



EuroNews



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IMA Europe Region is activated

By Sandy Goss, IMA-E PAO

During ceremonies at the Village Pavilion in Heidelberg's Patrick Henry Village Oct. 7, the Europe Region of the Army's Installation Management Agency (IMA) was formally activated.

IMA, a field-operating agency under the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM), stands at the center of the Army's transformation of installation management (TIM) initiative that molds the army's base operations (BASOPS) into a more corporate structure. Its focus is efficient, effective, and equitable management of Army installations worldwide.

Presiding over the ceremony was the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust.

"Last week, on October 1st, 2002, at the Pentagon, Secretary White officially activated the Army agency established to take U.S. Army installations into the 21st century -- the U.S. Army Installation Management Agency. Today, we are here in Heidelberg to officially activate the U.S. Army Installation Management Agency's Europe region," he said to the overflow crowd of military and local national dignitaries.

"The establishment of the Installation Management Agency is a profound change for the Army; it lays a new, solid foundation for transforming the Army's installation management to meet the extraordinary challenges of the future -- to respond to warfighting and training missions around the world, protect our homeland, and take care of our people.

"Beginning in this new fiscal year, the Installation Management Agency has the mission to provide equitable, efficient and effective management of installations worldwide, in order to support mission readiness, enable the well-being of sol-



A proud moment — for Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, Army ACSIM (left) and Mr. Russell Hall, IMA Europe Region Director after they'd uncased the IMA Europe guidon for the first time. Mr. Dave Chilton (right) posted the colors as the regional activation orders were read. (US Army photo by Sandy Goss)

diers, civilians and family members, improve our aging infrastructure, and preserve the environment on our installations.

Concluding his remarks, Lust moved to

"I have an extraordinary team of high-spirited, selfless, dedicated experts in this business." — Mr. Russell Hall, IMA Europe Regional Director

the center of the stage front where he was joined by Mr. Russ Hall, Europe Region Director of the IMA. Mr. Dave Chilson posted the "Euro" guidon to the front of the audience as Mr. Jim Sohr read the citation:

"Headquarters, Department of the Army, General Order number four, effective 1 October 2002, the IMA is established as a

field operating agency of the ACSIM working under the director of the ASA (I+E) for all Planning, Programming, Budget and Execution System policy matters and directly coordinate with HQDA staff activities and agencies for all operational matters. Effective 1 October 2002, the United States Army Installation Management Agency, Europe Region Office, Heidelberg, Germany, is established. Signed: Thomas E. White, Secretary of the Army."

As Lust and Hall removed the casing, the guidon dropped down and a small smile appeared on Hall's face. He turned and moved to the podium as Lust and Chilson returned to their previous positions.

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Second Fisher House opens at Landstuhl

The Landstuhl Fisher House II opened after a dedication ceremony at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) today at 11 am. This is the 31st Fisher House to open and the second Fisher House opened overseas.

Attacks on the USS Cole in October 2000 initiated the building of the first Fisher House at LRMC.

"Before the ribbon cutting [of the first house at LRMC in June 2001], the house was full," said Arnold Fisher, chairman and chief executive officer for the Fisher House Foundation, Inc. The terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 prompted the decision to build another house, Fisher explained. LRMC often treats US military patients coming from Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia.

With these Fisher Houses, family members get "comfortable, inexpensive lodging" while their loved ones receive medical care at major military and VA medical centers, said Fisher.

During a press conference before the dedication ceremony, Lt. Gen. James B. Peake, Army Surgeon General, commented that he sees firsthand the positive effects the Fisher Houses have on family member morale. There is continual feeling of being at home even if patients are transferred to another facility and family members follow on to another Fisher House, said Peake, who is also commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command headquartered in San Antonio, Texas.

"Since Operation Enduring Freedom began, more than 1,200 service members serving in and around Afghanistan received treatment at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center," said Col.



Second Fisher House opens in Europe -- A Fisher House Foundation trustee passes the Fisher House key to US military officers commemorating the opening of the second Fisher House in Europe. From the left, Helmut Mies, Director, LBB (Landesbaubetrieb); Norbert Hoebel, Deputy Director, LBB; Michael Stern, Fisher House Foundation trustee; Lt. Gen. James B. Peake, Commander, US Army Medical Command and Army Surgeon General; Col. David Rubenstein, Commander, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center; and Kathy Gregory, Landstuhl Fisher House Manager.

(Photos by Betsy Thompson, ERM Public Affairs Office)

David A. Rubenstein, commander of the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, during the dedication ceremony.

The new Landstuhl Fisher House is largest of any other Fisher House ever built – "a Fisher-House-and-a-half" – and will be the future size of other houses, said Fisher.

The new Fisher House has 11 bedrooms, a manager's office and a children's playground. Both Fisher House I and II operate as non-appropriated fund activity through a stand-alone NAF program. Family members will be asked to pay \$10 per day to stay.

Army says business initiatives support Transformation

ARNEWS

The Secretary of the Army has approved 12 new Army business initiatives as part of a formal Department of Defense (DoD) process designed to identify and implement business reform actions.

The approved initiatives, which were worked through the Army's Business Initiatives Council (BIC), include, teaming with industry and academia to ensure long-term technology efforts are included in systems development, reengineering DoD's procedures for issuing official passports by leveraging existing data systems and automation, and establishment of procedures that will enable the Army to do a better job of identifying, documenting, and adopting

best practices in all functional areas.

Of the 12 initiatives, six have been approved for Army implementation and the process of preparing implementation plans will begin immediately. The other six initiatives are approved for submission to the DoD's BIC, as they may have benefits that could be extended across all the military services. With the approval of these initiatives, the Secretary of the Army has now approved a total of 35 BIC initiatives. A complete list of the Army approved initiatives can be found at <http://www.asafm.army.mil/bic.asp>

A key BIC philosophy is that savings will be retained by the organization that executes the initiative, thus encouraging

organizations to be innovative with their proposals. "The anticipated results of Army BIC initiatives are efficiencies that will free manpower and funding resources to be reallocated to Army Transformation," said Dr. Craig College, the executive director of the Army BIC.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld created the BIC process in June 2001. Both the Army and the DoD councils focus on finding ways to streamline stringent administrative requirements and lengthy staffing processes.

The Army will continue to complete succeeding rounds of BIC efforts quarterly, in an effort to facilitate improvement of its business operations and processes.

“You are heroes and I thank you!”

Former U.S. Army, Europe Commanding General Montgomery C. Meigs presented coins to four outstanding members of the Headquarters IMA-Europe staff during a brief ceremony on Nov. 27, 2002, in the IMA-Europe Conference Room at Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, Germany. Meigs recognized with his commander's coin and personal thanks (from left to right) Mr. Gustavo E. De Jesus, a supervisory general engineer in the Business Management Branch, Engineer Division; Ms. Christel Nagel, Chief of the Agreements Branch, Resource Management Division; Mr. Larry L. Waddell, Chief of the Logistics Division; and Mr. Michael Beldermann, German Deputy for the Public Affairs Office. Mr. Russell B. Hall, Director of IMA-Europe (right) assists with the presentation. Meigs visit to the IMA-Europe headquarters was his opportunity to personally thank the staff prior to his relinquishing command of USAREUR Dec. 4th.

(US Army photos)



U.S. Army team takes second-place silver in Culinary Arts World Cup competition

by Arthur McQueen, ARNEWS

The U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team, composed of Army chefs from around the world, took the overall silver medal in the quadrennial Culinary World Cup Nov. 21 after a hair-raising finish that kept every team member on edge.

The competition is divided into hot kitchen (worth 60 percent) and cold kitchen (worth 40 percent) categories. Within each category, 36 to 40 points qualifies for gold, 32-35.999 points for silver, and 28-31.999 for bronze.

After four of the five grueling days, the Swiss and German military teams looked poised to win, having completed both events, and earning gold in each. The U.S. team members went into their cold kitchen phase with what was described to them as a "very high silver" in the hot kitchen category, and knew they had to excel.

Staff Sgt. Rene Marquis of Fort Lee, Va., explained: "We compete against a standard, and that standard is absolute perfection."

In a 25-hour marathon effort, the team prepared and finished seven different three-course meals, impeccably displayed on the required white plates; a chocolate centerpiece over 3 feet high; and four table pieces and menu frames all made out of sugar.

Every item augmented the theme of Mardi Gras, chosen in a group meeting according to Team Manager Chief Warrant Officer Travis W. Smith because "It's such a festive occasion, and food is so important in New Orleans. There are good ingredients to work with, and a variety of styles."

The enemy facing the team was time. A seemingly insignificant piece of lace-like fan decoration intended for a dessert entry had been left behind. As the clock ticked on toward the 10 a.m. deadline for modifying and perfecting the table, the team members maintained their cool, removing minute fingerprints from plates, correcting lighting, applying final dabs of gelatin, and adjusting the soft jazz music from CD player under the table.

The fan arrived at 9:57 a.m. After checking it for breakage, Master Sgt. Mark War-



Well past midnight in a Luxembourg Army kitchen, Master Sgt. Mark Warren of U.S. Army Europe puts the finishing touches on a dessert plate. (photo by Arthur McQueen)

ren lifted the delicate piece onto the plate with a pair of dentist picks. His hands never quivered, and the clutch performance, the last of many performed by different members of the team, drew a round of polite applause. The team then packed up,

as they were not allowed to be in the same room as the judges.

The suspense lasted until the next morning at the multilingual award ceremony. The final overall scores were: Switzerland 494.098 points, USA 493.177, and Germany 490.268.

"I am very satisfied," Smith said. "I couldn't have asked for a better team."

The members of the 2002 U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team are:

Sgt. 1st Class Willie Meeks, Team Captain, Fort Bragg, N.C.; Master Sgt. Mark Warren, Heidelberg, Germany; Sgt. 1st Class Ben Tesoro, Camp Hovey, Korea; Staff Sgt. Rene Marquis, Ft. Lee, Va.; Spc. Adam Lang, Fort Bragg, N.C.; and Spc. Scott Graves, Heidelberg, Germany.

Team support included:

Chief Warrant Officer Travis W. Smith, Team Manager, Fort Lee, Va.; Chief Warrant Officer James Longstaff, Wiesbaden, Germany; Sgt. 1st Class David Russ, Fort Bragg, N.C.; Staff Sgt. Jesus Camacho, Fort Drum, N.Y. and Sgt. Jason Rine, Heidelberg, Germany.



Nationally syndicated "Today" show co-anchors Katie Couric and Matt Lauer, along with celebrity weatherman Al Roker, join soldier-chefs from the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team after they cooked up a storm Monday on the plaza of the NBC studios at Rockefeller Center in New York City. Representing Army chefs worldwide were Spec. Scott Graves from Heidelberg, Germany; Sgt. 1st Class Willie Meeks from Fort Bragg, N.C.; and CW2 Travis Smith from Fort Lee, Va. (NBC photo)



Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, U.S. Army, addresses approximately 500 U.S. and German guests and employees of the new HQ IMA-Europe Region at the Activation Ceremony he hosted Oct. 7, 2002, at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany.

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“I’m excited to serve as the first director of the U.S. Army Installation Management Agency Europe Region,” said Hall. “I have an extraordinary team of high-spirited, selfless, dedicated experts in this business. Now all of us -- from the installation-level garrison staffs, to the region offices, to the IMA headquarters in Alexandria – are executing our challenging mission: to provide equitable, efficient and effective management of Army installa-

“...the Installation Management Agency has the mission to provide equitable, efficient and effective management of installations worldwide, in order to support mission readiness, enable the well-being of soldiers, civilians and family members...”
Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, ACSIM.

tions worldwide, to support the mission readiness of our warfighting Army, to enable the well-being of soldiers, civilians and families, to enhance our aging infrastructure and preserve our environment for years to come..... I have heard Secretary White say, “we’re not going to put soldiers in a position of having to choose between



Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, ACSIM and Mr. Russell Hall, IMA Europe Regional Director, approach the podium prior to the beginning of the IMA Europe Region Activation Ceremony. Below, an overflow crowd estimated at over 500 was present for the activation ceremony.



Heidelberg's Bundestag Representative, Mr. Dirk Niebel (left), talks with U.S. Army, Europe Deputy Commanding General Lt. Gen. Michael L. Dodson before the commencement of the HQ IMA-Europe Region Activation Ceremony on Oct. 7, 2002, at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany. Mr. Niebel was the senior German representative attending the event. Engaged in their own conversation were Maj. Gen. Anthony Jones, USAREUR Chief of Staff and Maj. Gen. Dee McWilliams, USAREUR DCSPER (right).

the profession they love and the well-being of the family they love.”

Sir, the U.S. Army Installation Management Agency Europe Region is ready for action – we believe in our mission and we are prepared for the challenge. We are proud to serve in an organization whose

motto is “sustain, support and defend.”

As the crowd applauded, Hall returned to his seat. The “Army Song” was played and as the final notes died away, the crowd surged out to a reception where they could meet with Lust and Hall. Although the

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ceremony was over, the work of the infant organization was just beginning; it will oversee all facets of installation support, including environmental programs, construction, morale and welfare, family care, force protection, logistics, public works, etc., and the planning, programming and budget matters that provide the resources for these functions. It will enable the

“...we believe in our mission and we are prepared for the challenge.” Russell Hall, IMA Europe Regional Director.

Army to establish standards, resource to standard, deliver equitable services from installation to installation, and ensure that all tenants, including reserve components, are treated equally. An IMA Board of Directors, composed of senior MACOM and headquarters, Department of the Army, leaders, will oversee the operation and recommend programs, major construction projects, resource and finance strategies, and installation management standards, goals and objectives.

For the soldiers and family members and Department of the Army civilians living and working in Europe, the IMA-Europe



First sight — Maj. Gen. Larry J. Lust, Army ACSIM assists Mr. Russell Hall, IMA Europe Regional Director, unfurl the new command's guidon.. Assisting and spotting the guidon was Mr. Dave Chilson, IMA Europe MWR.

mission will be to enhance the quality of life for soldiers, enable tactical units to focus on training, deployment and operations, strengthen combat readiness to pre-

vail in every mission, and lay a solid foundation for the successful execution of the Army's transformation vision.



Mr. Russell B. Hall, Director, U.S. Army Installation Management Agency, Europe Region addresses approximately 500 U.S. and German guests and employees of the new HQ IMA-Europe Region at the Activation Ceremony, Oct. 7, 2002, at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany.

AAFES says TV decoders can now be activated 'while you wait' at their stores

AFRTS release

The American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) has initiated a new online process named "PVConnect" for activation of AFN decoder boxes.

With PVConnect, AFRTS is allowing military exchanges to log onto the system and authorize decoders for customers - while you wait!

Exchange stores must contact HQ AFRTS at commercial 703 428-0616, DSN 312 328-0616 between 0630 and 1600 Eastern Time on duty days to sign up for this service. Once the store signs up, this online system will revolutionize customer support by immediately authorizing decoders thus reducing trouble calls and eliminating delays caused by time-zone differences.

It should be noted, a leased/rented decoder authorization request will only be accepted by AFRTS if it comes from the exchange store renting/leasing the decoder - not the customer.

Additionally, customers in Europe purchasing decoders may apply for authoriza-

tion in three ways:

1. Allow the exchange store to perform the authorization,
 2. Online at <https://www.pvconnect.net/unreg/auth1.php> or at <https://www.pvconnect.net/unreg/auth1.php>, customers may put in their UA and TID number and follow the prompts to request authorization, or,
 3. Customers may send an e-mail to afrts@pvconnect.net with "get form" in the subject block to receive an electronic form to fill out and return via e-mail.
- AFRTS has provided radio and television service overseas since 1942—currently sending up to seven television and 29 radio services to active duty U.S. military, DoD civilians and their family members. Information regarding AFRTS, its services or schedules can be accessed at <http://www.afrts.osd.mil/> or <http://www.myafn.net/>

Customs will assess APO, home business violations

By Robert Szostek, Customs PAO

Running a spare-time business is a good idea. However, people who want to operate a business in Germany need to comply with German tax and customs rules. These laws, for example, prevent you from reselling goods acquired duty-free, using your USAREUR-plated vehicle for commercial purposes in Germany, or employing the APO.

To assess the current extent of APO violations, USAREUR customs inspectors are inspecting military post offices for shipments of goods that may be destined for commercial resale. The inspectors will warn small-scale violators that it is a customs violation to receive commercial consignments through the APO for resale. However, large-scale violators will be charged without warning.

“The reason you may not use the APO for commercial purposes is that you have not paid customs duty on those goods,” said William L. Johnson, chief of services, USAREUR Customs Executive Agency.

He added that customs investigators from the 560th MP Company discover all kinds of APO violations involving commercial imports of kitchenware, computer components, hair-care and beauty products, handicraft items and even lingerie. Commercial shipments must be sent to a civilian address through the regular postal system. German Customs process these shipments and can assess any tax or duty to be paid.

Similarly, if a person buys goods in other European countries for resale in Germany, they may not im-

port the goods into Germany, tax or duty-free. They must declare these goods to German Customs as commercial shipments. This applies also to goods imported for auction through an internet auction house. Likewise, goods may not be purchased in the exchange, commissary, or using the tax relief system, if they are to be used for commercial purposes.

A vehicle used to deliver goods or provide services for profit must be registered under the German system. The gas and oil for your USAREUR-plated vehicle are tax



and duty-free and so you are forbidden from using it for commercial purposes. Even using commissary goods to bake cakes for resale is not allowed.

The sale of products is not authorized in government-owned and leased housing in Germany. That rules out the sale of kitchen items, cosmetics, gourmet food and other products. Additionally, government quarters may not be used as a business showroom, warehouse or storeroom.

However, businesses providing services to other U.S. forces mem-



bers may be operated out of USAREUR government housing. Activities such as tutoring, singing and dancing lessons, accounting and tax services, word-processing, and childcare are allowed. The community commander must approve these service-oriented businesses and income earned from them must be reported to German and U.S. tax authorities. These businesses must also comply with the trade and tax provisions of the Status of Forces Agreement and with the standards of conduct and conflict of interest regulations.

People who don't follow these rules risk receiving a hefty fine and tax demand from German Customs or tax authorities, and military administrative action, where applicable.

If you have doubts about your current business or are planning to start one, first contact your community's commercial affairs office for a review of the rules. Then contact your local military customs office if you have additional customs and tax questions. More information can also be obtained online at www.1perscom.army.mil/PSSD/hbb.htm.

Education tops Family Action Plan issues

by Harriet Rice, ARNEWS

Affordable continuing education is a high priority for soldiers and their families, according to the votes of 112 delegates to the 2002 Army Family Action Plan Conference.

In-state tuition for military members headed the list of AFAP's top five issues -- ahead of retirement dislocation allowance, selective use of military spouse preference, elimination of time limits to use Montgomery GI Bill benefits and medical coverage for activated reserve-component families.

During the Department of the Army AFAP conference Nov. 18-22 in Alexandria, Va., delegates representing every demographic segment of the Army worked in eight groups addressing 24 issues in areas such as family support, force support, logistical support, employment, entitlement, and medical/dental.

Each work group elected a spokesperson to brief out its top three issues at week's end to an audience of senior Army leaders that included Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. John M. Keane and his wife, Terry; Mrs. Patty Shinseki, wife of Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, director, Army National Guard, and the conference host, Brig. Gen. Robert L. Decker, commander, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

Aaron Jones, a 16-year old from Fort Eustis and one of six youth delegates, briefed the #1 issue: "In-State Tuition." He explained how having to pay out-of-state tuition causes undue hardship on mobile military families.

"This limits the [educational] choices of someone like me or the next president or the next chief of staff of the Army," Jones said. "We recommend waiving out-of-state tuition for family members residing in that state on military orders."

The #4 issue addressed the 10-year limit for using the Montgomery GI Bill after a soldier's expiration term of service or retirement.

Cyndi Fischer, Fort Belvoir, Va., pointed out that sometimes life events prevent veterans from taking advantage of the MGIB college benefits.

"Veterans and their family may be dependent on full-time employment or there may be other members of the household, such as a spouse or a child, currently pur-

suing their dreams," Fischer said, "thereby making it a very cost-prohibitive option during the first 10 years following ETS or retirement."

Citing the MGIB as an aid to recruitment and an enhancement of the nation's competitiveness with a more educated workforce, Fischer put forth her group's recommendation to eliminate the 10-year expiration date.

Help for retirees was the focus of the #2 issue: "Retiree Dislocation Allowance." Pointing out that service members incur the same kinds of relocation expenses whether they retire or make a permanent change of station, Barbara Willey of Fort Myer, Va., spoke from her own recent retirement move experience.

In addition to the normal expenses incurred during a move, "often a service member retiring is still seeking employment, so there are additional financial burdens," she said, adding, "We just feel it's one more that we can say 'thank you' to a retiring service member and his or her family."

The group's recommendation to authorize and fund retirement dislocation allowance would mean changing current law.

Issue #3 was "Selective Use of Military Spouse Preference" briefed by Ginny Quirin, Fort McCoy, Wis. The intent of the MSP was to assist spouses in their career progression, not just to get a job, she said. But sometimes a spouse takes the first job available in order to boost the family income after a permanent change-of-station move, Quirin explained, and that job may not be in the spouse's career field. If another position opens that is, the spouse has already invoked the MSP and cannot invoke it again at that installation. The recommendation is that spouses be authorized to select the job series and grade for which they want to invoke the MSP.

"Medical Coverage for Activated Reserve-Component Families" was the fifth issue. West Point's Debbie McDonald described how reservists have difficulty retaining their civilian health insurance for their families because the premiums become prohibitively expensive.

As a result, soldiers switch to TRICARE, "and, in some cases, the TRICARE system does not provide all the [medical] coverage the family needs," said McDonald, adding

although waivers are possible, they take a while to obtain, potentially interrupting crucial treatment. The work group recommended establishing a civilian healthcare allowance for activated RC soldiers to offset the increased premiums to their existing coverage.

After all the issues were briefed, delegates voted for the top five from the conference, the six most critical active AFAP issues and the most valuable community services.

"This has been a terrific conference. Those issues are real; they are serious," Keane told attendees. Those compelling issues that do not require resources, we'll do something about quickly. Those that require resources, we'll have to study them. Those that require policy changes and do not require resources, we'll change the policy.

"There is no single activity in the United States Army that produces more results on behalf of soldiers and family members than AFAP, not just at this conference, but at the installation and major Army command levels, and we reap the benefits of what this team has done, he said.

Youth delegate Jones testified to reaping AFAP benefits. "The one where if I'm a senior I can stay. My mother was getting ready to move and because of that I get to stay and graduate."

He was referring to an AFAP issue that resulted in new personnel guidance that allows soldiers to request stabilization if they have a family member who's a junior in high school.

For first-time AFAP attendee Michael Austin, spouse of an enlisted soldier from Fort Jackson, S.C., it was a learning experience. "It's been totally awesome. I've learned a lot about the Army. I've learned they do care and even though they're putting soldiers out front to protect us, [senior leaders] are also concerned about the family member and retirees that are left behind.

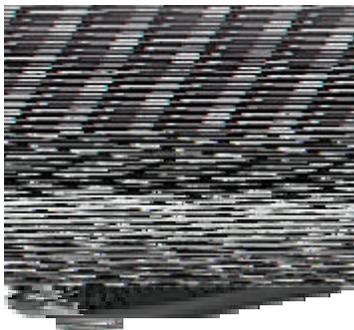
Sgt. Norma Klein, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers president at Fort Stewart, Ga., echoed those sentiments. "[Our leaders] do care what happens down in the trenches. When you're there, you don't think they do, but up here, I've learned otherwise. They're totally for the soldier"

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The AFAP grassroots process has identified issues affecting soldiers' and families' lives to the senior leadership level since 1983. AFAP is a family support program of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

(Editor's note: Harriet Rice is the CFSC Public Affairs Officer.)



PERSCOM replaces all e-mail addresses with AKO

by Capt. John L. Barrett, ARNEWS

In terms of personnel business, Army Knowledge Online became the official e-mail for all soldiers this month.

U. S. Army Personnel Command replaced all soldier e-mail addresses currently in its database with AKO addresses. Officer record briefs, for example, now contain the us.army.mil address in the top left-hand corner, not what was previously listed. Enlisted soldiers' AKO addresses are also required on efficiency reports to shorten contact time when an NCO-ER requires a correction.

Previously, various unit and personal e-mail addresses were saved in the Army's personnel database. Some remained current while others were not updated after soldiers moved away from an installation.

"We want every officer and soldier to be accessible," said Lt. Col. Georgia Bouie, whose office headed the e-mail transfer. The only way to ensure that is to use a common e-mail address that the soldier will have for his entire life."

AKO e-mail is currently used for a vari-

ety of official purposes, such as correspondence from career managers and the electronic mailing of travel voucher settlements from DFAS.

The change was implemented at PERSCOM, with no action required on the part of soldiers. Soldiers without AKO addresses will not have a contact e-mail in their database. Soldiers who do not currently have an AKO address should sign up for an account from the Army Knowledge Online web site at www.us.army.mil, officials said.

AKO e-mail is just one of the various features of the larger AKO initiative. It includes functions such as AKO chat -- which allows soldiers to communicate electronically in real time -- and the AKO White Pages, where soldiers can search for other soldiers. AKO provides troops access to functions normally included in the electronic communities of the private sector, officials said.

AKO was designed as a central place for soldiers to receive information. Personalized information can be sent directly to them via their AKO e-mail account. The Army can use this similar to how businesses use e-mail to provide information to their customers, PERSCOM officials said. They said information about assignments, professional development opportunities, and re-enlistment can be sent to the field quickly -- saving both time and money.

AKO e-mail can be read through the AKO Web site or can be forwarded to other e-mail accounts owned by the soldier for convenience. Mail forwarding can be implemented by choosing the "personalize" tab once inside the AKO portal.

Annual Cost of Living survey is coming soon

Have you ever felt like you're not paid enough to live in Germany? Do you believe the cost of items and services purchased on the economy has jumped since Germany converted from the Deutsche Mark to the Euro? Military members may soon be given the chance to

do something about it.

Over the next few months, the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) will be sponsoring two surveys in the following communities: Bremen and Bremerhaven, Garmish, Geilenkirchen, Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Heidelberg, Ramstein, Schweinfurt, and Stuttgart. These communities are representative of three support categories, which are defined by varying time and distance to the nearest commissary and exchange.

The first survey, a living-pattern survey, will determine which local stores typical service members shop in and how much they buy from the commissary and exchange. For example, the living pattern survey may show that service members typically buy half their clothing on the economy with Euros and half at the PX with U.S. dollars.

The second survey, the retail price survey, will use the results from the living pattern survey to price over 160 goods and services from auto repair to potatoes. The prices gathered will be compared to prices in the United States for equivalent goods and services. If the cost in Germany is greater than the U.S. cost, a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) is paid. Some examples of the commodities to be surveyed are groceries, clothing, phone services, entertainment, auto maintenance, restaurants, and daycare.

As you buy goods and services in the near future, be conscious of where you choose to shop on the local economy. Keep a list of places you shop in order to make filling out the surveys easier. Also estimate what percentage of particular goods you buy from the local economy, as opposed to goods purchased at the commissary or military exchange.

Now is the time to take control of your paycheck. Your accurate and complete survey can help ensure your pay better reflects the actual expenses incurred.



Haus Rissen Seminars set for Feb., March '03

By Michael Beldermann,
IMA Europe Public Affairs

The Hamburg-based Haus Rissen Institute will host two seminars for U.S. military and civilian personnel during the first quarter of calendar year 2003.

The seminar for field-grade officers and equivalent-grade civilians is scheduled for February 2 - 7, 2003. The seminar for company-grade officers and equivalent-grade civilians is held March 2 - 7, 2003. Commanders, U.S. public affairs and civil affairs officer, and U.S. personnel who deal with host-nation authorities are especially encouraged to attend.

Nominees must have a retainability of at least 1 year in USAREUR. The Office of the Chief, Public Affairs, HQ USAREUR/7A, provides funds for seminar costs, lodging, and meals. Sending units and organizations must provide temporary duty orders, pay attendee travel expenses and residual per diem for the travel days.

Haus Rissen is an international institute for politics and economics. It is a private organization not affiliated with any political party, religion, or interest group. The institute is in Rissen, which is a part of Hamburg. Haus Rissen offers seminars on

current and historical issues in Germany and Europe for U.S. Forces military and civilian personnel. The five-day seminars provide information on the political system and history of Germany; the German education system, Germany's foreign and security policy, the German Armed Forces, and Berlin after unification. A harbor and sightseeing tour of Hamburg is included in the program.

The point of contact is Mr. Beldermann, DSN 370-8725 or e-mail: *BeldermannM@ima-e.army.mil*.

Winter means 'winterizing' your car

Ready for winter? Get your car ready, too. Here's what you need to know for tire maintenance and a look under the hood. Have your kids prepare a winter safety kit, and remind your teen of winter driving tips.

Tire Maintenance

Rain, snow and ice reduce tire traction and compromise your control. What's the solution?

1. Get winter tires

Winter tires dig into loose snow and compress it into their large tread grooves (like packing a snowball), resulting in snow-to-snow traction. You can choose from three types:

- **High performance** winter tires were originally designed to meet strict government regulations for driving on high-speed highways in Europe. They feature large directional and/or asymmetric treads to enhance handling and steering, resist hydroplaning and help tires work through slush.

- **Studless** winter tires are most common and increase traction on ice through the use of advanced tread rubber compounds. They're a safe alternative to studded tires, which are forbidden in many locations.

2. Check your tire pressure

Fall and early winter are the most critical times to check tire inflation pressures because the days are getting shorter and temperatures are getting colder.

Tip: For every 10-degree Fahrenheit change in temperature, your tire's inflation will change about one pound per square inch (psi) (up with higher temperatures and down with lower).

Tip: Check your tire pressure in the morning

before you drive a few miles. If you park in an attached or heated garage, you will "lose" pressure when you leave its warmth.

3. Check your tire treads and sidewalls

Look for thin or uneven tread wear. Take a Lincoln-head penny and insert it Lincoln-head first into your tire tread at the most worn part of the tire. If you see the top of Lincoln's head, you may need new tires. Cut or damaged sidewalls are also weak areas that can collapse under severe conditions.

Under the Hood

1. Check your battery

It takes a lot more power to start your car when it is cold outside. Check for clean and tight connections and proper fluid levels. Clean corrosion (a whitish powder) from battery terminals.

2. Check your cooling system

Your coolant system keeps your car warm. Check the level, acidity and concentration of radiator fluids at least every 3,000 miles.

Tip: A mixture of 50% anti-freeze and 50% water will protect down to -40 degrees Fahrenheit.

3. Clean your fuel system

Add a de-icer to your fuel to keep moisture in the fuel system from freezing.

4. Change your oil and oil filter

Check your owner's manual for the grade of oil recommended for winter. In most cases, 10w30 oil works year-round.

5. Inspect and replace

Inspect your air filter, rubber hoses and drive belts and replace as necessary. Also check your fluid levels (transmission, brake, differential, power steering and window washer fluid).

Winter Safety Kit

Prepare a winter safety kit to keep in your car at all times. Be sure to include:

1. **Winter necessities** such as an ice scraper; tire chains; extra washer fluid; boots and gloves; and sand, kitty litter or old house shingles for traction.

2. **Emergency supplies** such as extra clothing and blankets, flashlight with spare batteries, energy bars or dried snacks, drinking water, a battery-powered radio with spare batteries, a first aid kit, booster cables, safety flares, a small shovel, and a jug of water and funnel for radiator refills.

3. **Tools and "fix-it" supplies** such as a screwdriver, pliers, rubber hammer, wrench, a can of penetrating oil, an old scarf and belt for emergency hose repairs, and a small throw rug and old shower curtain (for kneeling next to your car or getting under it).

Winter Driving Tips

No matter how safe your car is, winter driving requires extra attention. Brake gently, accelerate gently and steer gently. Remember these tips, too:

Tip: As every driver's education teacher repeats, steer **into** a skid.

Tip: If you get stuck in the snow, throw kitty litter, old newspapers or dirt in front of and behind the drive wheels.

Tip: In snowy conditions, drive in lower gears. Avoid using your overdrive feature.

Tip: Always keep your gas tank at least half full.

Change will allow more students to travel 'on the government's dime'

by Michelle Bard, ARNEWS

Each holiday season, military families stationed overseas turn to the Dependent Student Travel Entitlement to reunite them with children attending college in the United States. Now modifications in the program—to include expanding the types of students—will help more families spend this holiday season together.

The Dependent Student Travel Entitlement, contained under the Joint Federal Travel Regulations, is an 18-year-old program that originally granted undergraduate college students a round-trip commercial flight each fiscal year to visit parents stationed overseas at the government's expense.

Changes in the entitlement this year now allow students attending approved vocational and technical classes and even those attending graduate programs to use the entitlement as well.

"It's more than going to college anymore," said Thomas E. Gray, chief, Transportation Plans and Operations Branch, Total Army Personnel Command and functional proponent for the program. "Regardless of where their kids are going to school, it doesn't hurt to go down...and at least check to see if they're eligible for the entitlement," he said.

There was a big push for change from Gray and other employees, as PERSCOM maintains policy and procedural oversight.

"It was a big heartache for me because a lot of kids don't go to college, but go on to some sort of secondary post-high school education," Gray said.

Gray said the idea did not go over well at first.

"There weren't a lot of people who wanted to hear it, but eventually they heard us out," he said.

Gray said before the program was created in 1984, college students with parents in the Armed Forces overseas were restricted to one flight a year on space-available Air Force flights with destinations limited to common locations like Germany, France and Japan.

"If you had a soldier in Australia or Singapore, their kids were just out of luck,"

Gray said.

Gray and other Army personnel believed army members should have the same entitlement other federal employees had, so the program was born. He said the Army was in for a surprise when it started getting applications for the program.

"I think the Army totally underestimated how many people would go."

Between 2,000 and 2,500 students use the entitlement each year, Gray said.

In addition to travel, the entitlement also



allows the student to ship or store up to 350 pounds of unaccompanied baggage. The Army arranges for the packing, pickup and shipping of the goods to the soldier's duty station overseas and for the return back to the student's residence.

To be eligible for the entitlement:

- o The student must be under 23 years old and unmarried.

- o The overseas soldier must be serving a "with dependents" tour and be accompanied by dependents that reside in the area of the duty station.

- o The student must attend a school in the United States fulltime. Students attending service academies are not eligible to use

the Dependent Student Travel Entitlement, as someone cannot be in the service and dependent simultaneously.

If a student attends a vocational or technical school, the school must:

- o Provide a program of training to prepare students for gainful employment; and
- o Have been in existence for at least two years and be accredited by an organization recognized by the Secretary of Defense.

To apply for the entitlement, soldiers need to visit their local Personnel Services Branch and bring documentation proving the student is command sponsored and meets the requirements for eligibility. The student must also have a "No Fee" passport and visas if necessary.

Gray said the earlier soldiers get their applications in, the earlier travel plans can be made, especially if the student wants to travel during the peak travel months from November to January.

"A lot of effort goes into getting the young people to their families at Christmas time because the time frame is so short," Gray said.

Gray said PERSCOM has gone to great lengths over the years to help reunite students with their families overseas. One student who had family stationed in Uruguay had to fly through almost every South American country and still had to take a boat in Argentina to get to his destination because there was no other way to get there, Gray said.

"My feeling has always been, when we enlist people in the Army we have this tacit commitment to them, a promise, that we are a family and we take care of our own," Gray said. "And if we don't do that, then we're not filling an obligation that we make as much to the soldiers as we do to their families."

Soldiers or family members who have questions about the dependent student travel entitlement can send them to PERSCOM at ATAC@hoffman.army.mil.

New RESUMIX system—find a job easier, get hired faster

The Civilian Human Resource Management Agency is implementing a new system to make the hiring process easier and faster for applicants and selecting officials.

Effective Dec. 16, 2002, all CHRMA Europe Region appropriated fund resumes merged with four other Continental United States regions into a Centralized Resumix database. This merger should result in several modifications that will benefit selecting officials and applicants alike by offering a user-friendly format and straightforward procedures.

Benefits for Applicants:

As part of this transition, all appropriated fund vacancy announcements will be posted on Civilian Personnel OnLine. The announcements will look slightly different, but will remain accessible through the CHRMA website at www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil or through CPOL at www.cpol.army.mil. Benefits include the following:

- ? Applicants may submit one resume for positions in all of the centralized regions (Northwest, Southwest, South Central, North Central and Europe).
- ? Applicants can update their resumes and general supplemental data forms **at any time** instead of being limited to specific update periods. It is important to remember that the resume updates overwrite current system data and become the resume of record.
- ? ANSWER (Applicant Notification System Web Enabled Response) will

replace SOARS (Standard Online Applicant Response System) for referral activity in the centralized database system. Applicants will access ANSWER to see if they are being considered for a position, to view their resume, and more. ANSWER will be accessible through either the CHRMA or CPOL website. SOARS will remain available for referral activity prior to the transition.

- ? Resumes submitted through the Army Civilian Resume Builder will flow automatically into the centralized Resumix database and self-nominations will be automatically posted to the database with on-line confirmation to the applicant, making the process easier for everyone.

Benefits for Selecting Officials:

Selecting officials will receive, via AKO e-mail, web-based referral lists and will be able to make selections online through the AKO portal. Benefits include the following:

- ? **Easier to navigate, user-friendly referral lists and resumes, emailed directly to selecting officials.** The referral lists and resumes of qualified applicants will be attached to the email. The resumes will be organized in an easy-to-use PDF format with applicants indexed by name. By clicking on a name, an applicant's resume will automatically appear onscreen, eliminating the previous method of scroll-

ing through numerous pages to find a resume.

- ? **Easier selection process.** Included in the referral list email will be a URL link. Once the selecting official determines whom s/he wants to hire, they will simply click on the URL, which will link to the selection site, where they will enter their Army Knowledge Online username and password and make their selection(s).

Use of the selecting official's AKO account is an integral part of the web-based referral process. All active duty personnel and US civilian employees are currently required to have an AKO account and an AKO email address. Local national supervisors who do not yet have an account will find information on obtaining an AKO guest account at <https://www.us.army.mil>.

For more information related to the transition to Centralized Resumix, visit the CHRMA homepage at www.chrma.hqusareur.army.mil.



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