

Herald Union



Vol. X, No. 10

Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

Feb. 18, 2002



Photo by Karl Weisel

Race to the finish

Five-year-old Sadie Grizer gives Col. David Bender, 284th Base Support Battalion commander, a run for his money in the Giessen Groundhog Day Five-Kilometer Run and Three-Kilometer Family Walk Feb. 1. Bender finished in second place behind Ron Locklar in the Male Masters category. The race was dominated by a group of runners from the Hanau community who go by the monicker, the Laufen Crew. See page 28 of this edition for a look at five runners who take running seriously both on and off the trail.

Army issues 'Stop Movement' order

Hold put on some soldier moves to maintain readiness, cohesion

Some U.S. Army Europe soldiers will be affected by the Army's recently announced limited stop movement policy.

The stop movement order has been given to maintain personnel readiness and to ensure continued unit cohesion and stability, officials said.

Soldiers with a Date Eligible for Return from Overseas between March 1 and Sept. 30 may be extended. Soldiers with a DEROS of Feb. 28 or earlier will comply with their assignment instructions, unless an exception is approved.

Soldiers on orders for temporary duty to attend a school may not attend if the school report date is on or after March 1.

Soldiers with a previously approved inter-theater tour or consecutive overseas tour may not proceed to the gaining unit if the soldier's current tour DEROS is March 1 or later.

Officers and warrant officers on assignment instructions with report dates of March 1 and May 31 are subject to an involuntary Foreign Service Tour Extension, not to exceed 180 days. Officers

and warrant officers with a report date of Feb. 28 and earlier will comply with their assignment instructions, unless an exception is approved.

Exceptions to the stop movement policy may be granted and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

USAREUR soldiers who are retiring or leaving the service will not be affected. Units currently supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle will not be affected.

A stop movement is not the same as a stop loss, said officials. Stop loss orders suspend voluntary separations from the military, and have only been implemented for specific skills for limited periods.

Military personnel should contact their unit S1 or their chain of command for additional information.

The 1st Personnel Command point of contact for enlisted soldiers is Maj. Zane Chambers, mil 379-6366 or 9411. The POC for officers is Capt. John Pilgrim at mil 379-6440. (USAREUR Public Affairs)

News flash

CPAC to be closed Feb. 20

The Hanau Civilian Personnel Advisory Center and its site offices in Wiesbaden and Baumholder will be closed Feb. 20. In case of an emergency call mil 322-1310.

'Permit to transfer'

Military Customs officials have seen an increase in problems after U.S. Army Europe drivers sell their old or wrecked USAREUR-plated vehicles to German junkyards without obtaining a required "Permit to Transfer" from military Customs in advance. Completing the Permit Transfer (AE Form 550-175B) is necessary when U.S. service members, Department of Defense civilians and their family members have imported or bought a vehicle in a duty and tax-free status and then sell or donate their tax-free personal property to non-ID card holders. People who don't obtain the permit are often discovered when attempting to clear Vehicle Registration. If the vehicle was sold or transferred to a non-ID card holder, Vehicle Registration staff request to see the AE Form 550-175B. German Customs may also require you to prove what happened to the vehicle or pay the full tax due on it if you can't. For more information visit your local Customs office or browse to www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/custom2.htm. (IMA-Europe Release)

MARKS course

The 102nd Signal Battalion's Records Management Section offers classes on the Modern Army Recordkeeping System and Military Correspondence March 4 and 25 from 8 a.m. to noon at Hanau's Pioneer Education Center, Building 11. Call Mr. Hussain at mil 322-5506/8934 or email Aijaz.Hussain@cmtymail.104asg.army.mil to register. For information about classes in the Baumholder and Wiesbaden communities call Mr. Sisk at mil 337-7322 or email Carroll.Sisk@cmtymail.104asg.army.mil.

EEO course

The 104th Area Support Group Equal Employment Opportunity Office will conduct an EEO Counselor's Course Feb. 24-28. For more information call mil 322-8834 or civ (06181) 88-8834.

Inside



Feedback

"The knowledge we could learn is very important," said Wiesbaden's Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Jackson. See page 2 more feedback on space exploration.

Sting like a bee
Fists fly at Hanau's Black History Month Boxing Tournament. See page 14.



104th Area Support Group Customer Service Survey

... See page 4

'The struggle goes on'

Speaker shares personal look at history

By David Ruderman
104th Area Support Group
Public Affairs Office

In one of many Black History Month events around the 104th Area Support Group, Dr. Shirley Sheck, principal of Gelnhausen Elementary School, addressed soldiers and community members at the 16th Corps Support Group's Touch of Home Cafe Feb. 13.

Sheck was raised in Texas and Oklahoma in a world where the class structures and racial prejudices that consolidated after the Civil War lingered and defined daily life. "We weren't middle class — we weren't even close to middle class," said Sheck. "We did chop cotton in the summer and pick cotton in the fall."

Despite their economic hardship, Sheck recounted a happy childhood enriched by the liveliness and progressive attitudes of her home life. "We had values and we had love. And not just for ourselves, but because of the way we were brought up, we had love and respect for



Photo by Karl Weisel

Dr. Shirley Sheck, Gelnhausen Elementary School principal

others too. 'Love your neighbor as yourself,'" she said, quoting the Biblical injunction to do good.

While her father was the janitor of the elementary school she and many of her 10 siblings attended, Sheck recounted a home life full of reading and political discussions. Her parents urged their children to become educated and strive for accomplishment, she said.

Sheck's family was one of seven black families in town, living literally across the railroad tracks from the majority white population. She recalled being the only black child in her class through middle school, and being chased and harassed by white boys. She recounted the segregation of her youth, the separate and unequal movie theaters, the lack of black faces in the popular media of the time.

Sheck set out to make her life, and the world around her, a better place to live.

While pursuing a master's in education she

See 'Struggle' on page 3

Commentary

Feedback: How important is it that America continue to explore space?



Sgt. 1st Class Kim Armstrong
414th Base Support Battalion, Hanau

"I think they should revamp the program. They should look at the equipment in the space shuttle because this is the second time. Once it was on its way up and now it was on its way down. I don't know how much more we can learn in space exploration — we've been doing it for over 20 years — but if it's for the betterment of mankind I think it's OK."



Helmut Schartel
284th Base Support Battalion Safety Office, Giessen

"I think it's very important to continue because exploring space is one way to implement our visions. It also serves the scientific purpose as it helps in developing new methods of conducting technical and medical research. This helps us to know more about our Earth and how to protect the environment. Money spent in exploring space is money spent on our future."



Sgt. 1st Class Regina Mundell
421st Medical Evacuation Battalion, Wiesbaden

"It's an important part of progress and research, and it's important to continue on with what we're doing. Especially in light of the tragedy we should still put up the money, not do away with the program. We should learn from the tragedy and go on to doing bigger and better things."



Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Tyler
4th Brigade S-1, Hanau

"I think it's extremely important to continue. These are sacrifices made by all people. Adventurers like the astronauts realize the risks when they get into this. They're seasoned military people; they knew the risks. I think NASA should be funded even more than it is. The technological advances that come from NASA are well worth the risks. Let's face it, it's 17 years since the last accident."



Jacqueline S. Young
284th Base Support Battalion Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Giessen

"I think it's important to continue because we have to have knowledge of what's out there. It would be presumptuous to believe that we are the only life form in the universe. And what if something happens to our planet? We need to find out if there is anywhere else to go and live."

Don't shy from talking about war with children

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, and the "war on terrorism" have prompted many children to ask questions about war. "What is war?" "Why are we having a war?" "Is the war going to be here?"

You may worry about the exposure your child is getting through the media, other adults or friends at school. You may wonder how much is too much for your child to understand. It's important not to shy away from talking about war with your child. As a parent, you are the best source of information. Talking about it with you may ease the fear and stress your child feels, and help clarify misconceptions.

Most children over age 4 are aware of the concept of war. They overhear adults talking about it or see it on TV. Some children have family members in the military who may be preparing for deployment. Children, however, don't have the ability to understand war as adults do. Instead a child sees war through his or her own eyes, which may cause fears, concerns and misconceptions. When you begin to talk about war, remember to:

Try to anticipate the questions your child may ask you. These may include, "Why are we at war?" "Will the war come here?" "Will I have to go to war?" "Do we know anyone who will be going to the war?"

Let your child talk first. Ask your child to tell you what he or she knows about war and about what is happening in the news. You may be surprised at how much your child

knows, or you may be alarmed at conclusions your child has drawn. Allowing your child to take the lead will help you give him or her the most appropriate information.



Ask your child questions such as, "What are you scared of?" "What bothers you most about the war?" "Do you feel angry or sad?" Children are often not able to draw abstract conclusions about complicated events such as war.

Your child may conclude that since four planes crashed in the Sept. 11 hijackings, all planes aren't safe. Your child may worry that if you or other family members take a trip somewhere you won't come back. Talking about your child's fears can help you address these misconceptions.

You can help clarify what your child knows by asking questions as well. If your preschooler asks, "Is this a real war?" you might clarify what she means by saying, "Tell me what you mean by a 'real war.'" Remember your child's idea of a real war may be very different from yours. Always remember to answer your child's question after she has answered yours.

Remember that children tend to look for simple answers. When explaining the actions of war, you may want to make a distinction between actions such as bombing or killing and a long-term war. Children may assume that the action of bombing a building or country will be enough to resolve the conflict. (Courtesy of the 1st Armored Division's Mental Health Division)

Did you know? It's time to celebrate Fasching in Germany

Germany's silly season gets into full swing in the coming weeks culminating in the three crazy days before Ash Wednesday, March 5. Americans have an opportunity to take part in a wide variety of activities from costume balls to hour-long parades. Among the most famous Fasching parades are those held annually in Mainz, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Bonn on Rose Monday, March 3.

Local USOs feature trips to various Fasching events including the parade in Wiesbaden March 2 and the one in Mainz March 3. But many other cities and towns also feature parades on the weekend or Monday before Ash Wednesday.

While Fasching can be a good time for all ages, parade-goers should keep a few tips in mind to stay safe:

Ⓢ Keep children from straying too close

to the front of crowds along parade routes where they could be trampled by horses or crushed under a float.

Ⓢ Take the train or public transportation to parade cities as parking is nearly impossible near the parade routes. Also don't mix drinking and driving.

Ⓢ Maintain your composure when someone shoves a bottle in your face — simply smile and decline graciously or pass it on.

Ⓢ Don't get offended when inebriated revelers insist on dancing with your wife, husband, friend, etc.

Ⓢ If wearing a costume or mask, use attire that doesn't impede walking or vision. Be sure to dress warmly.

Ⓢ Relax, have a good time and shout whatever the people next to you are yelling (most likely, "Hellau") as the floats go by.

Herald Union

The Herald Union is an authorized unofficial Army newspaper published under the provisions of AR 360-1 for members of the 104th Area Support Group. Contents of the Herald Union are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content is the responsibility of the 104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office. No payment will be made for contributions. This is a biweekly publication printed by The Stars and Stripes in Griesheim, Germany. Our office is in Building 1205 on Hanau's Yorkhof Kaserne. Circulation is 13,000 copies. For advertising rates contact Darin Laracuenté at civ (06155) 601-204, mil 349-8204 or laracuented@mail.estripes.osd.mil.

Commander 104th Area Support Group
Col. George A. Latham II
104th ASG Command Sergeant Major
CSM Jose A. Fontanez
104th ASG Public Affairs Officer
Raino Scharck

Newspaper staff

Editor.....Karl Weisel
Associate Editor.....David Ruderman
221st BSB Reporter.....Cassandra Kardeke (mil 337-5772)
222nd BSB Reporter.....Ignacio Rubalcava (mil 485-6191)
284th BSB Reporter.....Alexandra Williams (mil 343-6597)
414th BSB Reporter.....Melody Joy Fields (mil 322-1600)
Address: 104th ASG, Herald Union, Unit 20193 Box 0001, APO AE 09165-0001; or, Herald Union, Yorkhof Kaserne, Bldg. 1205, Chemnitz Str. 2-4, 63452 Hanau. Telephone: mil 322-9257, civ (06181) 88-9257. Email: hesherald@104asgexch.hanau.army.mil. Home page: www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil. Fax: civ (06181) 14029.

News flash

Win a Harley

The Frito Lay Company, in conjunction with the Defense Commissary Agency Europe, is offering commissary customers the chance to win one of five Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The Harley Sportsters are on display at commissaries in Hanau, Ramstein, Vogelweh, Würzburg and Heidelberg. One motorcycle and two leather jackets will be awarded in each of five commissary zones in Europe. The contest is open to U.S. military personnel, spouses and Department of Defense civilians 18 years and older. Entry boxes are located in all Europe commissaries. (DeCA-Europe Release)

Military-themed cards

Military-themed greeting cards are now available in Army and Air Force Exchange Service stores across Europe. Featuring the artwork of Mark Baker, W.C. Pope and Mike Jones, cartoonists with the *Army Times*, *Citizen Airman* and *All Hands*, the cards are printed by Patriot Greetings, a private company that donates a percentage of proceeds to a college scholarship fund for children of fallen and injured military members. The cards are also available online at www.patriotgreetings.com.

Top soldier

Soldiers who have shown unusual honor, valor or dedication to fellow soldiers and their communities in 2002 are eligible to be nominated for the annual *Army Times* Soldier of the Year award. For details on nomination requirements browse to www.armytimes.com/soldier. Deadline for nominations is March 14. (Army Times Release)

Register firearms

Gun owners in Germany are reminded that in addition to registering their privately owned firearms with the U.S. Army Europe Registry of Motor Vehicles they must obtain a Waffensbesitzkarte (German Weapons Possession Card) to comply with German law. Weapons not covered by a valid WBK must be stored in a Rod and Gun Club, community or unit arms room. Storing firearms in unit arms rooms or Rod and Gun Clubs is



not intended to be a permanent solution. USAREUR firearms owners must have the German permit by Dec. 1 of this year or they will be required to ship them to a storage location outside Germany at their own expense or arrange for a pickup by a U.S. government-contracted carrier for commercial storage at government expense if they are within six months of a permanent change of station. Firearms to be transported in connection with a PCS move must remain stored until they are shipped. Owners must follow U.S. and German Customs laws and postal regulations when shipping firearms. Owners can also not sell or otherwise dispose of the firearms without first obtaining written approval from the USAREUR Registry of Motor Vehicles. People who have not obtained the German permit by Dec. 1 will be required to hand over their weapons to German authorities for disposal. For more information visit the USAREUR website at www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/opmhome.html. (USAREUR Release)

Mail order pharmacy

Pre-registration for the new Tricare mail order pharmacy program is under way. Interested beneficiaries may register with Express Scripts, Inc., the new mail order pharmacy contractor at www.express-scripts.com. All military pharmacy mail order customers will be switched to the new program on March 1. It replaces the National Mail Order Pharmacy program. Those eligible to use the current program are eligible to use the new program. New customers must register for the program. Pre-registration will speed the processing of future prescription orders, officials said. Beneficiaries who have refills remaining under the current program as of March 1 will be transferred to Express Scripts so they can continue ordering medications on time. Overseas Tricare beneficiaries may use the mail order pharmacy if they have an APO, FPO or U.S. embassy address as long as the prescription is written by a provider licensed to practice in the United States. The usual delivery time is five to seven days. For more information contact your servicing Tricare center, military pharmacy or browse to www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy.

Tax code changes mean more money for soldiers

Take advantage of Earned Income Credit, Thrift Savings

By Spc. Rebecca Burt
V Corps Public Affairs Office

This year's federal tax codes include a lot of changes that could put more money in soldiers' pockets, said V Corps legal officials.

Soldiers with families are the most likely to benefit from changes, including a drastic revamp of the Earned Income Credit code, said John Martensen, supervisory attorney in the legal assistance division of the V Corps Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

"In the past (the tax codes) included the cost of military benefits in the calculation of your income, but now they've done away with that, and are just considering your actual earned income," said Martensen. "This means that you could have an E6 or even an O2 with combat-excluded income, who's now qualified for Earned Income Credit—getting a refund in excess of what is actually owed to you."

In addition to the soldiers who will save dollars thanks to the new Earned Income Credit calculation,



soldiers who took advantage of the Army's new Thrift Savings Program will notice a little extra jingle in their pockets.

"A lot of people have been making contributions to the TSP, but not really noticing where it's going. Now they'll start to see a difference—in their tax returns," said Martensen.

Soldiers who put money aside in the TSP or another qualifying program such as an IRA, and who earn less than \$50,000 a year, earn a retirement savings credit.

"And that credit can knock off up to \$1,000 from your taxes," he said.

In addition to the advantages of saving for a future retirement and qualifying for retirement savings credit, soldiers who put money into the TSP are lowering their taxable income, which has benefits of its own, he said.

"Lowering your income means lowering your taxes, too," said Martensen. "And lowering your taxes could put you into a lower bracket or even make you eligible for other tax benefits that you couldn't take advantage of before, like the Earned Income Credit."

Overall, changes are for the better, but soldiers need to make sure that their taxes are completed and filed by someone who knows about the new changes, such as a tax specialist at one of the free military community tax centers, added Martensen.

There are a lot of big changes that will affect a lot of people," he said. "Make sure you're one of them."

'Struggle'

Continued from page 1

decided she was ready for classroom experience and landed her first job in Norman, Okla. Again she encountered racism, this time on the part of her fellow teachers. She remembered being ostracized by the faculty. Her one support was the school principal, an elderly white man.

During those years her dreams for her future materialized. She determined to become a school principal and to complete a doctorate. Sheck taught high school in Columbia, Mo., and became a Title I program administrator. Responsible for overseeing funding of special education activities, Sheck again encountered racism, sexism and age discrimination, she said.

While pondering her next move, Sheck took a side step, enlisting in the U.S. Army where she trained to become a radio repair specialist. "Patriotism is a word you have to live to make it meaningful," said Sheck. She entered the Department of Defense Dependents Schools system as a teacher and administrator after her discharge and continued to pursue her dreams. "It took me 21 years to become a school principal. It was a long time coming,

but I stayed my course." She also completed her PhD in philosophy.

Sheck exhorted her audience to pursue what she called "the four Ds"—dedication, determination, discipline and a dream—to achieve their goals of improving themselves and the world at large. "I am proud to be an American. I am especially proud to be a black American. With so many great predecessors who have contributed so much to our country, how could I not be proud," she asked.

Sheck ticked off the names of black Americans who have contributed to American culture in realms that range from politics, science and art to sports and entertainment.

"Why do we celebrate Black History Month? And why do we celebrate it in February," asked Sheck. She recounted the history of Carter G. Woodson, the founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, a pioneer of recovering and publicizing the historical role and contributions of blacks to American history.

It was Woodson who petitioned the government for the establishment of a nationally recognized Negro History Week, which was established in 1926. He chose the

second week of February as the most appropriate time because it coincided with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Negro History Week was expanded to become Black History Month by an act of Congress in 1976.

"The study of black history can give us a positive sense of pride and accomplishment. It's a reaffirmation of the struggle for identity and recognition of black achievements," said Sheck.

"We must continue to contribute to make America a better place, not just for the black race, but for all mankind. I believe we must look to the past to understand the present and make potentially a better future for America and for the world," she said.

"I want to remind you, the struggle goes on. We still have drugs and crime; we still have unemployment; we still have homeless people. I believe the big challenge is to apply the 'four Ds' to your personal life. 'You are what you make of yourself, not what others make of you,'" she said, quoting a traditional Swahili saying. "Do not let that window of opportunity close on you."



Customer Service Survey

Take a few minutes to fill out the 104th Area Support Group Customer Service Survey. Your honest, anonymous assessment of the wide range of support services available to you and your family is valuable information to the command.

It will help the base operations providers establish a baseline to measure customer satisfaction, identify areas of concern and improve the overall delivery of services that affect your quality of life. Your participation is vitally important.

Rate services in the section at right and identify your status in the section below.

Just one survey per person, please.

Tear off this page and mail the completed survey via MPS (no postage required) to:

**Commander
104th Area Support Group
Attn: DCA, SST
Unit 20193 Box 0006
APO AE 09165-0006**

Activity/Service/Program	Have not used / Do not have this activity	Attitude – Politeness, Respectfulness, Willingness to be of Service	Reliability – Accuracy, Faultlessness, Punctuality	Knowledge of Services Offered	Facility Condition
		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Please rate the following using: 1 = poor, 2 = OK, 3 = good, and 4 = excellent					
Army Community Services	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Army Lodging (Guest House)	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Leisure Car Rental (MWR)	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Chapel	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Commissary	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center	<input type="radio"/>				
Appropriated Fund (GS)		0000	0000	0000	0000
Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF)		0000	0000	0000	0000
Housing Referral	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Engineer (DPW) Service Orders	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
DPW Self-Help Store	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Mail Room/APO	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Arts & Crafts	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Auto Skills	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Roller Skating	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Outdoor Recreation	<input type="radio"/>				
Trips/tours	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Equipment Check-Out	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Movie Theater	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Military Personnel Office	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
In/Out Processing	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
ID Cards/Passports	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Household Goods	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Child & Youth Services					
Youth Services	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Child Development Ctr	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
School Age Services (SAS)	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Family Child Care (FCC)	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Central Registration	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Indoor Swimming Pool	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Fitness Center	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Library	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Self Service Supply (SSSC)	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
SATO Travel	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Clubs	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Bowling Centers	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Golf	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Rod & Gun Club	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Dispensary	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Dental Clinic	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Military Finance	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
AAFES PX	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
AAFES Shoppette	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
AAFES Cleaners	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Vehicle Registration	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Legal Center	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Dependent (DoDDS) Schools	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Drug & Alcohol prevention / treatment	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000
Provost Marshal	<input type="radio"/>	0000	0000	0000	0000

1. What is your status? (one answer only, please)

- Military member
- Family member of a military sponsor
- Family member of a civilian sponsor
- Civilian employee
- Retiree

2. What is your or your sponsor's current rank/grade?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Enlisted | <input type="radio"/> WO1 | <input type="radio"/> Officers |
| <input type="radio"/> PV1 | <input type="radio"/> CW2 | <input type="radio"/> 2LT |
| <input type="radio"/> PV2 | <input type="radio"/> CW3 | <input type="radio"/> 1LT |
| <input type="radio"/> PFC | <input type="radio"/> CW4 | <input type="radio"/> CPT |
| <input type="radio"/> CPL/SPC | <input type="radio"/> CW5 | <input type="radio"/> MAJ |
| <input type="radio"/> SGT | | <input type="radio"/> LTC |
| <input type="radio"/> SSG | | <input type="radio"/> COL |
| <input type="radio"/> SFC | | <input type="radio"/> GO |
| <input type="radio"/> MSG/1SG | | |
| <input type="radio"/> SGM/CSM | | |
| Civilian employees | | |
| <input type="radio"/> GS1-9 | <input type="radio"/> NF 1-3 | |
| <input type="radio"/> GS10-12 | <input type="radio"/> NF 4-5 | |
| <input type="radio"/> GS13-15 | <input type="radio"/> NA 1-4 | |

- Other: _____
- NA 5-9
- CC 1-4

3. Do you have a child/children aged 10 years or younger living in your home?

- Yes
- No

4. Do you have a child/children between the ages of 11 and 18 living in your home?

- Yes
- No

5. Where do you live?

- On post barracks/BEQ/BOQ
- On post family housing
- Off post — 10 minutes or less from post
- Off post — 11-30 minutes from post
- Off post — more than 30 minutes away

6. Where are you assigned/supported? (one answer only, please)

- 221st BSB — Wiesbaden
- 221st BSB — Dexheim
- 222nd BSB — Baumholder
- 284th BSB — Giessen
- 284th BSB — Friedberg
- 414th BSB — Hanau
- 414th BSB — Büdingen

Food: If handled properly, food items may be edible after use-by or expiration date

By Kay Blakley
*Defense Commissary Agency
 Europe consumer advocate*

Understanding how food product dating works might not be a subject people lose sleep over. But for a typical consumer, it has probably been a source of confusion from time to time. That confusion might have also resulted in some perfectly good food being thrown in the garbage or poured down the drain. For the straight scoop on product dating and a deeper understanding of exactly what those dates mean read on.

Dates and meanings

The “**Sell-By**” date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before this date;

A “**Best if Used By (or Before)**” date is a recommendation for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

A “**Use-By**” date is the last date recommended for use of the product while at peak quality. This date is determined by the manufacturer based on analysis of the product throughout its shelf life, tests or other information.

Questionable items

The items that seem to cause most concern among commissary shoppers are perishable items such as dairy products, eggs, meat and poultry.

Milk. Fresh milk is produced in Europe, according to American specifications, by inspected and approved dairies. A “Best Sell-By” date is stamped on every carton. Be sure to purchase the milk before this date. Take it straight home and refrigerate immediately at 40 de-

grees Fahrenheit or less. Under optimum conditions, milk should remain fresh up to five days or longer beyond the sell-by date. When in doubt, trust your own sense of taste and smell. Fresh milk will almost always let you know when it has passed its prime.

Yogurt. This is also purchased in Europe. They may be stamped with either a “Best Sell-By” or a “Best Use-By” date and the phrase may not always be written in English. The phrases “Haltbar bis” or “Haltbarkeit” and “Mindest Haltbar bis” or “Mindesthaltbarkeit” roughly translated, convey this same message. Store yogurts the same way as fresh milk and use by the “Best Use-By” date for highest quality. After that date you might see some separation of fluid in the product, which will affect its appearance but this factor alone is not an indicator of spoilage. It may be just fine after stirred. Under optimum refrigerator storage conditions yogurts marked with a “Sell-By” date can be expected to be of good quality and freshness seven to 10 days beyond that date.

Eggs. Fresh eggs are also purchased in Europe. The cartons are stamped with a “Best Sell-By” date. Keep the eggs refrigerated in their original carton. Egg shells are porous and can absorb odors from other foods stored in the refrigerator. The egg carton is designed to prevent this from happening. Eggs have a very long shelf life. Properly refrigerated eggs can be expected to maintain reasonable quality for three to five weeks beyond the “Best Sell-By” date.

European egg producers rely on the eggs’ natural coating to protect

against spoilage which is why the eggs may still have a bit of surface dirt and debris attached when purchased. Clean eggs with a damp paper towel, if needed, just before using them, don’t do it ahead of time. Washing destroys the eggs natural barrier against bacteria being able to penetrate the porous shell.

Meat and Poultry. Vacuum packed meats sold in European commissaries carry both a “Sell-By” and a “Use-By” date. Purchase meats before the “Sell-By” date, keep them refrigerated properly and either use or freeze by the “Use-By” date. Once a perishable product like meat is frozen, these dates become irrelevant because foods kept frozen continuously can be safe indefinitely. Fresh poultry, including turkey, rabbit and duck are stamped with a “Use-By” date.

If frozen by the “Use-By” date, foods emerge tasting better than foods frozen near the end of their useful shelf life. Freeze items you won’t use quickly. Unopened vacuum packaged meats can be frozen as is as well as the tray packed, cellophane wrapped poultry products. However, the cellophane wrap is not as sturdy as the vacuum package. Over-wrap these packages

with airtight heavy-duty aluminum foil, plastic wrap or freezer paper.

Frozen items with a ‘sell-by’ date

Frozen products such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage and ham may show a sell-by date that has long past. This is because these products are sold stateside normally in a fresh chilled state. Once a product is frozen the date loses its relevance. Manufacturers freeze these items and ship them frozen. This is done primarily to service our more remote locations where the transportation time required prohibits the use of fresh chilled products. These products, just like all other products in commissaries, are carefully inspected by military medical food inspectors to ensure they meet strict health and safety guidelines.

Infant formula and baby food

Federal regulations require a “Use-By” date on the product label of infant formula and varieties of baby food. If consumed by that date, the formula or food must contain no less than the quantity of each nutrient as described on the product label. Formula must maintain an acceptable quality to pass

through an ordinary bottle nipple. If stored too long, formula can separate and clog the nipple. Do not buy or use baby formula or baby food after its “Use-By date.”

Practice safe food handling at home

Commissaries maintain rigid quality assurance and sanitation standards to ensure fresh, wholesome and safe food products. After selecting food items, though, it’s up to you to take care of them properly.

Follow these simple rules and your knowledge of food product dating to ensure both quality and safety:

- Purchase fresh dated products before the sell-by date;
- If perishable, take the food home immediately and refrigerate promptly. Freeze items that won’t be used by the “Use-By” date;
- Follow any handling recommendations on the product label;
- Remember that product dating is a guide for quality, not safety.

Trust your own sense of taste and smell, plus your knowledge of how well the product has been cared for at home when deciding whether the product is safe and of useable quality.



Be a SNAP volunteer



Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program
Neighbors helping neighbors
keep their community safe and secure

Volunteer today and help safeguard your community by:

- ☛ Increasing threat awareness
- ☛ Actively observing your surroundings
- ☛ Watching out for your families and fellow soldiers

Cut out and return this form to the Army Community Service Installation Volunteer Coordinator at ACS in Hainerberg Housing Area, Building 7790.

Name

Phone Number

Housing area volunteering for