

Santa's coming to Wiesbaden

By Cassandra Kardeke
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

The holidays are right around the corner and so are many festivities throughout the 221st Base Support Battalion.

Tree lighting ceremonies kick off Dec. 5 at the Hainerberg Chapel at 5:30 p.m. and Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Dexheim Chapel.

After the tree lighting at Hainerberg visitors can wander down to the "Peppermint Stick Village" with Santa and his elves at the Youth Services Gym.

"We will have the gym decorated and set up as a peppermint stick village with giant peppermint sticks either suspended from the ceiling or propped up throughout the village," said Laura Waid, Morale, Welfare and Recreation events coordinator.

The village will include a bakery, Ye Olde Photo Shoppe, a general store, crafts store and the North Pole Post Office where children can mail letters to Santa.

"Something new we've added this year is a gingerbread house craft activity," said Waid. The life-size cardboard cut out of the house will be set up in the gym for children to decorate as they would a gingerbread house. "We've been collecting all sorts of things that children can decorate and then add on to the house," she said.

Throughout the evening children will get a chance to write their wish lists, make Christmas cards and holiday crafts and have pictures taken with Santa. Free refreshments will be available at the various "shops" within the village, and holiday portrait packages will be available through the Römer Arts and Crafts Center.

Römer Arts and Crafts will also host a holiday event Dec. 6 from 6-



Kayla Slagter makes pine cone ornaments during a Holiday Lights festival at the Youth Services Gym.



Abigail Romagno, 6, ensures Santa knows what she wants for Christmas at a previous tree lighting ceremony in Dexheim. Dexheim's tree lighting will be held at the chapel Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. See story for other Christmas activities throughout 221st BSB communities.

9 p.m. which includes festive music and holiday story readings by middle school musicians and artists. The event includes a special art show by local artists called "What People Collect," and special appearances by the Sweet Adelines and Kris Kringle.

The next big event is the community Christmas Concert Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. in the Hainerberg Chapel starring the U.S. Army Europe Band and Chorus. Enjoy the festive music and sing along to your favorite Christmas carols. The event is free of charge.

Not to be left out the Dexheim community hosts its own tree lighting Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at the chapel followed by free refreshments, crafts and pictures with Santa inside.

For those who didn't get enough caroling at the community Christmas Concert, the Amelia Earhart Playhouse offers caroling throughout the Wiesbaden community Dec. 17-18. Anyone interested in participating can meet at the Army Community Service cafeteria at 6:40 p.m. Dec. 17 for caroling in the Hainerberg and Aukamm housing areas or at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Community Activity Center Dec. 18 at 6:40 p.m. for caroling throughout the airfield and Mainz-Kastel housing areas.

If you want to enjoy some holiday cheer German-style, check

out the many Christkindl Märkte (Christmas markets) that begin opening up this week. Enjoy the open air scent of roasted chestnuts, music and other activities now until Christmas.

Check out articles on various Christmas markets in this and the

Dec. 9 issue of the *Herald Union*.

To see Christmas markets around Germany join Wiesbaden's Outdoor Recreation for tours of the Christmas market at Michelstadt Dec. 7 and Strasbourg Dec. 14. Call mil 337-5760 or civ (0611) 705-5760 for information.



A Soldier helps his son decorate a pinecone at the Holiday Lights celebration at the Youth Center complex in Hainerberg.

More holiday activities

Thanksgiving meals offered

Dining facilities at Wiesbaden Army Airfield and Anderson Barracks will serve a traditional Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rheinblick Golf Course offers a Thanksgiving Buffet Nov. 27 from noon to 3 p.m. and 5-9 p.m. and from 5-9 p.m. Nov. 28.

Commissary holiday hours

Normally closed Monday, the Wiesbaden Commissary will be open Nov. 24 (the Monday before Thanksgiving) from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and closed Nov. 27-28.

Volunteers needed

The Rhein Main Area USO seeks volunteers to portray Santa Claus and elves and to assist in photos with Santa at the USO office at Hainerberg Shopping Center Nov. 29-30. Volunteers are also needed to wrap gifts and bake baked goods to be passed out to troops passing through Rhein Main Air Base. For more information or to volunteer call mil 337-5591 or civ (0611) 721 010.

Mail deadlines

It's time to prepare for the holiday mail rush. To ensure that packages reach their destination before Christmas, be sure to mail packages sent Priority Airlift Mail by Dec. 4; Priority parcels and first class letters and cards by Dec. 11; and express mail by Dec. 18.

Christmas B-ball tourney set

The Tony Bass Fitness Center hosts a Unit Level Christmas Basketball tournament Dec. 15-19. Cost is \$100 per team. Call mil 337-5943/5541 or civ (0611) 705-5943/5541 to sign up by Dec. 3.

New Year's Eve party set

Ring in the new year at Victory Point Bar at the Community Activities Center at Wiesbaden Army Airfield Dec. 31. The party starts at 8 p.m. and will feature food, music and party favors. Call mil 337-5750 or civ (0611) 705-5750 for tickets.

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Firefighters respond to the scene of a mock traffic accident at Wiesbaden Army Airfield Nov. 14 during a joint exercise involving the Military Police, Fire Department and Criminal Investigation Division. Photo below: Fireman Matthias Kraus and Pfc. Kerina Ward perform CPR on a passenger in one of the vehicles. Photo bottom: Krause checks vital signs while another fireman places a helmet on the driver's head to protect him as the roof of the vehicle is cut.



Accident scene provides joint emergency training

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

One Soldier was killed and two people were injured in a two-vehicle traffic accident at Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Witnesses at the scene claimed a red car was speeding down the road while another car failed to stop at a stop sign and turned in front of the car.

Fortunately those involved in the fatal accident were only role-playing in a joint training exercise between the Wiesbaden Fire Department and Military Police Nov. 14.

Participants sharpened their emergency response and investigative skills as they responded to a scene in which one car was tipped on its side with its driver stuck in the window. In another car the driver passed out and was trapped in the front seat, and the passenger thrown through the windshield. The passenger was pronounced dead at the scene.

"We had to stage the accident as if it were a real accident," said Staff Sgt. Cory Hemkes who had spent the previous three weeks planning the scenario with Daniel Corzelius, fire chief assistant. "I bought the fake blood and the bloody scab makeup and gave it to the guys and told them to have at it. It just had to look real," Hemkes said. The Auto Skills Center do-

nated the vehicles and helped stage them to appear as if they were involved in an accident.

"The training was so realistic that the community thought there was an actual accident," said Maj. Jake Jacob, Wiesbaden provost marshal. The MP desk received calls throughout the day inquiring about the accident and the condition of the victims.

"Had I not seen them setting up the accident earlier that morning I would have thought it was a real one," said Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Noble, 221st Base Support Battalion.

"This type of training allows the MPs to get a flavor for what could actually happen. All too often our young Soldiers are forced to learn during a real incident. Realistic training like this could result in a responding MP who is properly trained to save a life rather than learn on the fly," he said.

While the MPs continued to process the scene, fire department personnel practiced their hazardous material response, ensuring no vehicle fires. They prepared to cut out the roof of the car to pull out the driver.

"Our firemen don't normally get a chance to respond to these types of accidents, therefore the training

really gives them the hands-on experience they need for when the real time comes," said Erwin Buecher, acting fire chief during the exercise.

"Seeing them [firemen] peel open the roof of that car was cool," said Shawn Welch, who watched the exercise from her office at the dental clinic.

"I personally got a feeling of satisfaction. It was rewarding to put as much work into making this exercise as we did, and then see everyone involved get realistic hands-on training," said Sgt. Robert MacLean, traffic investigator.

Overall the exercise went off without a hitch. All organizations involved felt the training was worthwhile.

"From our fire department personnel, emergency medical technicians and medical personnel at the Wiesbaden Health Clinic there was continuous and uninterrupted treatment of the victims. Even more remarkable was that this was all done with people who didn't even speak the same language," said Corzelius.

After the training was over, all departments agreed that it was indeed an effective learning experience. "It was so beneficial that we will be planning exercises like this twice a year with some added internal training as well," Corzelius said.

"Seeing them [firemen] peel open the roof of that car was cool." — Shawn Welch

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Tara Shaw and Sherlene Rowen mix and knead potatoes while learning how to roll them into dumplings during a lesson in German cooking. Photo right: Crickett LeMasters carves the turkey at a Thanksgiving dinner cooking lesson for the Land Frau German women's group in Dexheim.

Ladies exchange culture through cooking

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

It could have been called a cooking class or a German-American cooking exchange, or just a nice meal among new friends.

But no matter what you call it, American women found themselves in a German kitchen in the city of Dexheim, elbow deep into potatoes.

It all started with one woman. "I

want to learn how to make a traditional German meal," said Crickett LeMasters during a tour of Mainz hosted by the mayor of Dexheim, Hans-Jochen Gerloch.

Gerloch put LeMasters' request into action and hooked her up with the Land Frau of Dexheim, a German women's group that gathers each month at the Dexheim Backhaus to bake bread in a traditional brick stove. Dexheim residents could always tell when the Land Frau were

doing their baking as the aroma of the fresh bread pervaded the air.

However, it was a different smell one evening in October as LeMasters and other women from the Dexheim military community were learning to prepare a meal of roasted pork, red cabbage, potato soup, potato and bread dumplings and an apple tart.

"I never knew so much work went into making those dumplings," said Tara Shaw as she and other American women kneaded and rolled raw mashed potatoes into dumplings.

Following a delicious and filling dinner, topped off with a glass of wine, the German ladies then made their similar request. "We want to learn how to fix an American dinner," said Barbara Guntrum.

As Thanksgiving was just around the corner, what better a traditional American dinner than that?

Yet another month went by, and just two weeks before Thanksgiving Dexheim residents were experiencing a new aroma filling the air, that of turkey and stuffing.

"We could smell it as we arrived," said Irene Müller, who peered into the oven at the roasting turkey upon her arrival.

"I want to learn how to make a traditional German meal." — Crickett LeMasters

As the turkey continued to roast LeMasters taught her traditional Thanksgiving recipes for dressing, giblet gravy, sweet potato casserole, green beans and ham hocks, corn bread and chateau potatoes. Desserts of pumpkin pie, pecan pie, pumpkin roll and apple pie were prepared in

advance.

After heaping dishes were placed on the buffet table, it was time to say the blessing. LeMasters had all hold hands around the table and in a tearful prayer for the safe return of her husband, Lt. Col. Clark LeMasters, 123rd Main Support Battalion, and his unit from Iraq, she also gave thanks for the newfound friendships made in the kitchen.

"My husband would have just loved this, especially the food. He loves to eat," LeMasters said.

As is typical of a Thanksgiving dinner, the variety and amount of food seemed overwhelming to the Land Frau. "Thanksgiving is more than family, it's togetherness. When fixing a Thanksgiving dinner, it's not just for one day or one family, it's for all the friends and extended family that you spend it with and especially to have leftovers the next day," explained Sheila Frankson. And that is just what happened to the leftovers — everyone left with an extra helping of their favorite dish.

Compared to German food, American food is typically sweeter, and it was the sweetest of sweet dishes, sweet potato casserole, that was the most popular dish.

"We don't have anything like this," said Müller.

As the cleanup began all agreed that it was a fun and learning experience for both Germans and Americans alike.

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim

Community news notes

Spouses welcome at inprocessing

Spouses of Soldiers are encouraged to attend inprocessing with their sponsors at the Welcome Center. Inprocessing is an important tool in integrating new Soldiers and families into the Wiesbaden community. Classes include safety, Army Community Service and Army Family Team Building, education, force protection, beginning German and more. For more information call mil 337-5419 or civ (0611) 705-5419.

Housekeeping service available

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service now offers housekeeping services for Hainerberg, Crestview, Aukamm, Dexheim, Mainz-Kastel, Wiesbaden Army Airfield and Finthen housing areas. Those living off post may also be eligible for this service. Call civ (0171) 751 2762 or (06732) 933 326 or email squeakyclean@t-online.de.

NFL Sundays at Victory Point

Check out the football games and an extensive bar menu, complete with made-to-order munchies, at the Victory Point Bar at the Wiesbaden Community Activity Center every Sunday from 5:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. For more information call mil 337-5750 or civ (0611) 705-5750.

Instructors needed

221st Base Support Battalion fitness centers are looking for certified group fitness instructors, martial arts instructors, personal trainers and massage therapists for both the Wiesbaden and Dexheim communities. Call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943 for more information.

Bench press competition

The Tony Bass Fitness Center hosts a bench press competition Jan. 10. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and competition starts at 11 a.m. For more information and to sign up call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

DA photos not available

Due to annual leave the Training and Support Center photographer will not be available until Nov. 26. If you are in need of DA photos, make arrangements to have your photos taken at another time. For more information call mil 337-5006 or civ (0611) 705-5006.

Pre-separation briefings offered

The Army Career and Alumni Program offers pre-separation briefings and job assistance workshops Dec. 2-3 and Dec. 16-17. Soldiers leaving the military are required to attend a pre-separation briefing no later than 90 days before their separation date; however, Soldiers are encouraged to begin as early as one year before ETS or two years before retirement. Spouses are always welcome to attend. For more information call mil 337-5709 or civ (0611) 705-5709.

Microfit assessment available

The Tony Bass Fitness Center now offers microfit assessments. This state of the art technology determines individual fitness assessments and measures blood pressure, resting heart rate, weight, body fat or circumference, cardio-respiratory endurance, muscular strength and flexibility. Call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943 for more information.

Massages available

Massages by a certified massage therapist are available at the Community Activities Center at Wiesbaden Army Airfield. To schedule an appointment call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

Saturday APO hours

Both the Community Mailroom and Army Post Office will be open Saturdays, Dec. 6, 13, and 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Regular APO hours at Wiesbaden Army Airfield are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and Friday, and from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday. The McCully Barracks APO is open every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m.

to 2 p.m., and the Dexheim APO is open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rothenburg trip

Join the Kontakt Club for a guided tour of the fortified city of Rothenburg ob der Tauber Dec. 13. Cost is 30 euros for adults, 25 euros for children. Call mil 337-5772, civ (0160) 612 3911 or (0160) 655 5976.

BOSS meetings

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers meets the first and third Thursday of each month in Room 210 at the Welcome Center at Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

Playhouse performance

The Amelia Earhart Playhouse presents "An Evening Without Jennifer Lopez," a zany spoof of the American way of life in sketches and songs. Performance will be held Dec. 4-7. Tickets can be purchased at the United Service Organizations at Hainerberg and Wiesbaden Army Airfield or by phone at mil 336-2473, civ (0611) 816-2473. The playhouse is located at the Amelia Earhart complex at 39 Konrad-Adenauer-Ring in Wiesbaden.

\$1 days are back

Team 221st Fitness Centers host \$1 aerobic classes throughout the month of December. Classes include group indoor cycling, step aerobics, turbokick kickboxing, mat/ball pilates, fitness and prenatal yoga, and "legs, butts and guts." Classes are held at the Tony Bass Fitness Center, Dexheim Fitness Center and Hainerberg Elementary School. Call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943 for more information.

Flu shots available

Free flu shots are available at the immunization clinic at Wiesbaden Health Clinic for civilians and family members. The immunization clinic is open Monday, Tuesday,

Wednesday and Friday from 8-11:30 a.m.; and from 1-4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; and from 1-5:30 p.m. Tuesday. Be sure to bring your shot records. For more information call the Wiesbaden Health Clinic at mil 337-6633/7413 or civ (0611) 705-6633/7413.

Breastfeeding support

La Leche League is an international organization dedicated to helping mothers meet their own breastfeeding goals 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 more information. Mothers with their nursing babies and mothers-to-be are always welcome.

Volunteers needed

Participate in the annual 221st Base Support Battalion Army Family Action Plan Feb. 4-6. Volunteers are needed to facilitate, transcribe and record issues during the conference. Training for positions begins Jan. 13. Free child care is available. For more information call mil 338-7721 or civ (0611) 380-7721.

Trainers available

Personal trainers are available at the Tony Bass and Dexheim Fitness Centers to customize fitness programs. Cost is \$35 per session.

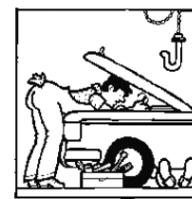
For more information call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

Health packages

The Tony Bass Fitness Center offers health and wellness gift certificates for the holidays. A \$49 certificate includes a 30-minute Swedish massage, a personal training assessment and one aerobics class. A \$59 certificate includes a one-hour Swedish massage, a personal training assessment and two aerobics classes. Certificates are valid Dec. 1 through Feb. 14. For more information call mil 337-5541 or civ (0611) 705-5541.

Auto maintenance class

The Mainz-Kastel Auto Skills Center offers a free auto maintenance class



Dec. 5 from 4-6 p.m. Learn how to check fluid levels, inspect belts and hosts, check tires for wear and learn proper inflation pressure, change wiper blades and more. Sign up by calling mil 334-2460 or civ (06134) 604460.

Wahoo fundraiser

The Wahoo Swim Team hosts a Polish Pottery Bingo fundraiser Dec. 5 at the Hainerberg Food Court. Cards go on sale at 6:30 p.m., games start at 9 p.m. For more information call civ (0611) 505-5708.

1-35 aid station pushes patient care limits

Story and photo by
Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson
372nd Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

Soldiers who work at the Task Force 1-35 Armor aid station, which is part of Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, were recognized Nov. 8 for outstanding performance of their duties during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Col. Anthony Young, chief of staff for the 30th Medical Brigade, spoke to the medics, thanking them for their hard work and encouraging them to keep going strong.

The platoon was issued a certificate of appreciation "for the medical care they provided for Coalition Joint Task Force 7 personnel," Young said.

The aid station combat medics were the only medical unit on the Coalition Provisional Authority presidential palace compound when they arrived earlier this year. Young said the soldiers did a fantastic job of adapting to an unusual and difficult situation.



The Task Force 1-35 aid station staff poses for a group picture after receiving certificates of recognition from Col. Anthony Young, chief of staff for the 30th Medical Brigade, Nov. 7 in Baghdad.

"None of the U.S. Army units here had acceptable medical assets for themselves," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Stephen Marks, battalion surgeon for Task Force 1-35. "By default, due to our location, we began to provide medical care to coalition personnel in the area."

The aid station, Marks said, was

equipped to provide medical care only to the approximately 750 soldiers who make up their battalion. Instead, the station took up responsibility for nearly 5,000 male and female coalition members from all countries, including military personnel, civil service personnel and employees of contractors.

"We took care of a lot of sick calls for CPA personnel, and have done (medical evacuations) for many soldiers and civilians," Marks said.

Pfc. Crizam Carlos, combat medic and guidon bearer assigned to the aid station, was one of the soldiers honored during the ceremony.

"Being an aid station, we are a platoon-sized unit; not a really large setup," Carlos said. "Since we have been here, we have constantly pushed the limit of how many patients we can care for." The type of care provided by the aid station, said Carlos, varies from treating the common cold or flu, to caring for combat-related injuries, such as severe burns or gunshot wounds. He said that he and his comrades were happy to receive recognition for their hard work.

Soldier duties

On top of their medical duties, the station staff also has to perform standard Soldier duties. Tasks such as pulling guard duty and radio watch have to be worked into what has turned out to be a hectic, ever-changing schedule, Carlos said.

"There are a lot of young men out here doing great things. This operation has been many of these medics' first experience with trauma in war, and we saved a lot of lives and limbs," said Marks. "They will be well prepared to do so in the future."

Holiday notes

Germans extend holiday invitations

German organizations and city officials are extending an invitation to families of Soldiers to participate in several holiday events. Reservations must be made so that event organizers can make better arrangements for those who participate. The following events are scheduled for American families:

The mayor of Berglangenbach, a village near Baumholder, invites 50 American family members (spouses and children) to the town's Christmas market Nov. 29. The bus departs from the Hall of Champions at 3 p.m. and returns at 6 p.m. The village will offer treats to the children and spouses. Reservations must be made by Nov. 26.

The city of Baumholder fashing club and lifeguard association invites 150 American family members (spouses and children) to a German-American children's advent coffee Nov. 30 in the city's Bruehlhalle. The program begins at 2 p.m. Reservations must be made by Nov. 26.

A Christmas coffee for 20 American spouses and their children is being hosted by Volkmar Pees, Baumholder district mayor, and Klaus Rickes, Baumholder city mayor, at the "washrack" gasthaus from 3-5 p.m. Dec. 12. Reservations must be made by Dec. 2.

To sign up for any of these events call Bridget Sanders at mil 485-8188 or civ (06783) 6-8188.

Some nativities banned by customs

We've all read and heard the warnings about mailing banned items such as meat or agricultural products to the States. Shoppers buying holiday gifts can now add nativity scenes to that list. Many European countries have a tradition of making nativity scenes at Christmas time.

However the natural products used to make them are often banned from import because of the agricultural pests that could be nested in them. Materials that are banned include pinecones, moss, bark and untreated straw. Department of Agriculture officials say people sending nativity scenes produced using stripped wood, plastic or commercially cleaned and lacquered straw are good to go. However people can be fined \$100 and more if they mail scenes that contain moss, bark, pinecones, untreated straw or other materials found to contain insects.

For more information call mil 381-7189/8320.



Photo by Bernd "Bernie" Mai

Remembering those who served

A garrison flag is lowered by a special flag detail in Baumholder Nov. 11. The large flag was flown along with the POW/MIA flag on Veterans Day in honor of all veterans. Several residents gathered for the event which also included a wreath-laying ceremony honoring all veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and comments from Lt. Col. Todd A. Buchs, 222nd Base Support Battalion commander. The wreath-laying ceremony was conducted by Baumholder's Iron Rock Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2566.

Residents 'clean up' during fall cleanup

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

The residents of Building 8060 in Smith Housing were treated to pizza and bowling Nov. 6 by Lt. Col. Todd A. Buchs, 222nd Base Support Battalion commander. It wasn't anyone's birthday nor did the commander lose a bet. It was Buchs' way of rewarding them for winning the community fall housing area cleanup.

"You have set an extremely high standard here, and that's a good thing because I'm going to bring a lot of people buy here to let them see what it means to care about your building and your community," Buchs told the residents who gathered in front of their building to receive the award. Behind them was the fruit of their labor, neatly mani-



cured flower beds lined with heather and white flowers and a trim and trash-free lawn. At the entrance to each stairwell the residents placed flower pots billowing with yellow chrysanthemum trimmed with American flags.

"I just want to thank all of you for what you've done. It really does help us all have a better community out here and that's what it's all about," said Buchs.

In addition to the free bowling passes and tickets for five free pizzas, Buchs also presented the residents of Building 8060 with a plaque commemorating their award.

Fall cleanup is nothing new to the community, but recognition by the 222nd BSB for a job well done is new. It was started as an incentive to get people into the groove of making the community better.



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava
Lt. Col. Todd A. Buchs (right), 222nd Base Support Battalion commander, thanks the residents of Building 8060 on Smith Barracks for a job well done during this year's fall cleanup initiative. Buchs presented them with several awards for their efforts.

Inprocess focuses on family members

Soldiers and spouses learn the ropes in Baumholder program

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Offering family members the same inprocessing opportunities that are mandatory for Soldiers is a new concept for U.S. Army Europe military personnel processing officials. But it's not new for Baumholder's central inprocessing facility.

"We started our program back in November of 2002," said Susan Mitchell, chief of Baumholder's central inprocessing facility.

The Family Member Inprocessing Program, sometimes known as the Greeter Program, was actually an initiative of Brig. Gen. Fred D. Robinson Jr., who was Baumholder's senior tactical commander at the time, and Lt. Col. Todd A. Buchs, 222nd Base Support Battalion commander.

When Robinson arrived he asked Mitchell, "How do you inprocess Soldiers? How do you inprocess their family members?" Mitchell told Robinson that Baumholder had a very good program for inprocessing Soldiers but admitted that "family member focus was really quite lacking."

Robinson and Buchs then tasked Mitchell to find out what families wanted to have happen during inprocessing. From there a program was put together based on an earlier survey of family members that focused exactly on this topic.

The survey revealed that spouses felt they were shut out of several information avenues. Spouses were eager to learn about housing, household goods and transportation and car issues. "Spouses said they spent the first three or four days sitting at a hotel with nobody greeting them, nobody telling them what was going on. So of course they were very depressed and unhappy," said Mitchell.

The first step was to designate someone who would be devoted strictly to family members, whose time and attention wouldn't be split between Soldiers and family members. "That's where Colonel Buchs stepped in and authorized us to hire someone who would do nothing but be a greeter," said Mitchell.

The heartbeat of the Family Member Inprocessing Program is the greeter, who meets the Soldiers and families as they pull up, before they even step off the bus. "When the

Soldiers go with the processing clerks to turn in their records, the families go with Dana Stone, our greeter," said Mitchell. They get a welcome letter from Buchs and other information such as emergency numbers, where to find Internet service and places to eat. She also goes over the inprocessing schedule with them.

While spouses cannot be forced into participating, the program actually enjoys almost 100 percent involvement. "What we tell the spouses is tomorrow you'll come back in with your husband and you'll go through Tricare and ACS," said Mitchell. "As soon as you tell them you are taking them to housing, they will find a way to come in because that's the most important thing to them."

To ease the burden on spouses, free child care is provided for the first day for children age 5 and under. Children age 6 and older accompany their parents on the tour. "We have a little scavenger hunt to keep them occupied," said Mitchell.

Some of the other areas covered include predeployment briefings, drivers testing, head start language courses and communication services such as Telecom and TKS.

"We provide predeployment briefings because as Soldiers are coming in they're also getting ready to leave," said Donna Finney, ACS chief.

The ACS predeployment briefing is conducted one-on-one with the Soldier and his or her family. "It's not, you need to have a will; it's, let me see the will. Do you have a power of attorney? Let me see your power of attorney and let's make sure it's going to take care of the right things. What's the family care plan? What happens if the Soldier is in Iraq and the mother has an accident? Who's going to take care of the children? Who's going to put their arms around their children? We do all that as part of inprocessing, and then they're turned over to the FRGs," said Finney.

While the Soldier is doing his or her finance inprocessing, the spouses have their own orientation hosted by a Baumholder senior spouse. They go over housing and banking information, how to get access to money, schools, education center information and other community issues.

One of the biggest features of the Family Member Inprocessing Program is the central location where soldiers and families arrive that does not create a bad first impression. "This was important to Robinson when he first became

involved with improving the program for family members," said Mitchell. Soldiers and families now have a dedicated room at the Lagerhof Gasthaus. While the soldiers are there, the spouses go up to the lounge with the greeter. All of their billeting arrangements are taken care of. "We go as far as picking up their keys, if they are staying in the Lagerhof and have them there when they arrive.

"We also have three battalions that actually send somebody down to greet the families when they find out they have someone coming into their unit," said Mitchell.

After a year the Family Member Inprocessing Program has revealed that families new to Baumholder want and need all this information. "We've only had about three or four people who have decided, 'no, I've been here before, I'm not interested. I don't need that information,'" said Mitchell.

"Everybody else is very anxious because it's so unusual for them to be told 'we want you to be involved. We want you to be a part of the Soldier's inprocessing.' Plus there are times when the Soldier perhaps doesn't hear everything that's said. In this case, two sets of ears are better than one," said Mitchell. "It seems to have really improved a lot of people's attitudes," she said.

Return customers have also become a common occurrence at central inprocessing.

"After spouses have been here a while they'll come back in and talk to Dana, just to find out, now that they're settled, what sort of fun things there are to do in the area, you know, what kind of trips can they go on, where is the good shopping.

"It's like they have one point of contact now they really feel comfortable going to. All the feedback that we've heard has been extremely positive," said Mitchell.

It's no secret that stress and moving go hand in hand but "these young families, they're coming over here and the Soldier is deploying. If they're new to the Army, new to Europe, in addition to stress, they can have a feeling of isolation," said Finney.

"We're a family here and it's scary to move so we want to get them settled. We want to make sure they know that we care and we want to get them prepared right off the bat for a family separation, if it happens," said Finney.

"This was the commander's vision. He saw the FRGs, ACS and central processing as a triangle working together to integrate families into the community," said Finney.



With music, knights and more

Burg Lichtenberg celebrates a medieval Christmas



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Burg Lichtenberg hosts a medieval Christmas market beginning Nov. 29.

The first medieval Christmas market at the Burg Lichtenberg youth hostel is scheduled for the first Advent weekend, Nov. 29 and 30.

The market opens with a real bang at 2 p.m. Nov. 29 as a traditional gun salute by "Boellerschuetzen" will break the otherwise calm atmosphere within the fortress walls. Minstrel singers in colorful costumes playing a variety of stringed instruments will entertain the audience on both days.

The Kusel gospel choir and the "Viertakter" a popular men's choir, will perform at 6 p.m. Nov. 29 in the tent. The fortress, built in the 12th century, some 423 square meters, is one of the largest in Germany.

It is one of the main attractions in the Kusel/Baumholder region,

and its atmosphere of days gone by will be resurrected with this medieval spectacle. Visitors will be transported back to medieval days and experience the atmosphere of simpler times.

Historical costumes and exhibits will set the mood for time travelers. A variety of food specialties will be available to curb the most discriminating appetites.

A performance by the knights of Glantaeler, complete with swords, a fire-eater and falconry, will help enrich the quality of the medieval spectacle. Archery will be available for the children as well as supervised handicraft sessions. A live nativity scene will also be on display.

For directions on how to find Burg Lichtenberg call the Public Affairs Office at mil 485-1600/6191.

Students adopt deployed Soldier

By Frank X. O’Gara
Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe Public Affairs Office

Spc. Jerry Engel may be deployed to Iraq, far from family and friends, but he is not forgotten. Engel was “adopted” by Melody Nielsen’s seventh- and eighth-grade seminar class at Baumholder American High School.

The initiative came about when a BAHS paraprofessional and spouse of another deployed Soldier, Deloura Clark-Rodgers, contacted her husband, Staff Sgt. Rodgers, who is Engel’s sergeant in Iraq. Rodgers emailed a picture of Engel and letter expressing his interests.

The class then “adopted” Engel. The class and teacher began by buying needed personal items, magazines and food to send him. Engel is part of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, deployed to Iraq from Baumholder.

In the first package, along with a variety of items, a letter was sent to Engel that included questions from each student and the teacher. A picture of the class was also enclosed.

In the second and third packages, the students sent Engel letters with the items they bought. They wrote about themselves and asked Engel questions about himself. The teacher continued to buy items that Engel would enjoy or need, hoping to role model for the

students even though most of them knew what Engel would need as they also had a parent in Iraq. The students needed occasional reminders to bring items to school before the package was shipped. In a special Halloween package, a Halloween card and other items were sent.

Clark-Rodgers and Nielsen developed a special bulletin board about Iraq. In November the class received a prayer rug and beads from Engel, which was put on the bulletin board. On the board is a letter Engel wrote to the class answering the students’ questions and telling about his family and home in the United States.

Nielsen recently sent a letter home to the students’ parents informing them of future plans for sending Engel Thanksgiving and Christmas packages. A card will be included in the November package as well as food, personal items and magazines. Included in the Christmas box, besides the food and other items, will be individual Christmas presents from each student, Clark-Rodgers and Nielsen, and a framed picture of the class.

The idea has caught on, and other seminar classes are sponsoring deployed single Soldiers.

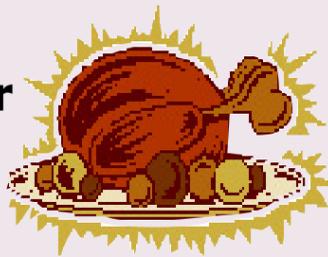
Every two or three weeks classes send a box containing student letters, pictures and items including toiletries, food and items such as nerf footballs.



Photo by Terri Toone

Baumholder American High School students Nadine Ritchey (from left), Cornell Grate and Stephanie Rodriguez view artifacts and a letter from their adopted Soldier, Spc. Jerry Engel. The adoption program has caught on, and six other classes have stepped up and adopted Baumholder Soldiers deployed to Iraq.

Thanksgiving meals to be served at Baumholder dining facilities



Baumholder’s Strassburg and 2nd Brigade dining facilities will offer a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal Nov. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The meals will be open to family members and guests. The cost for family members of E-1 through E-4 is \$4.55, and all others pay \$5.25.

The menu is extensive and includes roast turkey, honey glazed duck, southern style greens, cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes and more. For dessert customers can

fill their plates with assorted pastries, apple pie, strawberry shortcake, ice cream, assorted decorated cakes and more.



For the complete menu tune to Baumholder’s Command Information Channel, available to all residents in Wetzel, Champion, Smith, Neubrücke and Strassburg housing areas as well as in all Soldier barracks.