local and stateside resources available to help them cope with their return.

"Never before in U.S. Army history has so much been offered in the way of support services. This command and administration are very concerned for its military members' safety and productivity and have made professional services available to Soldiers and their families no matter where they are in the world," he said.

Emotional hardship

Soldiers often share their emotional hardship and struggle to get their lives back together during the reintegration briefings, Adams said. Causes of anger were often magnified and held on to downrange, and Soldiers bring those feelings home — anger about trust broken by a loved one, whether spouses, siblings or parents, he said.

"One Soldier told me he gave his mother power of attorney and he just found out that she has spent all of his money. Another Soldier said his wife must have bought all of the collectables in Germany, and there is hardly any of the money left. These guys are back and find their trust broken. Many said that they wished that there was a legal system out there that would help them go after wrongdoers who broke their trust. Others talked about their unfaithful spouses or the suspicions their spouses had about them in Iraq. I think the trust issue is one of the most horrible experiences for some of these Soldiers," he said.

Besides the death of fellow Soldiers, many returning from Iraq are coming to terms with the death of friends or family members while they were away. They have missed funerals, weddings, divorces, births and other milestone events and could not share their feelings with loved ones.

"The father of two brothers, both stationed in different battalions in 1st Brigade, died during deployment. One brother got to

go home for the funeral while the other brother could not go. Now this young man has to go home for his celebratory reunion from Iraq with all these emotions he held inside, and go through all this grief and anger," said Adams.

Challenges to individual religious and political belief structures are another stress factor, he said.

"The values of those beliefs may have been have been changed and altered. For

some regaining those original beliefs and values is the same as finding their old self again, the self with whom they are comfortable and who feels comfortable to be with others again. Accepting change is tough and stressful and it's not possible

to ever go back to the normal way it used to be. There is always a new normal," said Adams.

"Some joined the military out of a patriotic sense of duty, and suddenly they read in the news that our country started the war for the wrong reasons, that there are no weapons of mass destruction. The prison scandal at Abu Ghraib and the media attention became a huge problem for Soldiers too. Many feel judged by society and the media, and it hurts them that the world didn't hear enough about the good things they accomplished — building up schools, orphanages, sanitation, health care and clean water. Many Soldiers are afraid that they are not meeting society's expectations.

"Understanding their own emotions and coping with their experiences takes a lot of time...and we must give them the time they need and encourage them to seek help when emotions overwhelm them," he said.

Being respectful

"To help our Soldiers with a safe and productive transition, families, friends and community members must be more respectful," said Adams.

"As curious as we are about knowing firsthand about their experiences, we need to hold back and not ask them questions about the deployment unless they want to share. Likewise, when someone opens up to share their experiences, we really need to listen without judging and offering rebuttals.

"It takes about two months to decompress. The many signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder may last approximately six to eight weeks. We tell them that they need to take a good two months to decompress with positive activities before making any major decisions such as big purchases or relationship issues.

"What they need right now is to know that we — society, family and friends — appreciate their dedication, sacrifices and the honorable service given to the world. They truly have done a great and honorable service for us all," said Adams.

"Every Soldier who went downrange has his or her own story. They can't just come back, forget about all the compartmentalized feelings they had to put on hold for so many months while maintaining focus on the mission."



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Daniel Adams, an Army Community Service social worker, knows about the emotional stress many redeploying Soldiers are dealing with. Adams and fellow social workers offer a host of programs to support Soldiers and their families.

Sleep disorders common after deployment

Help available for Soldiers at health clinics, aid stations

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

One in every eight Soldiers who have just returned from the Iraq deployment is expected to experience sleeping problems, said health officials.

“A sleep disorder is most common among Soldiers who are returning from a deployment,” said Maj. Susan Robinson, Butzbach Health Clinic commander.

“This is part of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that can occur after experiencing life threatening events. We estimate that in units like the 2-3rd Field Artillery and the 527th Military Police Company the numbers are higher—one in four or one in three or even higher than that—because due to their location and duty downrange they saw more traumatic things.”

Heightened states of alertness for extended periods of time and traumatic experiences are main causes of sleepless, she said.

“Part of surviving downrange is to always be alert. The Soldiers get used to listening to hear if mortars are coming in, even when they sleep. They could never let their guard down. Now they are back and feel safe, but everything is so quiet.

They are also dealing with anxiety, bad memories and feelings and flashbacks. Many are very irritable at the moment. That’s why it is so important to look for help because the sleep disorder will influence a person’s social and family life.”

Soldiers seeking help to deal with this post-deployment problem need not worry about medication that leads to addiction, said Robinson. “In a very few cases we will give them very mild sleeping medication, but this is just first aid to help them get a rest — so we can work on the sleep issue.”

Doctors, physician assistants and social workers are on duty to help Soldiers deal with sleeplessness and other issues, she said.

Developing good sleeping hygiene

“We treat PTSD by helping them develop good sleeping hygiene. That means they have to be consistent about going to bed and must avoid things that prevent them from sleeping such as drinking alcohol, exercising right before going to bed, big meals — anything that is stimulating to the body. Taking naps on the couch isn’t good either — just like reading books or watching television before going to sleep — because it all conditions you for a sleeping disorder.”

Signs of sleeping disorder include daytime sleepiness, poor concentration and heightened irritability.

“We urge anyone with sleeping problems to come to the clinic because this condition will not go away by itself. If you can’t sleep and have noticed any of the symptoms call us and arrange for an appointment,” said Robinson.

“We will not label anyone, and you don’t have to say ‘I’ve got a problem.’ When calling for an appointment just say that



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Treating sleeping problems with medication without seeing a doctor is not the best way to deal with the issue. Sleeping problems could indicate a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that needs to be treated.

you can’t sleep and we know what to do.”

For appointments call the clinic at mil 345-4040/4045. Soldiers can also contact local aid stations. To arrange an appointment at the Division Mental Health office call Maj. Orsingel at mil 324-3010.

For background information about PTSD go to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website at www.ncptsd.org.

ACS classes

Anger management

The 284th Base Support Battalion Army Community Service hosts an Anger Management class Aug. 23 in Butzbach’s Outreach Center, Sept. 15 at the Giessen ACS and Sept. 20 at the Friedberg ACS. The class is from 10-11:30 a.m. For details call Kris Cervantes at mil 343-7421. Units can schedule classes for their Soldiers.

Stress management

A Stress Management class is scheduled for Sept. 2 at the Butzbach Outreach Center and Sept. 13 at the Friedberg ACS. All classes are from 10-11:30 a.m. For more information call Kris Cervantes at mil 343-7421. Units interested in scheduling individual classes for their Soldiers should call for arrangements.

Interpersonal communication

An Interpersonal Communication class will be hosted Aug. 30 from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Butzbach Outreach Center, Aug. 25 from 10-11:30 at the Giessen ACS and Sept. 13 from 12:30-2p.m. at the Friedberg ACS. For details call Kris Cervantes at mil 343-7421.

Free counseling

The Army One Source free counseling line is available 24 hours a day at civ (00800) 4648 1077. The toll-free service puts callers directly in touch with professional counselors.

Plan pet care before taking vacation

By Petra Roberts

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Summertime is a natural for traveling. As many families plan block leave, local animal protection agencies urge pet owners to remember the welfare and safety of their ani-

mals as they prepare their getaways.

With so many families and individuals taking block leave, it may be difficult to find a reliable friend or neighbor to walk the dog, clean the cat litter box or provide fresh water and food daily. Consider these contingencies and make arrangements well in advance.



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Before booking his vacation Chief Warrant Officer Frank Ernst of the 1st Armored Division Engineer Brigade made arrangements at a local pet hotel for his 12-year-old dog Duchess. For a relatively small fee these hotels offer professional, full-time care for your pet.

● If a pet is to be cared for at home, make sure the animal and its caretaker get along, and that that person is trustworthy. The fact that a pet’s owner is gone is stressful enough. Waiting hours for somebody to come by and spend a little time with your pet can be torture on the animal.

● Discuss what needs to be done with the caretaker and clarify his or her expectations. Is she or he expecting to get paid? Can you return the favor one day? Are you expected to return the favor? Come to clear agreements before heading out the door.

● Dog owners who decide to travel with their pets must get information about regulations and restrictions that govern pet travel in their country of destination.

In most cases families travel without their pet and

have trouble finding a reliable sitter. Consider other options for pet care.

Cat and dog hotels provide care and attention for a relatively small fee. Dogs are usually kept in individual kennels with runs. Cats are kept in secure environments to assure they don’t “go for walks.”

Daily rates range from •8-14 depending on the pet hotel and the size of the animal. The 284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office can provide addresses and phone numbers of reliable shelters.

Shelters available too

Pet shelters managed by area animal protection agencies also offer to care for pets while owners are gone. Many dogs and cats that have experienced these kennels more than once actually feel right at home there, said pet owners.

Call the Giessen shelter at civ (0641) 52251 for information. They are open Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3-5 p.m. and weekends from 3-6 p.m.

The Heim-Tier-Land Gasthof für Tiere, a hotel for cats, dogs, rabbits and birds is located in Münzenberg. The owner speaks English. For details on rates and space availability call civ (06404) 930 084.

Summer vacations should not result in abandoned animals being found tied up to a pole somewhere or left at home suffering without proper care. Spending a few extra dollars to assure your pet’s well-being should be part of your budget, and a happy reunification with your pet when you get back will make it all worthwhile.

Community spotlight

Chaplain's anniversary barbecue

The 284th Base Support Battalion Chaplain's Office hosts a barbecue luncheon Aug. 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Whiddon Park on the Giessen Depot (behind the MWR building) in recognition of the U.S. Army Chaplain's Corps anniversary. Everyone is invited to enjoy free food, free games for children and hundreds of door prizes. Inclement weather location is the Giessen Chapel. For details call Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Ford at mil 324-3508.

PSB office closed

All offices of Detachment C, 55th Personnel Services Battalion in Friedberg will be closed Sept. 2 in observance of the battalion's organization day and welcome home ceremony. For more information call Warrant Officer 1 Jeffrey Gordon at mil 324-3602.

AAFES job fair

The Army and Air Force Exchange Human Resource office hosts a job fair Sept. 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Giessen PX. The fair is open to the community and provides first-hand information on job opportunities. For details call Hedy DeCosta in Hanau at civ (06181)958416.

Substitute teachers, volunteers sought

Giessen Middle/High School seeks substitute teachers for the new school year. Pick up an application at the school's main office. No specific experience is needed. The school also seeks volunteers for the School Advisory Committee and the Booster Club. Lunch

monitor positions are also available for up to two hours per day. For more information call Marcia Smith at mil 343-7333.

School registration

All new arriving and returning students need to be registered for the 2004/05 school year. Early registration helps to compose class lists and hire staff members to meet student needs. To register new students parents need to bring: ☞ Child's birth certificate or passport ☞ Child's Social Security card ☞ Child's updated immunization records ☞ Updated copy of sponsor's orders with the child's name annotated on orders. The school's main office is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Orientation in Butzbach

Butzbach Elementary School hosts a new student orientation for all new students and their families Aug. 23 at 5 p.m. in the school's information center. Parents are encouraged to come to the orientation to learn more about the school's instructional and extracurricular programs and tour the school.

Employment opportunities

Butzbach Elementary School has several employment opportunities available. An education aide, GS-4, for three to six hours per week is needed. Requirements are experience working with school-age children, flexibility, ability to work independently and the possession of good organization skills. A substitute teacher for children age 3-12 is sought. Requirements include flexibility in schedul-



Photo by Alexandra Williams

National Night Out

McGruff the crime dog welcomes young community members during this year's National Night Out barbecue that took place Aug. 5 at Whiddon Park on the Giessen Depot. The barbecue was held to inform community members about crime prevention and the 284th Base Support Battalion's Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program offered by the Provost Marshal's Office. Besides face painting and games for children attendees were treated to a variety of demonstrations such as kitchen fire and explosives safety, K-9 and self-defense. For more information about SNAP or becoming a SNAP volunteer call Luz Medeiros at mil 343-6500.

ing, dependability, mature decision making, good organization skills and creativity. Clerical positions, GS-4, for three to eight hours per day are available. Applicants should have good social skills with children and adults, be receptive and adaptive to varying individual and school-wide needs, good organizational skills and ability to work independently and with others. Applications are available at the school. For more information call the school at civ (06033) 74520.

School bus registration

School bus registration for the new school year is ongoing. The School Bus Office in Butzbach is open Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1-2 p.m. In Bad Nauheim registration can be made at the elementary school Wednesday from 9 a.m. to noon.

Self Help classes

The Self Help stores in Giessen and Friedberg offer self-help classes for adults. The class is needed to allow residents free use of the Self Help Issue Points which provide materials, supplies, equipment and also loan equipment to housing occupants. The store personnel also provide one-on-one assistance. For details call the Friedberg store at mil 324-3169 and the Giessen store at mil 343-6263.

Tax Center update

Services at the Giessen Tax Center are available by appointment only. Call mil 343-8268 to schedule an appointment. The Friedberg Tax Center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Sept. 30 for walk-ins and appointments. The center is located in Building 3635, Room 112. For details call mil

324-2275.

WIC hours, class

The Women, Infants and Children Overseas office in Butzbach, located in Building 6543, Apartment 3A, is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1-5 p.m. The WIC-O office in Giessen is located in Building 12 on the Giessen Depot and is open Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to noon and from 1-5 p.m. A Sensible Tips for Eating Out class is scheduled for Aug. 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the WIC office in Building 12 on the Giessen Depot. For appointments call the office in Butzbach at civ (06033) 925 736 and in Giessen call civ (0641) 402 7448.

Army Family Survey could be coming your way

During the month of September randomly selected Army spouses will receive an Army family survey providing them with a chance to voice their opinions on housing, paid and volunteer work, children, health care, morale, welfare and recreation, deployments and other issues. Recipients are encouraged to complete the survey to fine tune the programs that serve Army families. This year survey participants also have the option of completing the survey online. The result of the survey will lead directly to changes in family-focused programs and services to improve the life of Army families. For details go to www.armymwr.com.

Clinic closed Aug. 20

The Butzbach Health Clinic will close Aug. 20 at noon for the clinic's organization day. For more information call the clinic at mil 345-4040.



Photo by Alexandra Williams

One more time with feeling

Fitness and martial arts expert Billy Blanks (center) is joined by community members at Giessen's Miller Hall July 29 for a tae bo lesson during his visit to the 284th Base Support Battalion. Blanks and his daughter Shelly Blanks-Cimarosti spent a day in Giessen and Butzbach's Roman Way Housing signing autographs, posing with their fans and giving an expert tae bo lesson. The visit was part of the Installation Management Agency-Europe Morale, Welfare and Recreation Summer Shout Out Program that brings celebrities to Army families in Europe.

Save federal tax on imported vehicles

By Robert Szostek

U.S. Army Europe Provost Marshal's Office

Soldiers and civilians stationed overseas for a minimum of 140 days may import vehicles to the United States without paying federal duty.

This exemption means big savings if PCSing car owners can meet three conditions: They must take physical possession of the vehicle before shipment, have valid movement orders and import it for personal use.

"Most people who encounter problems fail to take physical possession of the vehicle before shipment," said Bill Johnson, deputy director of the European Command's Customs and Border Clearance Agency. "They have a car shipped directly from the factory and risk having to pay import duty as a result."

Registering a vehicle is the most common way of demonstrating possession, he said. When that is not possible, owners can prove possession by putting a copy of their movement orders in the vehicle glove compartment.

Car owners must have a set of official change of station orders in hand before shipping a vehicle. People on extended leave or temporary duty are not entitled to the exemption.

Finally, vehicles must be for personal use or for use by immediate family members. "If you had six dependents of driving age, you could justify importing seven vehicles duty-free — one for each of them and one for yourself," said Johnson.

It is illegal to use the exemption to import vehicles for third parties or to sell them.

Those who import vehicles as part of a PCS can save on federal duties and taxes, but must realize that they remain responsible for state taxes, which can be high. For information on specific state taxes, check the Internet-based contact directory at www.rmv.hqsareur.army.mil/newdmvs.htm.

Call the military Customs Office at mil 343-6518 or the Transportation Office at mil 343-7705 for information and assistance.

Recreational events

Taking to the skies

Paragliding season is open through November. The **Paragliding Glider Club** in Giessen offers gliding lessons every Saturday and Sunday.

The cost is €155 for youths up to age 14 and €260 for adults age 15 and older. A 7-15-minute ride (depending on the draft) is €15. Participants must be at least 5 years old.

The **Cloudbusters ballooning club** in Pohlheim offers rides to Frankfurt for up to 25 people per balloon. The cost is €185 per person. The ballooning season is open through October. Giessen Outdoor Recreation Center will set up appointments for anyone interested. For more information call mil 343-8202/8207.

Satellite gyms open

In support of spouses with small children and no means of transportation the Sports Office has opened two satellite gyms in the Bad Nauheim Community Center in Building 6543 in Butzbach's Roman Way

Housing. The opening hours of the Bad Nauheim are Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Butzbach mini gym is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For details call the Bad Nauheim Outreach Center at mil 324-3566, the Butzbach Outreach Center at civ (06033) 925 329 or the Friedberg Army Community Center at mil 324-3100.

Outdoor Rec trips

Giessen Outdoor Recreation hosts an overnight trip to **Amsterdam and Six Flags** Aug. 21-22. The cost is \$139 for adults, \$79 for children age 12-4 and \$29 for children age 3 and under. A trip to the **Oberhausen Shopping Mall** Aug. 28 costs \$20 for adults, \$12 for children age 4-11 and \$5 for children age 3 and under. For more information call mil 343-8202.

Play at Alpine

My Joshua Productions presents the play "Secrets to Be Kept" Aug 28 at 7:30 p.m. in the Alpine Catering Center's ballroom on the Giessen Depot. Tickets cost \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Food and beverages will be available at the bar. For more information call civ (0175) 890 2507 or civ (0175) 890 2571.



414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau



Photo by 1st Lt. John Gavigan

Soldiers of 77th Maintenance Company drill for their roles as members of the fallen Soldier honor guard.

Fallen Soldier honor guard stands ready

By 1st Lt. John Gavigan
485th Corps Support Battalion

As Soldiers returned in droves from Iraq to Germany and communities responded with heartfelt welcome ceremonies, one group of 485th Corps Support Battalion Soldiers prepared for a grimmer mission, should the call come.

Soldiers of the 77th Maintenance “Mighty Warpath” Company were engaged in an endeavor that epitomized the Army value of honor — the responsibility to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice — through service in the fallen Soldier honor guard.

Thanks to their discipline and dedication, should a fallen Soldier return from Iraq, the remains of the hero will be met by a highly trained group of Warpath Soldiers who will render

appropriate honors.

“I take the training of the Soldiers for this task to heart because our fallen comrades deserve the most solemn and sacred handling we can give them,” said Sgt. 1st Class Laurence C. Mullins. “We won’t get a second opportunity to honor them in this fashion, so it has to be done one way and one time — the right way.”

The intensive and demanding training involves hours of practice to ensure the team performs in unison. Each member of the detail understands the importance of honoring their fallen comrades, and a sense of pride permeates their ranks.

Having returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom in late 2003, Warpath Soldiers understand what Soldiers face

there every day and the bonds that form when Soldiers share the hardships of combat and the long separation from friends and family. Fallen Soldier honor guard training is arduous work, but Warpath Soldiers are motivated and up to the task.

The irony is that not one Soldier hopes to perform the task for which they are so well prepared, but reality teaches that the honor guard must continue to perform. As long as our brothers and sisters in arms are determined to stand in harm’s way to defend the ideals of our nation, Soldiers will continue to pay the ultimate price. For their heroic actions we will momentarily wipe our tears to honor them.

Each of these heroes may have parted from this earth, but they will never be forgotten.

Aviators change command

Col. John Christensen (from left), commander of Division Support Command, 1st Armored Division, and Lt. Col. Eric E. Smith, outgoing 127th Aviation Support Battalion commander, watch as Lt. Col. Gary W. Tomey addresses Soldiers and family members as he assumes command of the 127th ASB July 31 on Fliegerhorst Kaserne. Tomey comes from an assignment as deputy director for operations in the Executive Communications and Control Directorate of the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army. Smith moves on to become deputy commander of the 12th Aviation Brigade in Giebelstadt.

Photo by Midori VanBrunt



414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Community notes . . . Community notes

Planners needed

Community members are sought to serve as 414th Base Support Battalion Army Family Action Plan conference planners. Well organized, committed and efficient individuals with great people skills are needed for the steering committee and other roles. The initial meeting will be held Sept. 15 at Army Community Service, Building 9 on Pioneer Kaserne, at 3 p.m. Call Amy Cuebas at civ (06181) 88-8766 or mil 322-8766 for details.

Büdingen PWOC

The Büdingen Protestant Women of the Chapel will hold its chapter Fall Kick-off Sept. 15 with a morning of fun and fellowship in the chapel on Armstrong Barracks. Fall Bible study and opportunities for discipleship and service will be on the agenda. For information call Amy Taylor at civ (06042) 979 119 or send email to ain13@aol.com.

Equal Opportunity events

The Hanau community Equal Opportunity Office hosts its fourth annual **Women's Equality Day 5-Kilometer Fun Run/Walk** Aug. 26 at the Pioneer Fitness Center starting at 8 a.m. Registration, which is free, will be from 7-7:45 a.m. The first 100 people to register will receive a free T-shirt.

The EO Office also hosts an **Hispanic Heritage Month trip to Calella, Spain**, Oct. 14-17. Cost is \$299 including roundtrip transportation by bus and airplane, three overnights in a three-star hotel, tour of Barcelona and meals. Deadline to make payments and sign up is Sept. 1. Call Sgt. 1st Class Gayden at mil 323-2012, Sgt. 1st Class Sanders at mil 323-2998 or Sgt. 1st Class Robinson at mil 322-7720 for information about either event.

Area school updates

Argonner Elementary School seeks substitute teachers, educational aides and lunch room monitors for the upcoming school year. Call the school at mil 322-8374 for details. If you haven't already registered or re-registered your child for school, now is the time, said school officials.

Hanau High School will conduct registration by appointment only Aug. 25 and Sept. 1-2. Call the main office at civ (06181) 9069910 for an appointment. An Open House will be held Sept. 7, the first day of school, at 1 p.m. A meeting for seniors and their parents will be held at 3 p.m. and an open forum for parents and administrators will be held from 3-5 p.m. Senior photos will be taken Sept. 10.

USO oriental dance, reduced hours

Hanau USO will hold a belly dancing class for beginners Thursdays Sept. 9-30. Cost is \$40. Sign up at the Hanau USO lounge, Building 9, Room 125 on Pioneer Kaserne. Bring slippers or gripper socks to dance in, not tennis shoes. The Hanau USO is open Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m.



Photo by Dennis Johnson

Pond's Security chief trainer Kai Dierske (left) demonstrates the use of the PR-24 nightstick with guard Marcel Jendrysiak. Pond's has increased the number of guards in the 414th Base Support Battalion and intensified force protection training, said officials.

through Aug. 24. Call mil 322-8725, civ (06181) 56119 for details.

Kids Korner

Enjoy a birthday package, state-of-the-art games and more at Wolfgang Shopping Center's Kids Korner in Hanau. Call civ (06181) 88-9013 for information on booking a private party.

AAFES jobs available

American citizens can apply for Army and Air Force Exchange Service jobs in Hanau, Giessen and Rhein Main on the web at www.aafes.com. Local nationals should visit the Human Resources Office at the Wolfgang Shopping Center, next to Popeye's. It is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or call civ (06181) 9584403.

Army Community Service

Hanau Army Community Service offers an **Employment Orientation** Aug. 24 and 31 from 10-11:30 a.m. A **Dress for Success** seminar will be held Aug. 18 from 10-11:30 a.m. An **Interview Techniques** seminar will be held Aug. 19 from 10-11:30 a.m. Classes take place in Building 9, Room 104 on Pioneer Kaserne. For information call mil 322-9191.

Computer sign-up

All visitors to the Central Processing Facility on Pioneer Kaserne should report to Building 21, Room 10 for a computerized sign-in. All agencies monitor the sign-in list and page the next customer. Personnel IOP, finance IOP, installation access, ID cards, transportation, SATO travel, Housing (in/out processing), CLEOS and clearing papers/final-out at CPF all use this new electronic sign-in.

Alcoholics Anonymous

The Hanau Army Substance Abuse Program hosts Alcoholics Anonymous meetings every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Room 327, Building 3 on Hanau's Pioneer Kaserne (enter the building at the first stairwell closest to the main street and proceed to the third floor, end of the hall). For more information call Ken Petersen at mil 322-8911/8762.

Cardwell art class

Enroll your child, 9-17 years old, in a Child and Youth Services-sponsored art class, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. at the Cardwell Youth Center. The class costs \$35 per month. Call mil 323-3919 or 9144 for more information and to register.



EFMP meets

The Exceptional Family Member Program support network meets on the fourth Monday of the month from 4-5 p.m. at Army Community Service, Building 9 on Pioneer Kaserne. For information call mil 322-9275 or civ (06181) 88-9275.

Respite care

Respite care provides a brief time away for care givers responsible for special-needs children in the 414th Base Support Battalion. Call mil 322-9275 or civ (06181) 88-9275.

Büdingen fitness

Enroll your child, 6 years old and up, for

a Child and Youth Services sponsored taekwon do class Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7 p.m. at the Büdingen Fitness Center. The cost is \$35 per month. Call mil 323-3919/9144. Children must be registered at CLEOS.

Basic car care class

Learn about basic car maintenance at Hanau Auto Skills every Wednesday at 1 p.m. Topics include changing your oil, fixing flat tires, checking fluid levels and brake pads for wear. The class fee is \$10. Call Hanau Auto Skills at mil 322-8247/8625 to sign up.

New Outdoor Rec office

For Outdoor Recreation trip reservations, equipment rental and payments visit the new leisure travel and equipment rental office at the Community Activities Center, Building 1355 on Fliegerhorst Kaserne. The office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. and closed Saturday, Sunday and federal holidays. Call mil 322-6015 or civ (06183) 902087.

Hanau Community Spouses Club

The Hanau Community Spouses Club needs volunteers for its annual fall bazaar. Profits from the bazaar are donated to the 414th Base Support Battalion community in scholarships and donations to organizations that support Soldiers and their families. Email bianca.moton@us.army.mil or call civ (0160) 9105 2378 for information.

Hearts Apart Group

Meet others who have deployed spouses to share common experiences every Tuesday and Friday at 10 a.m. at Büdingen Army Community Service, Building 2207. Call mil 321-4786 or civ (06042) 80786.

Pioneer bike race

Train for a bike race at Pioneer Kaserne, Sept. 18. There'll be many age categories and distances. Americans are encouraged to sponsor German riders. For information contact Larry Bostick at mil 322-8034, civ (06181) 88-8034 or larry.bostick@104asg.army.mil.

Sexual assault hotline

The Defense Department has established a toll-free telephone number for individuals to provide information to the Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. The hotline, (800) 497-6261, is staffed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time weekdays. "Every service member deserves to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity," said David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of Defense. "Sexual assault is criminal conduct and will not be tolerated in the Department of Defense. Information gathered from the call center will assist the task force and defense officials in developing policies and programs to improve assistance," Chu said. (*DoDNews*)

Get latest updates at www.hanau.army.mil

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Aviators touch down

Soldiers of 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division, returned to Fliegerhorst Kaserne through August after over 15 months in Iraq. Homecomings took place on a daily basis, reuniting Soldiers and their families. Here are some of the images.

*Photos by
Midori
VanBrunt*



Aviators of 1-501st Aviation Regiment show their colors.



Family members take videos of returning Soldiers.



A 4th Brigade Soldier is welcomed home after over a year in Iraq.



Soldiers are welcomed first by comrades in arms as they arrive at a Fliegerhorst hangar.

MWR supports Soldiers, families

By Marie J. DeLopez
414th Base Support Battalion
Marketing, Welfare and Recreation

Let's face it: The military community is a mobile population.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation support agencies know that and design their programs with the understanding of how vital those programs are to mission accomplishment. Programs implemented at the installation level create a sense of community among patrons with services that support the mobile military force and their families as well as the civilian members of the community.

In Hanau, Büdingen and

Gelnhausen, MWR provides the military community services that include child care, a club, two libraries, four fitness centers, an arts and crafts center, Outdoor Recreation facility a bowling center and the most recent facility to promote community well-being — the Kids Korner on Wolfgang Kaserne.

The Kids Korner offers great entertainment to children up to 12 years of age including a jungle playground for smaller children. There are a variety of amusement and gaming machines to enjoy, and a snack bar and a gourmet coffee shop are on the premises. Birthday packages are available at reasonable prices.

The Community Activity Center on Fliegerhorst Kaserne is another center of activity in Hanau. The Value Added Tax, Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Travel offices are located there under one roof. It is also home to Club i, which offers a wide range of adult entertainment and catering services.

The Hessen Bowl on Wolfgang Kaserne has 30 lanes dedicated to America's most popular indoor sport — bowling. The newly renovated facility features two Thunder Bowl lanes, cosmic bowling and a food outlet.

MWR also supports tours by sports and popular culture celebrities.



Photo by Midori VanBrunt

Brandon Ellis (from left), AJ Kwaku and Dominic Ellis watch local youths shoot free throws at Pioneer Gym Aug. 5 with former Charlotte Hornet star Muggsy Bogues. Bogues toured Army installations in the 104th Area Support Group as part of an MWR tour. "You can be anything you want to be," Bogues told the Hanau youths. "Follow your dream."

1-1st Cavalry Soldiers return to Büdingen

Come home with frog talismans to town decked with yellow ribbons

By Anemone Rueger
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

When Soldiers recently returned to Büdingen from serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, some carried green plastic frogs in their desert uniforms.

Throughout 15 months of deployment the frogs, representing the city of Büdingen, served as a reminder that the Soldiers of Büdingen's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, were not forgotten by their German neighbors.

"We have a very close relationship — they are 'our' Americans," said Manfred Hix, deputy Büdingen mayor.

Before the Soldiers deployed to Iraq more than a year ago unit leaders came to see the then-city mayor, Bernd Luft, and to deposit their unit streamer with his office for safekeeping until their return, Hix said. In return Luft gave the Soldiers several green plastic frogs as a token of friendship.

"The question is: Who was there first — the Büdingers or the frogs?" said Büdingen Mayor Erich Spamer, explaining the origin of the city's

unusual symbol. "Büdingen used to be marshland, and its castle used to be surrounded by a moat."

As legend has it, when medieval Count Anton of Ysenburg and Büdingen brought his young bride Elisabeth von Wied home to his castle, she could not sleep because of the persistent nightly frog concerts that the citizens of Büdingen already took for granted. The count ordered all frogs to be disposed of, so the citizens went out with buckets and took all frogs into custody, but they could not think of a better way to dispose of them than drowning them in the river. The frog has been a symbol of the city ever since, celebrated with annual frog parades displaying artistic frog specimens.

"Americans also have one big frog at their casern," said Hix. "It's for them a symbol of their tie with 'their' city of Büdingen."

"We had the unit streamer displayed in the town hall's customer service room during the entire time the unit was gone until the beginning of July," Hix said. "Then I took it down and handed it back to Lt. Col. Williams at his change of command [Lt. Col. Charles E. Williams



One of the ceramic frog talismans 1-1st Cav Soldiers took to Iraq.

commanded the 1-1st Cav during its deployment in Iraq]. I said to him I hope that we will not have to put it up again soon and that I hope we can spend a peaceful time here together."

Returning Soldiers were met by a plethora of yellow ribbons hung in greeting at the initiative of the city administration. "We wanted to have the ribbons up for the advance party," said Claudia Trupp of the city's tourist office. "So we put up 350 meters of yellow ribbon overnight. The American ladies who passed by were first very surprised, but then touched and delighted.

"Recently I got a letter from a Soldier's mom in the States. She thanked me that her son and the Americans are so welcome in Büdingen. She read about it in the 'Stars and Stripes.' That was very



Photos by Wolfgang Niebling

Büdingen Lord Mayor Erich Spamer greets 1-1st Cavalry Soldiers. Spamer met every returning group of 'his' Soldiers, day or night.

nice for me. I have two sons this age, so I can relate to what it feels like for a mom," she said.

Hix said that Williams mentioned in his change of command speech about the initiative and only then did they believe that this time they were really going to go home. "They even showed the article to their fellow Soldiers, saying 'look this is what our city is doing.' Just think — this story went all the way from Büdingen to Baghdad."

"It really made me feel welcome, too — all the decoration. All the people were very receptive and welcoming," said Lt. Col. John A. Peeler, who was in Iraq with 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, at the same time and took command of 1-1st Cav in July.

All Soldiers in his unit are back now, he said. They have finished their seven-day reintegration training and are now enjoying their well-deserved leave.

"As the troops were coming back you could see that the military leadership had planned ahead," said

Spamer. Extra patrols in Büdingen ensured no untoward events occurred following the return of Soldiers who had been deployed for 15 months with no alcoholic beverages at hand.

"Everything went smoothly. I've had no reports of any incidents," he said.

In another show of support the city recently hosted military spouses for a free tour of the Salvador Dali exhibition on display in town, and 30 children were given free tickets to the city's swimming pool. The city is also working with 1-1st Cav to find the best solution for the redeployment of the unit's tanks scheduled for mid-August. The idea is minimize the disruption to local traffic, Hix said.

"Our ties with the Americans are excellent. We join forces as we are all in the same boat," said Spamer.

"Now most Soldiers are on leave," said Hix. "But I exchanged phone numbers with several officers and we agreed to get together for a beer at the end of August when they are back."



A 1-1st Cav Soldier talks to a Büdingen reporter.