

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Ready to provide 'quality service'

BSB officials ensure families taken care of if soldiers deploy

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

While soldiers stationed in Giessen and Friedberg train for whatever the future brings, 284th Base Support Battalion officials said they are ready to provide quality service to families should units receive deployment orders.

The main focus is to let families know they will be taken care of while their active duty sponsor is deployed, programs are available to help them cope with deployment stress and there will be no lack of services, officials said. In case of deployment all services and hours of operation will remain the same but may be altered if there is a need in the community, said officials.

"All morale and welfare services such as gyms, clubs, art and crafts or libraries and so on will keep their hours of operation until there is a need to alter hours," said Jammie Hawkins, 284th BSB director of community activities.

"There is no need to worry about reduced child care service during a deployment," said Child and Youth Services manager Mary Ann Butzkies. "The Child Development Centers continue to provide day care for working parents, and we also have plenty of Family Child Care providers," she said.

"We are also offering special programs for parents who need a break such as the Parents Night Out. We started this service during the deployment to Kosovo, kept it and may offer it more often should there be a need for it due to a deployment," Butzkies said. "All CYS services will be tailored to the needs of the community."

A great benefit to the community will be the transformation of Army Community Service Centers in Giessen and Friedberg into Family Assistance Centers.

It's a four-phase process. Before a planned deployment the BSB commander will announce Phase 1 of FAC operations.

"That means that ACS staff prepares for possible expansion of hours and an increase in staff to assist family members during the deployment," said Martha Pinion, 284th BSB Army Community Service deployment readiness, outreach and mobilization coordinator in Friedberg.



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Dan Adams, center, 284th BSB ACS employment readiness manager, conducts a Resumix class. ACS offers a variety of workshops and classes empowering military families and supporting spouses during deployments.

The BSB commander may initiate any of FAC phases II-IV which will lead into a further increase of hours and staff in a graduated manner to meet the needs of the community, she said.

"During deployment the FAC is here to answer questions, provide normal service and information and generally assist family members in any area of their concern. We work closely with the Family Readiness Groups and family support liaisons and with other community resources to assist family members with any issues that might arise," she said.

"We've learned a lot from previous deployments so we are prepared and ready to provide quality service to families," said Jane Wingate, 284th BSB Army Community Service officer. As a result deployment readiness training is provided year-round.

"We conduct family liaison and Family Readiness Group training on a regular basis and upon request. It's an ongoing program because they are available to prepare for deployment, but also extended field exercises," said Deborah Gantt, 284th BSB ACS

outreach, mobilization, deployment and readiness manager.

Other classes offered include stress or money management, homecoming briefings, parental support and resources briefings, she said.

"We are a one-stop center for the entire community," she said. "We are here for everybody who needs information, support or just someone to talk to. If we don't have the answer, we'll point them in the right direction," Gantt said.

"We are looking to get people out of the house," said Gantt. "We provide information on various activities and also offer plenty of volunteer opportunities. We pay for child care for ACS volunteers," she said.

"We are ready to take care of families in case of a deployment. This is a good reason to stay here. Another reason is that we are working closely with the rear detachments and other organizations, which ensures that we can keep families in touch," she said.

"There are many reasons why a family should stay in Germany," said 284th BSB executive officer Michael Grizer.

"Not only will all the great services they are used to, including the commissary, AAFES and MWR still be here and open regular hours, but families also have access to free email and MPS mail as well as Video Teleconferencing to stay in touch with their deployed loved ones. In addition there is an amazing network of support here, from your stairwell neighbors to the trained staff at ACS, many of them military spouses as well, who are dealing with the same issues and can provide that much needed helping hand in these difficult times," he said.

Deployment readiness begins at home. Soldiers and spouses need to be actively involved in preparing now to avoid problems later, said officials. From attending pre-deployment briefs to getting a power of attorney to ensuring the spouse has access to the Leave and Earnings Statement online, there are many things families can do to get ready. "We have the tools to help families," said Gantt.

For more information on ACS services during deployment call ACS in Giessen at mil 343-7618 and in Friedberg at mil 324-3465.

Army Community Service classes . . . Army Community Service classes

Employment Readiness

Federal Resume classes are being held every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Giessen and from 10 a.m. to noon in Friedberg. For details on more classes call Dan Adams in Giessen at mil 343-6038 or Tim Fitzgerald in Friedberg at mil 324-3465.

Relocation Readiness

Sponsorship training for soldiers, families and Department of Defense employees is offered upon request. Newcomers Orientation and Welcome workshops are offered Feb. 18-19 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Friedberg. Free child care is available when registered in advance. Coupon Socials are held in Butzbach

every fourth Friday of the month. For details call Patricia Harper in Giessen at mil 343-6910.

Financial Readiness

This program offers classes for Money and Credit Management and Checkbook Management. For more information call Zachary Bonaparte in Giessen at mil 343-8075.

Parent support

Parent and Me Playtime takes place every Monday in Wetzlar from 10 a.m. to noon, every Tuesday in Butzbach from 9-11 a.m., every Wednesday in Friedberg from 10 a.m. to noon and every Friday from 9-11 a.m. This program lets parents and children to bond through play.

Gunner shares passion for wrestling

Volunteer coach helps inspire high school grapplers to excel

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

The ever growing number of enthusiastic Giessen Middle-High School wrestlers is a testament to the dedicated efforts of its soldier volunteer coach.

“The school didn’t have anybody to coach the team, and I did not want my two sons to get cheated of the chance to wrestle while being here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Domko, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery.

Coaching offers him a chance to share his experience and love for the sport, he said. “It’s a team sport, but you are also on your own. There is nobody to blame but yourself if you are doing something wrong.”

Domko remembered how he first started wrestling. “Actually I wanted to play football, but I was too small, so I started wrestling,” he said.

His passion for the sport remained after high school, and he would have pursued a professional career if not for a knee injury. “It’s hard anyway since there is no professional wrestling for guys like me, and I am too small to be a show wrestler.”

After choosing the Army as his career, an assignment to Hanau in 1992 gave him another chance to wrestle. “I wrestled on a German-American friendship team, and we won the European championship,” he said.

As a coach Domko said he sees building up the team as his priority. When he first took over the team last year it included 11 athletes. This year it has expanded to 23 young men and women.

“Wrestling used to be a very popular sport in Giessen about 10 years ago. In the cafeteria they have a display of all the plaques they won back then,” he said.

“Right now I don’t care about winning tournaments. I want these kids to get more experienced. Hanau and Wiesbaden have great wrestling programs, and we are working on getting there. My goal is to put Giessen wrestling back on the map. Until then I want the team to get more experienced and compete. We are still losing many matches, but that’s all right,” he said.

Domko gets support from his entire family, he said. “My



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Darrin Domko (top) shows his son Matthew a few wrestling techniques during the team’s daily practice.

wife Keri is the team mom; my 13-year-old daughter Crystal is a team manager; and my sons Matthew, 15, and William, 11, are both wrestlers.”

“I played other sports, but I never wrestled. When we got married, he taught me a lot about the sport and I came to like it. I enjoy supporting the team and my husband,” said Keri, who also assumed responsibilities as a tutor.

Good grades and discipline are just as important to Domko as being a good athlete. “It’s no longer true that if you are a jock you don’t need to have good grades. If a teacher tells me that the grades of a wrestler drop below a C average, I do not allow him to practice with the team. The same applies to working on assignments. My wife is a substitute teacher so she is available to work with them,” the coach said.

“I also demand a lot of discipline from them. If they talk too much or don’t pay attention I’ll have the entire team do pushups,” he said.

“But I am also a dad to them. I hug them. I am their shoulder to cry on and they know they can hold on to me. During the matches I yell and scream, I lay flat on the ground with them — if I could I would even wrestle for them,” Domko said.

Feeling like the team’s dad is a result of his own experiences as a wrestler when his own coach was a father figure for him, he said. “Now I want to be the same for these kids.”

His duties as the 1st Brigade’s fire support noncommissioned officer still allows him the time to coach and attend practice most of the time. “Sometimes it is a challenge, but I have a great chain of command. In my position I have 80 soldiers working for me who will cover for me when we practice. We also have substitute coaches who fill in,” he said.

Any support from the community is appreciated, he said. “Everybody can help the team by joining the Booster Club or by coming to the tournaments. You don’t have to be a parent to support us,” he said.

Friedberg’s Ray Barracks brings back the Wild West March 8

Annual fund-raising event March 8

By Judith Brown

Friedberg Community Bank

If you find yourself tapping to some good old country music and looking for your Stetson and cowhide boots you know the annual 284th Base Support Battalion Hearts and Hands Community Club Wild West Night is almost here.

This is the opportunity to kick up your heels and hope lady luck is on your side.

Doors are swung back March 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Villa Calabria on Ray Barracks in Friedberg.

Last year the Hearts and Hands Community Club raised over \$14,000 at Wild West Night, benefiting the Giessen and Friedberg communities and their many organizations.

Beside the charity side of the event Wild West Night is a unique experience in itself. Even those with little or no “country” genes tend to find themselves caught up in the evening. The Villa Calabria is transformed into a Bonanza-style saloon featuring cancan girls, gaming tables, line dancing and a county jail. A Country Store is available for those yearning for the taste of an old-fashioned country apple pie or antiques.

Community organizations and units donate larger-than-life country baskets that are auctioned off at a silent auction. If it is an

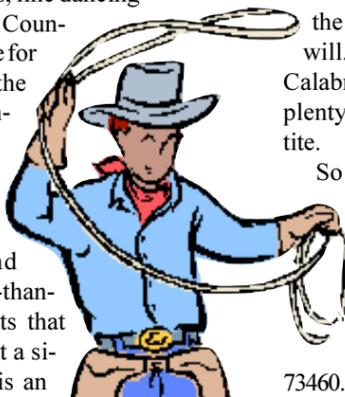
authentic, fast-paced and loud auction that sets your blood flowing then the evening should appeal to you. Halfway through the evening locally donated items are auctioned off. There’s always a great demand for the hand-painted solid wood furniture.

If the music doesn’t get you going then the smell of the barbecue ribs and chicken will. Vittles will be provided by the Villa Calabria at a reasonable price. There will be plenty to satisfy your thirst and your appetite.

So shape that hat, polish those boots and prepare to make your way back in time at the Villa Calabria March 8.

For more information contact Judith Brown, publicity chairperson of the Hearts and Hands Community Club, at mil 324-3282 or civ (06031)

73460.



Free tax assistance

Free tax assistance is provided at the Tax Center in Building 7, Room 254 on the Giessen Depot. The center provides services on a walk-in or appointment basis and opens Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To file taxes the following documents are needed: ☞ ID card, ☞ Social Security cards for all dependants, ☞ W-2 forms, earnings statements, including rental property and retirement income, ☞ a copy of the previous year’s tax returns, ☞ bank account number and routing number for electronic filing and ☞ a power of attorney if filing jointly for a spouse who cannot be present.

For more information call mil 343-8268 or civ (0641)402)4028268.



Community spotlight

Kudos to decorating contest winners

Congratulations to the families that participated in the family quarters decorating contest. Judging was extremely difficult and any of the 50 families could have been winners because the quality was so high, said officials. The following families were the winners — **Friedberg/Bad Nauheim:** the Gordons, Colemans, Frieslands and Murdors; **Giessen:** the Emiliens, Nottos, Peppers, Kakuks and Hiesters; **Butzbach:** the Hancocks, Heathmans, Deleons, Millers, Akers and Delunas. Special thanks to Army and Air Force Exchange Service for donating three \$100 grand prizes and to the 284th Base Support Battalion's Morale, Welfare and Recreation division for donating consolation prizes.

Volunteers sought

The Hearts and Hands Community Club seeks volunteers to work as bank tellers and dealers, and help at the gambling tables during the annual Wild West Night held March 8 at the Villa Calabria on Ray Barracks. Anyone interested in volunteering can call Judith Brown at mil 324-3282 or civ (06031) 73460.

Valentine bouquets, baskets

The Arts and Crafts Shops in Giessen and Friedberg offer various balloon bouquets, specialty baskets, bears and fresh roses for delivery for Valentine's Day. Delivery dates are Feb. 13 and 14. There is no charge for

delivery to Giessen Depot, Pendleton Barracks, Dulles and Marshall Housing and Ray Barracks. Delivery to Butzbach is \$5 and to Bad Nauheim \$3. Credit card orders by phone or email will be accepted. For details call mil 324-3266 or civ (06033) 81-3266 in Friedberg or mil 343-6445 or civ (0641) 402-6445 in Giessen or send an email to Paula.McGuire@104asg.mwr.army.mil in Giessen or Eric.Danzeiser@104asg.mwr.army.mil in Friedberg.



Black History Month Celebration Feb. 13

The 1st Armored Division Engineer Brigade and 284th Base Support Battalion will host a Black History Month Celebration Feb. 13 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Alpine Catering Center. The event includes entertainment, exhibits and refreshments. The guest speaker is Deric Gilliard, author of "Living in the Shadows of a Legend: Unsung Heroes and 'Sheroes' Who Marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." The event is open to all community members.

Spiritual retreat for Catholic leaders

A spiritual retreat will take place Feb. 21-22 at Haus Nothgottes in Rüdeshheim-Nothgottes. The event is open to all Catholic priests, volunteers, leaders and youth ministers. There is a minimum donation of €10 and

preregistration is required. For details call Gerri Merkel at civ (06181) 889 224 or mil 322-9224.

Single parent lunch

A Single Parenting Networking and brown bag lunch will be held Feb. 11 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Friedberg Army Community Service Center on Ray Barracks. This lunch offers single parents an opportunity to share experiences and provide support to each other. For details call Friedberg ACS at mil 324-3465.

Money order found

A money order was found in the 284th Base Support Battalion. Anyone who has lost a money order can contact the 284th BSB Provost Marshal Office, Military Police Investigations section, at mil 343-7602/7601.

SNAP volunteers sought

The 284th Base Support Battalion seeks volunteers for the Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program. SNAP volunteers help safeguard the community by actively observing their surroundings. Prior training is available. Interested individuals should be 17 years or older and residents of any of the 284th BSB housing areas. For details call Tina Gonzales, 284th SNAP coordinator at mil 343-6500.

Reserve career counseling available

Active duty soldiers interested in receiving

counseling on options, benefits and eligibility available with the U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Army National Guard before their separation from active duty can schedule appointments with David Hathaway, the Reserve component career counselor, in Building 4, Room 106 on the Giessen Depot. For details call mil 343-6506.

Multicultural spouses meeting

The multicultural spouses group meets every third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the Giessen ACS. For details call Patricia Harper mil 343-6910.

Translator service in Butzbach

The Butzbach Outreach Center hosts an Open for Interpretation translating service every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. to help with those mind-boggling German letters or to call German vendors such as the phone company. For more information call Chellee Burson at civ (06033) 925 329.

AFTB classes to be held in February

An Army Family Team Building level I class is scheduled for Feb. 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Butzbach Outreach Center. The topic is "Surviving Army Life." A three-day level II class takes place Feb. 25-27 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Butzbach. The topic is "All About Leaders." For details call Kelly Peterson at mil 343-7618/6040.

527th MP Company adopts Giessen Red Cross

By Alexandra Williams
284th Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Being called on to help is a routine experience for Military Police men and women.

Coming to the aid of an entire office is a unique project, but the 527th MP Company in Giessen proved it could be done by officially adopting the American Red Cross Office in the 284th Base Support Battalion. The resulting partnership has meant a steady flow of office supplies to the Red Cross and the man power to organize events.

The idea of sponsoring the Red Cross sprang up two years ago when Capt. Michael Johns, commander of the 527th MP Company, arrived at the 284th BSB's Provost Marshal's Office. "I heard Ken Joy, the 284th BSB Red Cross station manager, asking for volunteers to help with fund-raisers or donations to the Red Cross during meetings and briefings," he said.

"Capt. Johns often volunteered his free time, but always asked us how else he could help. I told him that we have no access to funds

and often fall short on office supplies. He kept telling me that one day he'd adopt the Red Cross," said Joy.

Johns was able to turn his plan into reality when he took command of the 527th MP Company in spring of last year.

"One day I told my battalion commander about the idea of adopting the Red Cross to better support them. He is aware of their funding problem and fully supported my idea. In December I was able to adopt the Red Cross," said Johns.

"Capt. Johns saw fit to come to the support of the Red Cross' efforts. He knows that we are a self-supporting agency and depend on the charity of others," said Joy.

The adoption enables Johns not only to volunteer his personal time during barbecues, gift-wrappings and other fund-raisers, but to provide support when the Red Cross needs supplies.

"Whether I need Scotch tape, folders or other supplies, I call Capt. Johns and he comes to my rescue to help us keep the office running in a professional manner," said Joy. "If possible he sends soldiers to help

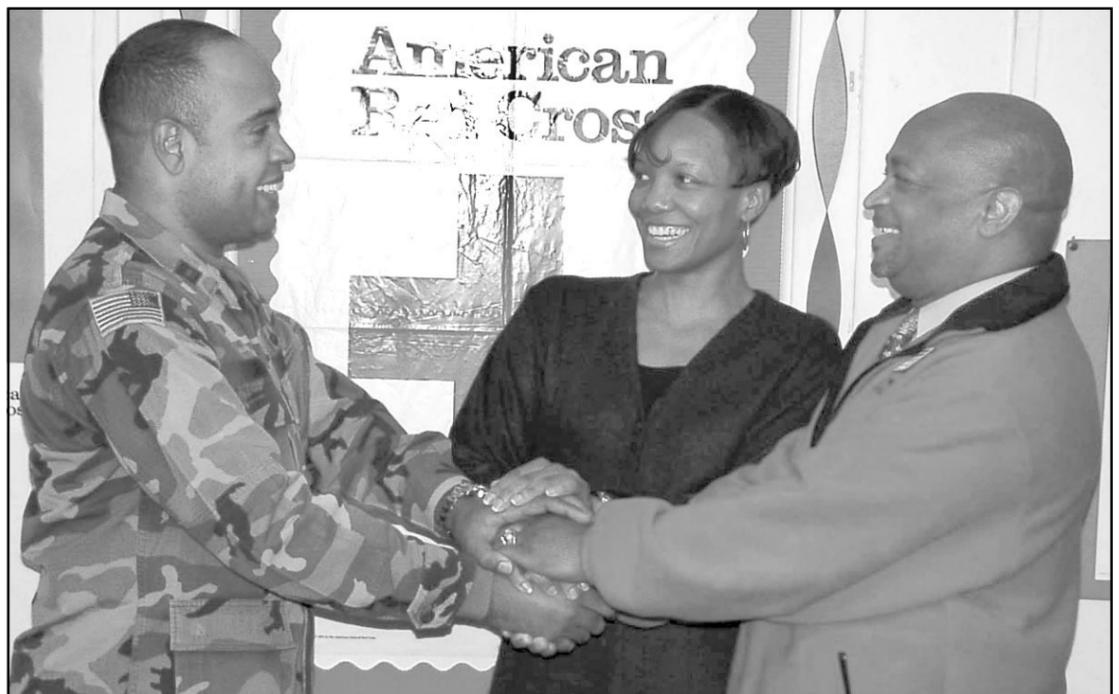


Photo by Alexandra Williams

Red Cross field office representative Michelle McKoy (center), and station manager Ken Joy (right) thank Capt. Michael Johns for the continuous support of the 527th Military Police Company.

us set up community awareness displays. I really appreciate the fact that I have somebody that comes to my aid."

Johns and Joy know that the

support will continue even after the departure of Johns. "My battalion commander said, 'The 527th MP Company will support the Red Cross' — so that's an order for the

entire company and not just for me," Johns said.

"This is a gift that keeps on giving. Maybe this idea will inspire others to help," said Joy.

284th BSB – Friedberg, Giessen

Guardsmen get an insight on German prison

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

When visiting a foreign country the last thing you want to do is land in a local jail.

Sgt. Daniel Donahue and Sgt. 1st Class Richard Morgan of Battery B, and Sgt. John Mohl of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 213th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, members of Task Force Keystone, went to prison voluntarily. They were invited to tour the Giessen Precinct South facility at the invitation of station chief Polizeihauptkommissar Werner Bursik. The tour was designed to give the guardsmen, Pennsylvania policemen in civilian life, an insight into the work of their German counterparts.

Bursik explained the mission of the precinct, the duties of the patrols and officers, and shift plans starting at the front desk. The tour continued to the detention area located in the basement. Equipped with security doors and surveillance cameras the holding area looks like many others, but the guardsmen quickly noticed a difference.

"The cells are really clean over here," said Mohl, a policeman in Pottsville.

"I wish I'd come here sooner. We just renovated our prison, and I could have gotten some good ideas. The drainage on the floors in the cells and hallway are a great idea. It's easy to keep clean," said Donahue, a patrolman in Bucks County.

"We have 10 single cells and two group cells. The group cells are used when we do preventive arrests, for instance during demonstrations. When we are aware of the presence of well-known troublemakers we are authorized to arrest them for the duration of the demonstration or event. Other suspects are kept for 48 hours," said Polizeioberkommissar Bernd Felde, officer on duty in the holding area.

"I think it's good that you get to keep the suspects for 48 hours. That gives the police extra time to search for evidence. We can only keep them for six hours," said Mohl.

The National Guard soldiers said they were surprised the cells were empty of everything but a bunk. "We don't equip our cells with latrines and sinks. If an inmate has to use the latrine he or she has to ring a bell so a policeman will escort him or her to the bathroom," said Felde.

"They cannot even flush the latrine; only the guard can do that. This is necessary because he or she may have to look for evidence the suspect might have swallowed upon his or her arrest," said Bursik.

"I am glad we don't have to do that," said Donahue as Mohl and Morgan nodded in agreement.

"New arrivals have to strip their clothes and get searched," said Felde. "The reason is that we have to ensure they did not hide a weapon. Female inmates are not allowed to wear a bra



Photo by Alexandra Williams

Hauptkommissar Gerold Kühne (front) explains a Polizei Operations Center workstation to National Guardsmen Sgt. Daniel Donahue (from left), Sgt. 1st Class Richard Morgan, Staff Sgt. John Mohl and Ruth Reichert of the Giessen Provost Marshal's Office.

while being in the detention cell because they could use the wire to cut their wrists. We've seen many things before we started the detailed search. Once we had a man in here who brought in a lighter and set himself on fire. Another man brought in a sawed-off gun and others were hiding razor blades under their tongues," Felde said.

"We don't have such a detention area at my station; we have to rely on the community lock-up," said Morgan, a state trooper in New Ringgold.

The next stop was the operations center. "We have five workstations each equipped with computers that are connected to police stations all over Hessen," said Bursik. The computers provide dispatchers with important information such as road maps, caller identification and also connect them with other police stations.

"The police in Hessen have the most advanced computer system," said Bursik.

"The system in the office is really great. We often run into problems when our dispatchers or patrols are not from the same area and have to look up streets on the map," said Donahue.

"We have the same system in our patrol cars, but our operations centers are not as well equipped," said Mohl.

"We also have them in the patrol cars so that patrols are no longer tied down to the dispatchers," said Morgan.

An examination of a German patrol car concluded the tour. "It was really interesting to see how German police work. It's not so much different from us," said Morgan.

"We are always told that German police officers are really dangerous, and you have to be careful around them because they are allowed to use their weapons right away. Now I know that this is not true. What I really liked are the denim pants some of the officers are wearing. They look more comfortable than our dress pants," said Mohl.

New detailed medical training available in the 284th BSB

By Alexandra Williams

284th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Training and detailed information on various medical issues is now available in the 284th Base Support Battalion to all active duty soldiers, local national and civilian employees and family members.

"Most of the training takes from 30-60 minutes. I have PowerPoint presentations and handouts available," said 284th BSB community health nurse Jamie MacKenzie.

Topics include exposure to blood-borne pathogens and how to protect yourself, diseases such as the human immunodeficiency

virus, hepatitis and hearing conservation. Training can be provided on issues related to specific areas, she said.

"Hepatitis for example is a very confusing topic as there are several types that operate by different means of infection. I will provide all necessary information," MacKenzie said.

"During pregnancy exposures training I'll talk about things that are harmful to the pregnancy and that need to be avoided," she said.

MacKenzie can also offer help in office ergonomics, including how to adjust and place your computer screen, she said.

"For the hearing conservation class I can bring an audiometer so individuals can see the actual noise level and we can talk about the dangers of too much noise," she said.

"I can also train groups on injuries at work, the proper way to report them and how to get them documented as injuries," MacKenzie said.

"Support is not limited to only those topics. Whatever medical topic someone wants to receive training on I will gather all necessary information to provide appropriate training," she said.

To arrange for training or for more information call MacKenzie at mil 343-7447.

Financial news

Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance is a new financial resource available to service members and their families stationed overseas to allow them a better standard of living.

Soldiers may qualify for up to \$500 in entitlements provided they meet household and income criteria set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (i.e. a family of four with an income of less than \$2,452 per month, stationed in Alaska or overseas is eligible).

FSSA is an annual entitlement that must be recalculated every February.

Stop by ACS to see if you qualify. For details call mil 343-7618 or 324-3465.



414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Readiness: BSB agencies focus on family needs, deployment readiness

By Melody Joy Fields

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

"The 414th Base Support Battalion is already in its forward deployed position," said Lt. Col. Jerry L. Mraz, 414th BSB commander. "We're not going anywhere."

Units from the Hanau and Büdingen areas regularly deploy for training at Grafenwöhr, Hohenfels, Poland and the Czech Republic, said Mraz. "We're always focused on readiness."

Recent concerns about long-term troop deployments to the Persian Gulf have people asking questions about what happens for those who go and those who stay behind. For those soldiers and family members who stay, the answers are fairly easy.

"All the services that we provide right now we will continue to provide," said Mraz. "We're even improving services, such as the Post Office which has just started Saturday operations." Mraz emphasized that all aspects of base support will remain activated and in service.

Having services in place is one important aspect of deployment readiness. Getting families emotionally ready is another of the pre-deployment pieces the BSB is striving to put in place.

Army Community Service has already offered two Deployment Readiness University sessions for rear detachment commanders, Family Readiness Group leaders and community service personnel (see page 14-15). Deployments can be an anxious experience, whether it's for a few weeks or several months. This training helps prepare leaders to meet the myriad of needs families might have if their sponsor deploys. ACS leaders hope it will encourage family members to use their Family Readiness Groups both as a source of information and a support network.

Spouses concerned about the prospect of single parenting during a deployment will have numerous outlets in already existing programs, such as the New Parent Support Program, the Family Advocacy Program, play groups and support



Photo by Melody Joy Fields

Lt. Col. Jerry L. Mraz, 414th BSB commander, offers advice to rear detachment commanders on a Deployment Readiness University advice panel. Experienced family readiness group leaders and former rear detachment commanders trained community leaders on how to prepare for a possible deployment.

groups.

Spouses worried about the stress of a long-term separation also have a wide range of services available to them. Family Readiness Groups, stress management classes, chaplains and social services counselors are available to encourage, support and inform couples both before and during a deployment.

ACS is also updating a family deployment handbook which will explain base services, provide phone numbers and

list points of contact. Family members concerned about a possible deployment will soon be able to pick up a copy as a reference guide. Rear detachment commanders, family readiness group leaders and liaison officers will have the same information available for their unit's families.

For those who aren't already in contact with their family readiness group, ACS can provide the right contact information. Call the FRG representative at mil 322-8965 or civ (06181) 88-8965.

Germans stand guard at Hanau posts

By Melody Joy Fields
414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Residents of the 414th Base Support Battalion will soon encounter new guards. As Task Force Keystone soldiers finish their rotation on guard, German soldiers from the Bundeswehr will take over gate security at several posts throughout Hanau and Büdingen.

"They will be an enhancement for the forces on the ground already," said Mason White, the S2/S3 for the 414th BSB.

"Over 200 German soldiers will provide gate entry control," said James Duffy, force protection officer for the 414th BSB. "It's going to be a combination between the German soldiers and our quick reaction force. And they will be working 100 percent in conjunction with the BSB force protection officers."

The change of guard will occur Feb. 7 in Büdingen and Feb. 17 in Hanau and Erlensee.

The German guards will have the same authority as Ponds Security guards and the U.S. Army gate guards, including detention authority, said Duffy. "The gates might look a little different. They're going to bring their own engineers, and they might change things a bit to protect their soldiers."

White, Duffy and the BSB commander, Lt. Col. Jerry L. Mraz, have been working closely with Lt. Col. Reinhold Nickel who is the liaison officer and officer in charge of the German contingent.

The soldiers, both career and conscripted, come from seven different battalions stationed throughout Germany. "They're coming from as far away as the Danish border and as close as Koblenz," said Duffy. The soldiers will be housed in U.S. Army barracks and use U.S. facilities.

All the soldiers serving on BSB installations speak some English, said White. "Forty to 50 percent are more fluent."

"This is not in anticipation of deployments," said Duffy. "This is because Task Force Keystone is departing."

The assistance by the German military is in response to U.S. requests to the German government, said Millie Waters, spokesperson for the Installation Management Agency-Europe. "Based on numerous commitments worldwide, the U.S. government expressed the hope that host nation assets could help the United States perform force protection in Germany."

Duffy said the German soldiers would be providing security "for the foreseeable future."



Photo by Melody Joy Fields

Sgt. Maj. Heiner Fobbe, a Bundeswehr soldier, checks identification cards with Pond's Security guard Elfi Gasseh. German soldiers will begin guarding Hanau and Büdingen posts this week.

Merging German, U.S. health care

Health Clinic officials work to raise patients' 'comfort level'

By Melody Joy Fields

414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Patients rely on their doctor's advice. But what if a patient doesn't understand his or her doctor?

Military families living in Hanau are often required to see German physicians for medical emergencies, pregnancy or specialty care. The Hanau Health Clinic recently conducted a survey of 93 American patients seen by German doctors. The survey confirmed that patients are often frustrated by language barriers and cultural differences in the German medical system.

"Families and active duty soldiers who receive specialty care from our German colleagues often have a lot of anxiety because some of the people they see don't speak English well," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) William T. Humphrey, Hanau Health Clinic commander. "German physicians don't communicate medical information to patients in the same degree of detail that an American physician would typically try to do. Hospital stays are typically longer for any given disease. Then add to that the background anxiety of being in a foreign country — all of these things tend to make patients hesitate about German doctors."

Enter the patient liaison.

The health clinic employs two patient liaisons, English speakers who are fluent in German and who understand the German medical system. They act as translators, advocates and educators for military personnel and family members receiving care "on the economy." Their mission is to "provide comfort and assistance," according to Humphrey.

"We translate for them, try to answer questions for them, visit them in the hospital," said Reggie Underwood, who has served as a patient liaison for more than 10 years.



Photo by Melody Joy Fields

Bimla Moudgil, a patient liaison from the Hanau Health Center, visits Capt. Annette Whittenberger and her newborn son, Blaze Derek at the Stadt Krankenhaus in Hanau. Blaze was born Jan. 23 and was able to leave the hospital with his mother Jan. 29. Patient liaisons assist U.S. Army families receiving care in German hospitals and visit hospitalized patients daily.

"We're there 24/7 for the patient."

"A lot of people are anxious when they have to go to emergency services downtown on the weekend and when the clinic is closed," said Humphrey. "These are the periods of highest stress for our patients."

"So we are planning to place a patient liaison in the Stadt Krankenhaus to assist our patients in negotiating the system there," she said. The liaison would be housed in the German hospital during peak emergency room hours, from 6-10 p.m. weekday evenings and from 2-10 p.m. weekends. Any American receiving care there would have a translator and advocate at hand from the moment her or she came in the door.

This new position has already been created, and the clinic staff hopes to have someone hired in the next two to three months.

The patient liaisons are now on call when an American must be seen in the emergency room. "When an American patient comes in,

the German local hospitals give us a call — 24 hours a day," said Underwood. Anyone admitted to the hospital already receives a daily visit by the liaison to explain medical treatment, translate any written advice and to ask the doctor questions for the patient. "Even on weekends we visit patients," said Underwood.

"I personally visit our sickest patients to ensure they're getting quality care," said Humphrey.

Equal care

Anxiety about language barriers and cultural differences can lead to a false assumption that German medical care is not as good as American care. "But the German health care system is equal to the American system, and in some cases even better," said Humphrey.

"They have equal technological advances," and their medical training is equally

rigorous, Humphrey said.

Of the 93 patients surveyed, 75 percent felt they received quality care from their German physicians. The 25 percent who felt they received poor care almost invariably cited communication problems as the reason. Several patients cited long waits, less than friendly patient-doctor relationships, and conflicting advice between doctors. Only six patients complained that they received "substandard care."

Conclusion? Most of the problems Americans experience with the German medical system have to do with cultural differences and not with bad doctors.

"A lot of Americans come over here and expect things to go exactly as they go in the States," said Underwood, adding that German health officials don't have the same bedside manner to which Americans are accustomed.

"We try to inform our population what to expect (from German health care professionals) and what not to expect," said Underwood. The liaisons conduct weekly briefings to explain hospital procedures, doctor-patient relationships and hospital-doctor relationships.

For example, whereas doctors in the United States are typically able to dictate care for their patients in American hospitals, in Germany, the hospitals are autonomous. While hospital staff will listen to a doctor's recommendation, it is the hospital physician who ultimately decides the best course of care for a patient in his or her keeping, said Underwood. That difference alone can lead to confusion for patients who believe they will receive one course of treatment, and arrive at the hospital to undergo a distinctly different course of treatment.

Longer hospital stays are also a reality of German care, and something not likely to change for American patients. "Being in a hospital longer keeps people out of their homes where they want to be, but it ensures better care for the patient," said Humphrey.

Humphrey said he and his staff are also teaching German physicians what to expect from American patients, and they're giving them an incentive to learn.

Those doctors who have already received high marks from American patients for their cultural sensitivity have been placed on a recommended referral list.

"What we are doing now is recognizing physicians who are exceptionally sensitive to American values," said Humphrey. "We have a list of referrals for physicians whose service and expertise patients have said they like."

It's a matter of economics. Doctors who respond to an American's need for detailed treatment explanations, a friendly bedside manner and quick service as well as sound diagnoses will receive more referrals for American patients.

Ultimately the clinic hopes to reduce the stress placed on both American patients and German doctors, ensuring quality care for the American military community and increased appreciation for the German medical system.

How do you spell victory?

Argonner Elementary School Spelling Bee champion Taylor Northington is congratulated by her family after winning the school's Spelling Bee Jan. 23. Northington advances to compete at the Department of Defense Dependents Schools European Spelling Bee March 29 in Stuttgart. If she wins there, she will go on to compete at the national level in Washington, D.C. Taylor Smith was second, Esther Malone was third and Jeff Holt was fourth at the Argonner Spelling Bee.

Photo by Melody Joy Fields



414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau

Taming the 'The Tempest' Middle schoolers breathe life into Shakespeare play

Story and photos by
Melody Joy Fields
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How about a little Shakespeare to chase away that midwinter's night dream?

Hanau audiences are being treated to raging seas, thunderous applause and fantastical characters in a Hanau High School production of the bard's play about a magical island. The school's Shakespearean Actors Troupe opened the "The Tempest" Jan. 31, and the play will be featured again Feb. 6-8.

The cast is culled mostly from the students in Chris Swanson's Shakespeare class. Unlike most courses which survey several works by the playwright, Swanson's class

has focused only on "The Tempest." They have been studying the play since the fall semester.

Twenty-two students analyzed the play line by line and sometimes word by word for interpretations, said Swanson. "I want to emphasize their dedication." Each of the major characters in the production has spent the past semester memorizing their lines and developing their characters. "Prospero memorized 679 lines. That's a lot of lines."

Unlike most directors who cut scenes to shorten the performance time, Swanson and his students have chosen to perform the play unabridged. "We haven't cut a single word," he said.

The major characters, all students in Swanson's class, act out



The goddesses on Prospero's island delight their audiences, onstage and off, with dances and stunning costumes.

the drama with studied confidence. A recent dress rehearsal proved them capable actors in tackling the difficult dialogue. Although the performance was a little rough around the edges, replete with a few, scattered snickers from backstage, the adolescent thespians managed to captivate the audience.

Pageantry and dances fill the small stage. Beautiful goddesses and sprites dressed in vibrant colors swirl about the mesmerized castaways. Arabic-styled music lends to the mythical atmosphere. The extravagant costumes, artfully made by volunteers and parents, match the Renaissance dress of Shakespeare's own time. The elaborate details convince the audience this is no ordinary middle school production.

Kendra Schmitt, who plays the magician Prospero, carries the cast with her stately performance and regal air. Like the character she plays, Schmitt conducts her colleagues through the production with calm authority.

Ariel, Prospero's otherworldly servant played by Victoria Duck, is fluid rather than flighty and a charismatic foil to her careworn master. Duck manages to convey strength in this submissive character, a feat produced seemingly from sheer



Stephano (Laura Williams) and Trinculo (Tanya Rowe) imagine life as royalty on Prospero's magic island.

enjoyment of the role.

Miranda and Ferdinand, played by Kristina Avera and Danielle Becerra respectively, are timid as young lovers ought to be. Whether their awkward self-awareness was planned characterization or stage fright, it works.

The star of the show, however, is Caliban. Alexa Bookhart portrays this half-beast, half-man creature with warmth and charm and an exuberance her co-stars can't help but try to match. Bookhart raises the level of performance from every character on stage. Her facial expressions alone could communi-

cate Caliban's tumultuous emotions, but she also manages Shakespeare's difficult speeches through a knotty nasal accent.

Opposite Caliban, Stephano, played by Laura Williams, and Trinculo, played by Tanya Rowe, sparkle on stage as the down-to-earth humorists. Performed like a slapstick Abbot and Costello routine, Williams and Rowe are just what Shakespeare ordered.

When the production run is over, the students from Swanson's Shakespeare class will travel to London to work with actors from the Globe Theater, the premier Shakespearean troupe in the world.

Don't miss this chance to see a heartfelt production of "The Tempest" done in the spirit of Shakespeare's devotion to drama.

Dinner and performances will be featured Feb. 7 and 8 at 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$10. A coffee and cake night performance will be held Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. Cost is \$6. For those who prefer their theater on an empty stomach, performance-only tickets are \$4. The curtains rise at 6:30 p.m.

To make reservations call Chris Swanson at civ (06181) 9069 737. Tickets for the play only will also be available at the door on the night of the performance.



Caliban, played by Alexa Bookhart, wiggles his half-beast and half-man toes during a dress rehearsal of "The Tempest" at Hanau Middle School.

Disposable cans, bottles

Stores now charge deposit on some beverage containers

By **Christine Kümpel**
414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs
Office

Since the start of the new year a German law has been in effect which makes deposits mandatory for disposable beverage cans and bottles sold in German grocery stores and kiosks.

Affected is beer, mineral water and car-

bonated soft drinks packaged in cans or plastic bottles.

The deposit amounts to €0.25 for cans and €0.50 for bottles over 1.5 liters.

Jürgen Trittin, German minister for the environment, welcomed the new law which "stabilizes the bottle and packaging return system and puts an end to the ever growing trend toward disposable packaging." Ac-

cording to Trittin the new law was good for the environment and the packaging return industry.

A generic Germany-wide return system for disposable beverage packaging is scheduled to be operational by Oct. 1. Until this system is established the cans and bottles have to be returned to the grocery store, beverage retailer or kiosk where they were

purchased. In order to get reimbursed the customer must present the receipt to prove he or she bought the items at that particular store.

Come October of this year a general system is slated to be in place which will allow the customer to return one-way packaging to any beverage retailer or grocery store with a return machine to be reimbursed there.