

the Gateway

The Gateway to Europe

Vol. 61, No. 24, Dec. 5, 2003, Rhein-Main AB, Germany

News Briefs

USAFE winner

Congratulations to 1st Lt. Jeffrey Adams, 469th Air Base Group security forces flight commander, who was recently named Outstanding Security Forces Company Grade Officer of the Year for U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

He will now compete at the Air Force level competition.

Holiday hours

The following are Post Office hours for the holiday season:

■ Finance (mailing out packages) 10 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Mondays - Fridays. The finance window closes at 3 p.m. on Thursdays.

■ Parcel pickup window: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mondays - Fridays. Closed at 3 p.m. on Thursdays.

For more information call 330-6384.

Holiday party

The 469th Air Base Group Holiday Party is scheduled for Dec. 13 at the Zeppelinhaus.

Cocktails begin at 6 p.m. with dinner to follow at 7 p.m. Dress is holiday casual and the cost is \$15 per person, cash or check only. See your flight representatives for tickets.

Call 330-7303 for more information.

Travel restriction

All travel to Izmir and Istanbul, Turkey is restricted to official business only until further notice. All other personal/unofficial travel to locations in Turkey is strongly discouraged until further notice.

Our First 100 Days Together

By Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong
Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (USAFENS) — Our first 100 days together has been both challenging and rewarding. We've been true to our USAFE vision: Leading the way for the most respected, all-purpose expeditionary air and space force in the world. Our airmen and civilian workforce are doing incredible work, day in and day out, both at home and deployed. We've accomplished quite a bit over the last three-plus months . . .

In the summer of 2003 our USAFE team mobilized to support potential noncombatant evacuation and peacekeeping operations in Liberia — a true team effort. We provided core personnel for the newly established Joint Task Force Liberia (JTFL) Headquarters, established the operation's initial presence in the region with an airfield operations team, and deployed units from Keflavik NAS, RAF Mildenhall, and Ramstein AB. We delivered JTFL an emergency aeromedical evacuation capability,

security for the US Embassy, full time contingency planning, and airlift control via reachback capabilities to the USAFE Air Mobility Operations Control Center at Ramstein. We flew a total of 71 missions delivering 354 short-tons of cargo and transporting 982 passengers throughout the area of operations, and provided emergency medevac of 52 sailors and Marines suffering from malaria.

In addition to our Liberian operations, our tankers, airlift, and fighter assets sustained OEF, OIF and the Global War on Terrorism from various locations throughout Africa and Europe. We transported over 3,300 OEF / OIF patients while retiring the C-9 Nightingale and transitioning its medevac mission to C-17s, C-21s, C-130s, and other opportune airlift. We truly are an expeditionary force — one team working together to successfully

accomplish any task, anywhere, anytime.

Why are we successful? It's simple . . . we are ready. Training exercises are



Photo by Staff Sgt. Felicia Haecker

United States Air Forces in Europe Commander, General Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong and USAFE Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Gary G. Coleman, take a moment on the flightline here at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to show their enthusiasm recapping what USAFE has accomplished over the past 100 days.

————— See **Together**, Page 4

Defending Military Justice

Commander's authority key to maintaining good order, discipline

Recently, two courts-martial took place at Rhein-Main. The charges: illegal drug use.

In both cases, the drug levels were above the minimum standards set by the Department of Defense and the type of drug found was cocaine.

The levels for one fell just above the minimum level and the second was 12 times over. The outcomes: one not guilty and the other guilty.

I found a particular fellow airman's response disturbing, however, not to the outcomes but rather, "Why would we court-martial anyone for having such a low drug level?"

I believe as an airman, an officer and a judge advocate that the proper response to this question is, "For good order and discipline."

The Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, Maj. Gen. Thomas Fiscus, recently noted in a story on the TJAG's on-line news service, that commanders are charged with the responsibility to send subordinates into harm's way and to perform difficult and dangerous duties.

A commander's military justice authority plays a pivotal role within our warrior culture to maintain good order and discipline.

According to TJAG, "this is central to mission accomplishment and simply cannot be diminished."

Military members understand and

accept that their commander is their professional focal point. This person can order them into life-threatening military operations and can also discipline them for refusing to go, for failing to perform their duties, or for having a positive result following a urinalysis test.

A commander's decision to prefer charges to a court-martial is not an easy one to make.

Our commanders are perfectly positioned to weigh all relevant factors in determining what to do when a case is presented to them. Commanders are required to know their people, what is required of them, and the environments in which they must function.

We realize that no system is perfect. However, our military justice system has many checks and balances that restrict the potential for abuse. We have prohibitions

against unlawful command influence; trial procedures that are rigorous and highly protective of the rights of the accused; the involvement of independent defense counsel and military judges that reinforce the fairness of the process; and the outcome of trials are routinely subject to review by higher command and legal authorities.

Why would we court-martial anyone for such a low level of cocaine but still falls above the standards airmen live by day-to-day? To protect those who must serve with that airman and to ensure



By Maj. Elizabeth Rodriguez
Staff Judge Advocate

Commanders Action Line

The Action Line is one way for me to keep my finger on the pulse of the Rhein-Main community and is used as an avenue for communication.

The main objective of the Commander's Action Line is finding solutions to problems or providing explanations for processes.

If you experience problems at Rhein-Main, you should always try to resolve problems at the lowest level by contacting the unit or agency managers. In almost every case, your chain of command is the best solution. I strongly encourage everyone to use that route first. When normal channels haven't been able to resolve your issues, feel free to send an e-mail to Hotline@rheinmain.af.mil or call 330-7779. Please include your name and contact information along with your concern.

Action Lines are forwarded to the appropriate agency for action and response. They should contact you within 24 hours. Once an Action Line is started, the agency must provide a complete answer to me within 10 days.

The 469th Air Base Group Public Affairs Office is responsible for managing the Action Line program on my behalf.

If you have any questions, call the 469th ABG/PA office at 330-7804 or e-mail at Hotline@rheinmain.af.mil.

Col. Bradley Denison
Commander, 469th Air Base Group

330-7779

mission readiness free of illegal drug use that may hamper safety and mission accomplishment.

Bottom line: to uphold a function of command authority of which good order and discipline are and must remain important.

the Gateway

Editorial Staff

- Col. Bradley Denison.....Commander
- 2nd Lt Uriah Orland.....Chief, Public Affairs
- Staff Sgt. Matt Summers.....Editor
- Monika Salfelder.....Public affairs specialist

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military service overseas. Contents of *the Gateway* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the public affairs office, Rhein-Main AB, Germany. Printing service is provided by ABC Druck, Liederbach. People may submit articles for publication to the public affairs office, Bldg. 347, Room 139, or email them to pa@rheinmain.af.mil. Submission

by deadline does not guarantee publication, however, all articles will be considered. The staff may be reached by calling 330-7804. All photos are property of the U.S. Air Force unless otherwise noted.

The deadline for the Dec. 19 edition of the Gateway is 4 p.m., Dec. 11.

Fire dawg up to 'The Challenge'

Rhein-Main airman ranks 3rd in AF, 26th in world among firefighting elite

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Matt Summers
Public Affairs

It's billed as "the toughest two minutes in sports" and has appeared annually on ESPN for the past 12 years.

Although it may not resemble mainstream sports such as football and baseball, a sport is exactly how one Rhein-Main airman approaches not only the Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge, but his everyday job as well.

Airman 1st Class Brandon Cunningham, 469th Air Base Group Fire Department, recently competed in the Scott Firefighter World Challenge XII in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, where he came away with the third best time among Air Force competitors, 1:38.86, and 26th among more than 700 civilians.

The Cincinnati, Ohio, native accomplished this feat in his first year as a firefighter in the Air Force.

"I look at firefighting as almost a sport," he said. "It's like basketball – you always want to get better at your game so you have to practice."

Cunningham began practicing earlier this year for his first competition at the U.S. Air Forces in Europe level in September. His time of 1:41 was good enough to qualify for the world event in Canada.

There he faced his stiffest competition yet, more than 700 firefighters from 131 fire departments representing 31 states, seven Canadian provinces and three European countries.

Wearing "full bunker gear" and a Scott Breathing Apparatus, competitors raced the clock to complete an obstacle course designed to simulate the physical demands of real life firefighting.

Cunningham had to climb a five-story tower while carrying a 42-pound pack, then hoist a 42-pound hose roll to the top.



Airman 1st Class Brandon Cunningham looks to improve upon his ranking not only among Air Force firefighters, but those around the globe.

After descending the stairs he had to move a 160-pound steel beam with a 9-pound shot mallet.

Next up was a 140-foot zigzag run through fire hydrants to an awaiting fire hose. He had to drag the hose for 75 feet, then fire a jet of water and strike a small target.

In the final portion of the event he had to drag a life-sized, 175-pound "victim" a distance of 100 feet.

Cunningham showed up at the competition thinking he had received a first-round bye based on his first-place finish at the regional event in Germany.

He soon found out that since the military-only event was not open to all competitors he would not receive a bye and was forced to compete among the 700 other competitors to qualify for the final round.

Senior Airman Rodolfo Pacheco, 469th ABG Fire Department, competed in the qualifying rounds, but came up just short of qualifying for the finals.

Cunningham said although the extra competition added some pressure, it also gave him more time to network.

"I spent 75 percent of my time talking to other firefighters and

learning from them," he said.

Although he competed in the individual category, Cunningham said he couldn't have competed without the help of several of his fellow Fire Dawgs.

"Chief (Cliff) Lewis, Major (Shawn) Moore, Master Sergeant (John) Smith and Staff Sergeant (Clifton) Garner, all helped me get to the competition," he said. "I also got a lot of help and advice from Senior Airman (Rodolfo) Pacheco, Staff Sergeant (George) Weaghtington and Staff Sergeant (Chris) Kammermeier."

Lewis echoed the sentiments that Cunningham's success was a team effort.

"It took all 40 firefighters here to support the trip," he said. "Everybody had to sacrifice so that we could provide safe and sound fire response to Rhein-Main."

Looking to the future, Cunningham has his sights set on reducing his time to under 1:30 and to win not only the USAFE military competition, but a regional event in the U.S. as well.

"I have the advantage of a combination of strength, speed and size," he said. "And I love the sport."

"I wouldn't trade my job for anything in the world," he added.

Together, from Page 1

essential to maintaining readiness and ensure our expeditionary forces have the appropriate tactics, techniques, and procedures in place. Within the last few months our warfighting team participated in several major exercises, the majority of which were with our European allies. We performed both live-fly and computer-assisted exercises in places like Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. We even sent airmen back home to train at Tyndall and Nellis AFBs. These exercises strengthened our command and control, communications, intelligence, logistics, maintenance, air combat, search and rescue, medical evacuation, airlift, and multi-national disaster preparedness / emergency response capabilities, oftentimes alongside our NATO team and partner nations.

Exercise planning, preparation, and participation takes a great deal of work, and our team's commitment to secure and conduct world-class training opportunities paid great dividends — it shows in our readiness.

Even though USAFE's readiness level is unmatched, our extremely large and diverse area of responsibility requires careful use of our limited resources. Over the past several months we've refined our posture to focus resources on those areas that have the greatest potential to ensure access, promote stability and security, and strengthen capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations.

Externally we continued to focus on theater engagement and security cooperation efforts to build relationships, expand our allied partnerships, and improve our strategic capabilities. In the last 100 days we executed 14 events and planned 25 more for execution in the near future. Such events include official visits, bilateral / multilateral exchanges, USAFE Band concerts, air shows, and weapons training deployments. One highlight included our participation in the NATO Air Meet in Poland last September — the largest to date with over 100 aircraft representing 16 nations from all over Europe. Our team also participated in the

Combat, special interest programs

Combat Care
Combat Education
Combat Fitness
Combat Flightline
Combat Intro/Exit
Combat Nighthawk
Combat Proud
Combat Touch

Customer College
Hidden Heroes
Project Cheer
Project Wizard

Moscow Air Show and performed site surveys in support of potential US deployments and operations in Bulgaria and Romania. We were extremely busy building partnerships that may assist our nations' future unified efforts in the Global War on Terrorism.

Internally we focused on two major reorganization efforts. In the United Kingdom we plan to activate the 420th Air Base Group at RAF Fairford. This new Group will report directly to Third Air Force and serve as the support advocate for geographically separated units currently reporting to the 100th Air Refueling Wing. Here at Ramstein we plan to activate the 435th Air Base Wing to pick up base support responsibilities from the 86th Airlift Wing. The 86th will remain as an operational wing and consist of an operations group, maintenance group, and contingency response group.

Our Combat and Special Interest Programs play a vital role ensuring we are ready to fight and postured to respond anywhere, while providing superior services to the world-class men and women serving in USAFE. If you look at these 12 programs in total, you'll see we are touching virtually every aspect of our team and mission — individually the basis for them is rock solid. Throughout the command we have refocused our resources on maintenance and flying operations . . . we are taking pride in ownership and appearance of our

facilities, on the inside and out . . . units are exercising together and ready for the new Air Force fitness standards . . . 230 students have already attended Customer College to learn to serve you better . . . we established 10 new flightline / work center chapel outreach offices and 2 coffee houses to increase personal well-being and energize individual spirituality . . . we enhanced the opportunity to take college courses during non-standard times and brought the classroom to your work centers . . . we eliminated as many as 15 inprocessing stops at some bases, and continue to streamline our inprocessing and outprocessing procedures . . . each base has a new Volunteer Foreman to help identify, encourage, and recognize volunteers . . . we have company grade officers and senior NCO teams gaining valuable experience representing their wing commanders after duty hours . . . we created scores of high-energy events in November alone for our single airmen, and will continue to do so throughout the winter months . . . our libraries are striving to better serve you and your families . . . and now we are focusing on improving the care, attention, and information flow to spouses and families of our deployed members. Together we are making a difference — let's keep the momentum rolling!

Chief Coleman and I are confident that you know better than anyone this highlights only a fraction of what we accomplished together over the past few months. You also know the next 100 days will no doubt be as challenging as the first 100. It is essential you make time to recharge yourself this holiday season. Spend time with your family and friends. If you're deployed take advantage of our many programs and resources available to you, and your USAFE team will help take care of your family.

Thank you for everything you do for our command, our Air Force, our nation, and our allies. I blame all of the men and women of USAFE for cramming 6 months of work into 3 — no wonder we inspire our friends and intimidate our enemies!

Thanksgiving feast

(Left to right with chef hats) Col. Bradley Denison, 469th Air Base Group commander, and Col. Jon Finke, 1st Personnel Command commander, serve up a portion of the Thanksgiving Meal sponsored by the 64th Replacement Company at the company's dining facility. Several Army and Air Force leaders helped serve more than 650 people who took advantage of the holiday meal which included 80 pounds of prime rib, 100 pounds of rolled turkey, 65 pounds of whole turkey, 24 pumpkin pies, 24 sweet potatoe pies and 24 pecan pies.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Summers

Rhein-Main gears up for winter weather

As the weather turns colder, Rhein-Main residents should be aware of the procedures for reporting to work, road conditions and the impact winter weather can have on school and work center schedules.

During severe conditions, weather reports are issued. Current and forecasted weather conditions may affect military operations including road conditions, school status and work center reporting requirements.

The primary source to obtain weather reports is AFN Frankfurt and the community channel. AFN radio (FM 98.7 and AM 870) broadcast these reports three to four times per hour. People should tune in to these broadcasts to receive the latest road condition, school and reporting information.

An additional source of information is the Rhein-Main community channel, which is only available to military family housing residents on cable television. Residents can also call 330-7778 or commercial 699-7778 to hear the latest information as recorded by the public affairs staff.

People are advised not to call the base command post, law enforcement desk or AFN for weather related information. These organizations are busy coordinating critical, weather-related activities.

The second part of the inclement weather report informs the community of the weather's impact, if any, on school operations.

All decisions affecting school operations will be sent out immediately through available information channels and the Department of Defense Dependent Schools' administration. As a reminder, the decision to close H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden is not determined by weather conditions at Rhein-Main.

The third part of the weather report describes the potential impact on base or post operations.

Depending on weather conditions, the 469th Air Base Group

Road conditions

Green – Normal driving for all vehicles.

Amber – Roads vary from mild to severe. Exercise caution. Possible snow of less than 4 inches, slush, packed snow, black ice, visibility 20-50 meters.

Red – Roads very hazardous. Use extreme caution. Possible snow of more than 4 inches, sheets of ice, drifting snow, visibility of less than 20 meters.

Black – Roads extremely dangerous. Possible snow of more than 8 inches, sheets of ice, visibility below 15 meters. Privately-owned vehicles should not be on the road.

commander may direct one or more of the following: closure of all work centers, delayed reporting for people living on base, delayed reporting for people living off base, or delayed reporting for everyone. There may also be a separate message directed at mission-essential personnel, however, these workers are normally required to report for duty regardless of weather conditions.

The delayed reporting policy is designed with "Mother Nature" in mind – the weather may improve during the delayed reporting period, which makes traveling safer.

The commander may authorize early release from Halvorsen-Tunner School and work centers. Notification of early release normally occurs by 1 p.m., but is dependent upon actual weather conditions. Schools will initiate closure procedures and early departure of buses. People who are released from duty should go directly home and not stop at the commissary, base exchange, etc. on the way. Every effort should be made to allow parents to meet small children who ride the bus home from school.

(Courtesy of 469th ABG Security Forces Flight)



Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Summers

Fueling an interest

Senior Airman Ted Hernandez, a C-17 communications/navigation specialist deployed to Rhein-Main, gives Peter Short, Air BP deputy chief executive officer, a tour of the cockpit during a recent visit to the Rhein-Main flightline. Air BP recently recognized Frankfurt Fueling Services with the "CEO's Special Award 2003" in recognition of outstanding teamwork and customer responsiveness. One of the FFS' main customers is Rhein-Main. Representatives from the 726th Air Mobility Squadron were on hand for the presentation of the award and then hosted a tour of the flightline.

Tax statements available on myPay

ARLINGTON, Va. — Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials have compiled a schedule of dates when servicemembers, military retirees and annuitants and defense civilian employees can access their tax statements through myPay.

Military members and Department of Defense civilian employees will have access to view, save and print their tax statements from myPay at <https://mypay.dfas.mil>.

For assistance, users can call myPay customer support at (800) 390-2348.

MyPay provides a secure method for

users to manage their pay account information, officials said. Available around the clock, customers can make changes online, instead of visiting a finance office.

Officials are projecting the tax statements will be posted on myPay during the following periods.

- Military annuitants: Dec. 13 to 18
- DOD civilians: Dec. 24 to 29
- Army, Air Force and Navy reserve components: Dec. 26 to Jan. 1
- Military retirees: Jan. 1 to 5
- Marine Corps active duty and

Reserve: Jan. 13 to 21

- Army, Air Force and Navy active duty: Jan. 16 to 26

"During 2003, more than 1.2 million users viewed their tax statements on myPay, and we continue to encourage users to view and print their statements online," said Pat Shine, director of DFAS' military and civilian pay services business line. "Timely access to W-2s and other tax statements is another way myPay gives users control of their pay information."

(Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Act gives commissary, other benefits to reservists

WASHINGTON — The fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act offers reservists and their families unlimited commissary privileges, better health benefits and an overall average military pay raise of 4.15 percent.

President George W. Bush signed the defense bill Nov. 24. It allows reservists in the Selected Reserve, reserve retirees under age 60 and their families to have access to commissaries on the same basis as active-duty people, retirees and their families.

The act authorizes a minimum pay hike of 3.7 percent with additional increases to midgrade and senior noncommissioned officers and midgrade officers. To improve readiness, the law allows Department of Defense officials to provide immediate medical and dental screenings and care to reservists who are assigned

to a unit that has been alerted or notified of mobilization. Reservists can obtain improved TRICARE coverage until Dec. 31, 2004, under the following circumstances:

- Nonmobilized reservists and their families can enroll on a cost-share basis if the reservist is unemployed or the employer does not offer health insurance.

- Coverage for mobilized reservists and their families can begin up to 90 days before the start of the reservists' active duty. Previously, coverage started only when the active-duty period began.

- Coverage can continue up to 180 days after separation from active duty. Previously, coverage lasted up to 60 or 120 days after separation, depending on the years of service.

(Courtesy of Air Force Reserve Command News Service)

Bush signs defense authorization act

\$401.3 billion spending package includes 4.1 percent average pay raise across-the-board

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Calling it a landmark piece of legislation that sends the clear message that “Americans stand with the United States military,” President George W. Bush signed the fiscal 2004 National Defense Authorization Act in a Pentagon ceremony here Nov. 24.

A bipartisan group of legislators and Department of Defense civilian and uniformed leaders attended the ceremony.

The act authorizes DOD to spend \$401.3 billion in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

“We will do all it takes to keep our military strong, to keep the peace and to keep the American people secure,” Bush said.

The money is in addition to the \$87 billion supplemental bill passed in early November.

“The war on terror is different than any war America has ever fought,” Bush said. “Our enemies seek to inflict mass casualties without fielding mass armies. They hide in the shadows, and they are often hard to strike. The terrorists are cunning and ruthless and dangerous, as

the world saw on Sept. 11, 2001, and again in Istanbul last week.”

But the terrorists now are facing the United States and its allies, “and this threat to civilization will be defeated,” Bush said.

The new threats mean the U.S. military must be fast, smart and agile, Bush said.

“Right now, America’s armed forces are the best-trained, best-equipped and best-prepared in the world, and this administration will keep it that way,” he said.

The legislation supports the force with an across-the-board pay raise that averages 4.1 percent, Bush said. It extends the current payment of \$225 and \$250 per month for hazardous duty/imminent danger pay and separation pay. It reduces housing costs for those living off base, and it keeps up the robust bonus-pay program that has served the all-volunteer force so well.

“Those who risk their lives for our liberty deserve to be fairly paid and fairly treated, and this bill keeps those commitments,” Bush said.

The legislation helps America remain prepared and fully equipped for unseen challenges.

“In our new struggle, challenges can emerge suddenly, and so we must always be ready,” Bush said.

The bill fully funds operations and maintenance accounts and amends some environmental laws that had an adverse effect on realistic training for America’s military.

“The Congress has authorized the full \$9.1 billion that I requested for ballistic-missile defense,” Bush said. “The spread of ballistic-missile technology, along with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, is a terrible danger to America and the world. We must have the tools and the technologies to properly protect our people.”

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called the legislation “transformational.” The president agreed.

“This bill also advances the vital work of transforming the personnel system for civilian defense workers so we can put the right person in the right job to meet the chal-

By the numbers...

The 2004 pay raise includes the following percentages for enlisted:

- 3.7 percent for E1s - E4s; E-5s with more than 12 years and E-6s with more than 18 years
- 4.6 percent for E5s with less than 12 years of service
- 4.8 percent for E6s with less than 18 years of service
- 5 percent for E7s
- 5.25 percent for E8s
- 5.75 percent for E9s with less than 24 years of service
- 6 percent for E9s with 24/25 years
- 6.25 percent for E9s with more than 26 years

lenges we face,” Bush said.

The department’s nearly 700,000 civilian workers have been laboring under “a cumbersome, inefficient system designed for another century,” Bush said.

The National Security Personnel System gives DOD managers the flexibility to place civilian workers where they are most needed without needless delay, Bush said. The bill reduces the time it takes to hire new people, introduces pay-for-performance bonuses and streamlines the promotion process.

“These are landmark reforms — the most ambitious of their kind in a quarter of a century,” Bush said. “To win the war on terror, America must fully utilize the skill and talents of everyone who serves their country, and this bill will help us achieve that goal.”

Bush said everyone associated with the Defense Department is involved in a great and historic task.

“And the stakes for our country could not be higher,” he said. “We face enemies that measure their progress by the chaos they inflict, the fear they spread and the innocent lives they destroy.

“America’s military is standing between our country and grave danger,” Bush said. “You are standing for order, hope and democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. You’re standing up for the security of all free nations and for the advance of freedom. The American people and your commander in chief are grateful.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Wolfe

The Defense Authorization Act extends the current payment of \$225 and \$250 per month for hazardous duty/imminent danger pay and separation pay for airmen like 1st Lt. Michael James, deployed to Iraq.

Safety a must when it comes to decorating

The Rhein-Main Base Fire Department would like community residents to keep safety in mind when preparing for the holidays – whether they're trimming the tree or fixing dinner, some simple steps can lead to a much safer and happier holiday season.

In 1999 there were 370 Christmas tree fires in the U.S., resulting in five deaths, 60 injuries and \$15.7 million in direct property damage, according to National Fire Protection Agency records.

In the same year, burning candles caused more than 15,000 fires, resulting in 102 deaths, 1,473 injuries and \$278 million in direct property damage.

Following are some tips to help people safely decorate their tree.

- Always use safe tree lights. (Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both).
- Never use electric lights on a metal tree.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the lights. Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used.
- Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Never use lit candles to decorate

a tree, and place them well away from tree branches.

- Try to keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water daily. Do not purchase a tree that is dry or dropping needles.

- When purchasing an artificial tree, be sure it's labeled as fire-retardant.

- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source and try to position it near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.

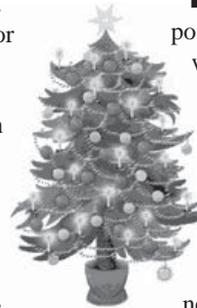
- Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Do not overload extension cords.

- Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.

- Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e. use clips, not nails).

(Information courtesy of Rhein-Main Base fire department.)



Holiday spirit

The holiday card created by the 469th Air Base Group Logistics Flight took top honors in the 469th ABG Services Flight holiday card contest. The winners were announced at the base tree lighting ceremony Thursday. Top prize was \$300. Second place and \$200 went to 726th Air Mobility Squadron. Third place and \$100 was captured by 362nd Air Expeditionary Group/726th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron/817th Expeditionary Aerospace Squadron.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Summers

Christmas tree sale

The Rhein-Main Air Base Cub Scout Pack 61 sponsors a Christmas Tree Sale from today through Dec. 21 across from the base exchange/commissary parking lot.

There are various size and types of trees.

Hours of operation are:

- Fridays (today, Dec. 12 and 19) from 4:30 - 8 p.m.
- Saturdays (Dec. 6, 13 and 20) from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Sundays (Dec. 7, 14 and 21) from noon to 6 p.m.

For more details, call 330-6139 or 6959-1390.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Summers

My military family

Emily Wilkinson and Kirstin Hamilton (left) create a "My Military Family" certificate during the National Military Family Month celebration Nov. 22 at the youth center. Several base organizations and businesses sponsored a free show of a Harry Potter movie at the base theater and food, fun, games and crafts for young and old alike in the youth center gym.

Tis the season to be cautious

Use common sense when it comes to gift shopping

It's the holiday season. A time to think about Santa, Frosty and all the traditional holiday fare. It's also time for one of our favorite subjects, presents.

Traditionally, December is a time to think about giving gifts to friends and family. January is the time to think about New Year's resolutions.

Well, there's one resolution you should consider before January: Don't spend the entire first quarter of 2004 paying for what you bought the last quarter of 2003.

Many of us get caught up in buying gifts for people at this time of year. Unfortunately, few of us think about planning for it financially before this time of year.

We just put it all on credit and worry about it later. This year, exercise

some restraint. Don't overextend your credit on Christmas presents. We all want to buy the newest and best gifts, but we need to focus on what we can afford.

There may be 19 more shopping days till Christmas but there is only one more payday before Christmas.

Don't let your holiday spirit and joy be chased away by buyers' regret when you get the bill in January.

It may be a little late to plan for this year, but if you buy what you can afford this year, you can save money next year to spend on Christmas gifts. If you plan that way, you can give the gifts you want without having to give 22 percent of your presents to the credit card company in interest payments.

And just a friendly reminder, when you're looking for ways to pay for all that Christmas joy you're spreading, your government travel card is not an authorized solution.

(Courtesy of the 469th Air Base Group legal office)



Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to the Rhein-Main Community: Thank you very much for your support of our Annual Airmen's Dinner, served Nov. 18 at the base chapel.

Officers, enlisted, spouses, teachers, Protestant members, Catholic members and many others from the Rhein-Main community volunteered time and/or donated food for this traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

We served many airmen, TDY troops, unaccompanied members, as well as more than 50 German soldiers. More than 60 take-out boxes were delivered to troops on duty.

The food was delicious and appreciated by all.

Thank you for your support – this truly was a community event.

*Angie Hansen
Rhein-Main Community
Spouses Club Welfare Chair*

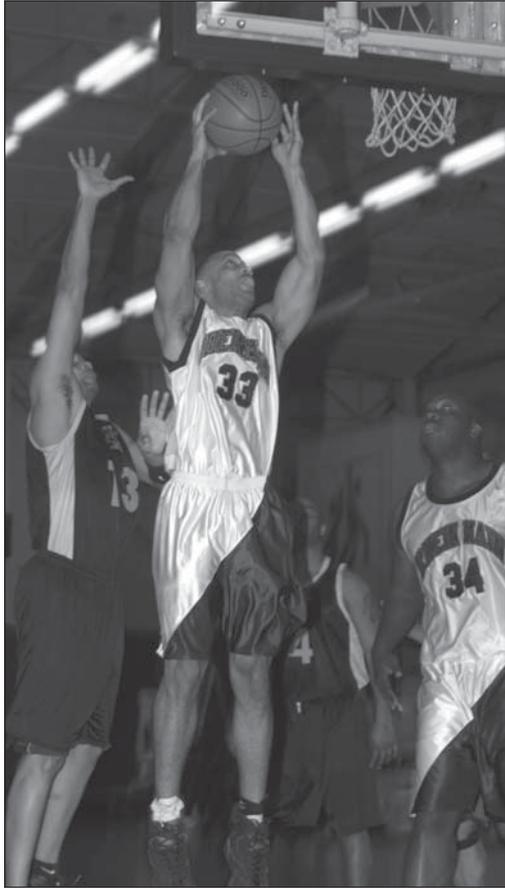


Photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Summers

Chairman of the boards

Rhein-Main Rockets' forward Ed Lawler hits a stickback bucket for two of his game-high 26 points in Rhein-Main's 91-80 win over Hanua in varsity basketball action Nov. 15 at the base fitness center. Guard Marcus Redmond netted 22 for the Rockets. Rhein-Main hits the floor again Saturday at Darmstadt. The Rockets travel to Mannheim Dec. 13.

Sports Briefs

Intramural action

Following is a summary of intramural basketball action from Monday night:

- 64th RC vs. 469th ABG – 50-48. Richard Broadnax had 13 to lead the 64th RC. Marcus Redmond hit for 20 to lead the 469th ABG.
- AFN-Hessen vs. Consulate – 39-38. Steve Heichelbeck led AFN with 17 points, while Ron Campbell netted 10 for the Consulate.

Combat Fitness Day

The base fitness center will host a Combat Fitness Day from 3 - 5 p.m. Thursday.

Activities include equipment orientation, developing workout plans and six exercise stations.

The base clinic will provide nutritional information and blood pressure checks.

For more information, call the fitness center at 330-7151 or 330-6062.

Turkey trot

Dave Gallagher, 469th Air Base Group Civil Engineer Flight takes the Rhein-Main 5K Turkey Trot to an extreme Nov. 21 as he runs in his gas mask. Fifty-two runners braved the cold to participate in the run. First place winner in the men's division was Matthew Hansen, 469th ABG clinic. Eric Heichel finished second and John Airis was third. In the women's division, Jennifer St. Amand was first. Beth Beyes came in second and Robin Harvel was third.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Joleo Dianala

Talent show

The youth center sponsors a Family Talent Show from 6:30-8:30 p.m. tonight in the youth center gym.

For more information, call 330-7125.

Christmas market

The base chapel will take its annual Christmas Market Trip to the Christmas Market of the Nations in Rudesheim Sunday.

Participants should meet at the shoppette parking lot at 3 p.m. to join the carpool.

For more information, call the chapel at 330-7501.

Stocking giveaway

From now until Dec. 22, when you bowl three games at the Rocket Bowling Center your name is entered into a drawing for "The World's Largest Christmas Stocking Giveaway."

The winner will be announced Dec. 22. For more details, call the center at 330-7219.

Santa's workshop

The Halvorsen-Tunner Parent / Teacher/ Student Association sponsors a Santa's Workshop from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Monday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday at the school.

There will be a variety of vendors with holiday gifts for sale in the classroom next to the music room. Pictures with Santa, gifts, crafts and goodies are available to all.

Chapel Worship

The following special worship opportunities are offered by the Rhein-Main Chapel:

- Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Mass, 11:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday.

- Advent Penance Service, 7 p.m. Dec. 15.

- Protestant Christmas Cantata, 10:30 a.m. Dec. 14.

For more information please call the chapel at 330-7501.

There will also be a drawing for a GameBoy-SP and other prizes.

Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 330-6272.

Top IV meeting

The 469th Air Base Group Top IV monthly meeting has been rescheduled for 7:30 a.m. Thursday at the Zeppelinhaus.

Items of discussion will include annual awards and organizational elections.

Holiday Open House

The Rhein-Main Family Support Center invites the entire community to attend a Holiday Open House set for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday in Bldg. 347 Room 30.

Visitors can meet the FSC staff, learn more about the center's programs and enjoy free food.

For more information, call 330-7992.

STAP deadline

Spouse Tuition Assistance forms for January - March are due Dec. 12 to the family support center or education office, Bldg. 347.

German cooking

The FSC sponsors a German cooking class from 3 - 5 p.m. Dec. 12 at the Our House Annex in Bldg. 627B-2 in Gateway Gardens.

Call 330-7992 to sign up.

Bundles for babies

New or expectant parents can learn about medical issues, family life, child safety and personal financial information they need to know when their new bundle of joy arrives.

The class is set for 12:45 - 4:15 p.m. Dec. 16 at Our House in Gateway Gardens.

Participants will receive a free baby bundle worth more than \$50.

Call 330-7992 to sign up.

Sponsorship training

This class is open to active duty personnel or civilians who are interested in serving as sponsors.

The class is from 10 - 10:30 a.m.

Movies at Rhein-Main

Tonight - "The Order," (R), 7 p.m.

Saturday - "Brother Bear," (G), 5 p.m., and "Once Upon a Time in Mexico," (R), 7:30 p.m.

Sunday - "Secondhand Lions," (PG), 7 p.m.

Wednesday - "Dr. Seuss: The Cat in the Hat," (PG), 7 p.m.

Dec. 12 - "The Underworld," (R), 7 p.m.

Dec. 13 - "Elf," (PG), 2 p.m.; "The Run-down," (PG-13), 5 p.m. and "The Matrix Revolutions," (R) 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 14 - "Fighting Temptations," (PG-13), 7 p.m.

Dec. 17 - "The Haunted Mansion," (PG), 7 p.m.

Movies and times are subject to change.

Movie schedules for local communities can be found at

www.aafes.com/ems/default.asp

For sale

For sale: 19" Zenith TV - \$65; microwave (220) - \$40; microwave (110) - \$45; 3-piece leather couch set w/coffee table - \$375; mattress/box spring (queen) - \$350; JVC DVD/Stereo Sys. (220) - \$100. All in good working order. Call Karie at 016099826935.

For rent

For rent: Apartment in Walldorf. Available Jan. 24. 95 sq. m.; 2 bedroom, 1.5 baths; balcony; garage. 15 min. from base. Call 330-7820 days, 06105951956 nights.

Dec. 17 in the FSC classroom in Bldg. 347.

Kliniks tour

The FSC sponsors a tour to the Flug and Uni-Kliniks set for 1:45 - 4 p.m. Dec. 18.

Participants will learn directions to the kliniks as well as what types of services are offered by the medical facilities. For more details, call 330-7992.

Thrift shop

The Rhein-Main Thrift Shop will be closed Dec. 23 - Jan. 6 for the holidays.

Been naughty or nice?

St. Nikolaus to check his list twice tonight before bestowing gifts

(Editor's note: Nikolaustag or St. Nicholas Day is celebrated in Germany on Dec. 6. Following is a story of this celebration told through the eyes of a German National.)

By Irmhild Pearce
Contributing writer

As a child, I remember waiting anxiously for St. Nikolaus to visit us on the evening of Dec. 5.

My cousins and I had rehearsed carols and poems for weeks – and were ready. As soon as dusk came, we began to listen for a rumbling in the stairwell, the ringing of a bell and the pounding on our door.

Although we couldn't wait for St. Nikolaus to visit us, my heart began beating a

little harder and a little louder as soon as we heard pounding on the door, and I would have sworn I could hear my cousins' hearts beating as well.

Here came St. Nikolaus – larger than life – carrying a book, a switch and a large sack.

How I dreaded that book. All my misdeeds and shortcomings had been entered, and St. Nikolaus read them to me in front of my cousins. Why hadn't I listened to my mother, who told me to behave and to put my toys away? St. Nikolaus evidently did see and hear all, just like she had told me so many times.

I was so embarrassed I could hardly recite my poem, while my cousins sat and smirked. But then, my turn to smirk came. St. Nikolaus had obviously watched them too, because their list wasn't any shorter than mine. To make matters worse, he requested we sing a carol for him, although none of us could carry a tune.

St. Nikolaus praised us for our efforts and reminded us to be good; after all, didn't he just prove he can

hear and see all?

Then came the part of his visit we liked the best – the reason why we had anxiously awaited his arrival. He reached into his large sack and gave each of us a bag filled with chocolates and cookies, nuts, apples and a small toy.

I thought the cookies looked and tasted much like the ones my grandmother had baked in previous weeks, but I couldn't be for sure...

So then, who was this St. Nikolaus

for whom I had waited so impatiently each year of my childhood?

Nikolaus was the bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) in the fourth century. Legend has it he was able to persuade the governor to refrain from killing three innocent men. Instead, the

governor confessed he had accepted a bribe to have the men killed. St. Nikolaus was also responsible for helping many needy people.

Dec. 6, the date of his death, marked the beginning of the early Christmas season. In the early days, children would set out food for the saint and straw for his horse on St. Nikolaus Eve and in the morning the good children would find these items replaced with sweets and toys.

To this day, Nikolaustag or St. Nikolaus Day is celebrated in Germany on Dec. 6.

In some families children set a plate or shoe outside their bedroom door the night before only to find them filled with sweets, apples, oranges and nuts the following morning.

In other families, St. Nikolaus visits the children either in the evening of Nikolaus Eve or the evening of Nikolaus Day. He also visits children in kindergarten, where for



Confused?

Don't confuse St. Nikolaus Day with Christmas. Germans celebrate Christmas much like Americans.

In Germany, Christmas celebrations start on Christmas Eve. Shops close in the afternoon and there are special church services for the children. Often the children put on a nativity play.

The celebrations on Christmas Eve differ from family to family. However, it is considered a very special evening and children as well as adults dress up for the occasion.

Children receive their Christmas gifts on Christmas Eve. The giving of gifts is called the "Bescherung". Church bells ring in the evening and this is often a time to begin with the handing out of gifts under the Christmas tree.

weeks students learn to recite poems and sing carols.

In predominantly Catholic parts of Germany, St. Nikolaus might appear dressed as a bishop, but in most areas he is a white-bearded man, dressed in a red coat with a hood and black boots. He

carries a book where children's misdeeds and virtues have been recorded all year, a sack that holds treats as well as the switch to remind children to behave in the new year.

In all my years, St.

Nikolaus never used the switch on me, even though he always had something written in his book to scold me about. Only as I grew older did I learn how he knew of my misdeeds and why one adult male in the family was always mysteriously absent when St. Nikolaus paid us a visit.

