

Army cook assigned to SF unit earns Bronze Star

Story & photo by Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
 Special Operations Command Public Affairs Office

As Maria Rodriguez-Torres listened to the narrative accompanying the presentation of the Bronze Star Medal to her husband for his accomplishments in Afghanistan, her facial expression displayed a look of astonishment.

She heard about his courageous actions when his forward operating base came under attack, and her eyes widened. She heard how he came under siege no fewer than 24 times in which the enemy fired rocket-propelled grenades, 82 mm mortars and 107 mm rocket fire, and she trembled.

She heard how he constructed and ran a kitchen to feed 150 U.S., Afghan and International Security Assistance Force military personnel, how he taught three local Afghan contract employees on all aspects of dining operations, and she revealed a huge smile.

Then she watched Maj. Gen. Michael Repass, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, pin the Bronze Star, and Lt. Col Isaac Pelletier, commander, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) pin the Combat Action Badge on

her husband, Sgt. Javier Rodriguez-Torres, and she held back tears of pride and joy.

"He is my hero, and from the beginning I knew what being a Soldier meant to him," she said.

Rodriguez-Torres, who is currently assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 1/10th SFG(A), served as the primary food specialist at Forward Operating Base Kutschbach and was responsible for the planning, forecasting, ordering and feeding of all forces in probably "one of the most dangerous kitchens in Afghanistan."

According to the ODA detachment commander who commanded the base, FOB Kutschbach lies in the heart of a heavily contested region, with Taliban insurgents maneuvering in and around the immediate

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Sgt. Javier Rodriguez-Torres, a food service specialist assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), proudly smiles following an award ceremony in which he was presented the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Action Badge for his courageous actions during his tour in Afghanistan.



Julia Cabalquinto and Joshua Cilley pile chunks of snow to make a fort during recess at Böblingen Elementary/Middle School Nov. 30.



Photos by Brittany Carlson
 Andrew Minnich gets a workout carrying a chunk of ice across the BEMS playground for use in an ice fort he and his classmates made Nov. 30 during recess.

Snowed under

The first snow of the season came to U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart in waves, causing two school delays the week of Nov. 29 to Dec. 3. To the delight of students, it also piled up in the school yards, useful for constructing fortresses.

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Winterfest puts kids in the spotlight

There were rides, goodies and a tree lighting at the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Winterfest, but the real stars of the show were performing children.



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Harlem Globetrotters impress ball fans

The world-famous Harlem Globetrotters basketball team — along with team mascot Globie — paid a visit to U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Dec. 5.



ACS helps AFC deliver services, keep promises

Commentary by Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
Installation Management Command
commander

The Army made significant promises when it unveiled the Army Family Covenant in October 2007. With the covenant, the Army committed to providing Soldiers and their families a quality of life that acknowledges their service, sacrifice and dedication. This includes providing programs and services — including family programs, health care, housing, recreation, education and employment opportunities, and child, school and youth services — that build Soldier and family well-being.



Lt. Gen. Lynch

Soon after I took my post, the Installation Management Command community conducted a review of AFC programs.

What Soldiers and families told us was that they have both too much and too little information on available

ACS is there for Soldiers and families now ... and tomorrow, as they pursue long-term personal goals.

services. Sometimes they did not know that there was a program designed to help with a specific need. Sometimes they knew of several programs available, but could not tell which one would be best for their situation.

We began looking at how we could improve access to program information through the source Soldiers and families already turn to: Army Community Service.

In fiscal year 2010, ACS staff had more than 14 million contacts with Soldiers, family members and civilians through programs such as Mobilization/Deployment Readiness, Relocation Readiness, Financial Readiness, Army Emergency Relief, Employment Readiness, the Exceptional Family Member Program, the Family Advocacy Program, Survivor Outreach Services, Soldier and Family Assistance Centers, Army Family Team Building, and the Army Family Action Plan.

We want to build on ACS's central role in the life of an installation. So, based on feedback from 10 focus groups conducted in October, we have developed several ideas for enhancing and updating ACS's capabilities.

One idea includes cross-training several ACS staff members in all basic ACS services and familiarizing them with other services available across the installation. With this information, they will be able to help clients access the programs that address their immediate concerns and take advantage of programs that help them meet longer-term goals.

Another idea is to move ACS delivery locations out to units, in/out processing centers, post exchanges, commissaries, Soldier Readiness Processing sites, community centers and off-post locations, in addition to ACS centers. ACS will also increase its delivery of services online through Army OneSource (www.

myArmyOneSource.com).

We will continue to seek feedback on these and other proposed changes during focus groups I will hold during my upcoming visits to installations. I want to hear from you, Soldiers and family members about what will work for you, and from your leaders about how to enhance ACS support. We will use your input to design pilot programs at five installations. The pilot programs will run from April to October 2011.

ACS is there for Soldiers and family members now, when they are dealing with today's concerns, and tomorrow, as they pursue long-term personal goals.

ACS is by no means the only organization on an installation providing services and programs that contribute to the quality of life for Soldiers and families, but it is often the first place they look. The work of ACS and other quality-of-life service providers is tangible proof that the Army is delivering on the promises of the Army Family Covenant.

Because of the importance of those promises, we in the Installation Management community are committed to providing a strong, supportive environment.

THE CITIZEN

Col. Carl D. Bird

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Commander

Public Affairs Officer

Larry Reilly

lawrence.reilly@eur.army.mil

Editor

Assistant Editor

Susan Huseman

Brittany Carlson

susan.huseman@eur.army.mil

brittany.carlson1@eur.army.mil

Contact Information

Telephone: 431-3105/civ. 07031-15-3105

Fax: 431-3096/civ. 07031-15-3096

E-mail: stuttgartmedia@eur.army.mil

Web site: www.stuttgart.army.mil

Office Location: Building 2949, Panzer Kaserne

U.S. Army Address: Unit 30401, APO AE 09107

German Address: USAG-S PAO, Panzer Kaserne,

Geb. 2949, 3rd Floor, Panzerstrasse, 71032 Böblingen

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ICE BOX

Weather, road conditions, work delay comments addressed

Over the last several weeks, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart has received numerous Interactive Customer Evaluation comments regarding bad weather, road conditions and work delays.

USAG Stuttgart installations are geographically diverse, and at any given time, the weather conditions at each can vary.

Military police patrols constantly assess the garrison streets and roads between installations, and determine the road conditions (green, amber, red, black). These conditions only apply to military vehicles, but the conditions are considered by the garrison in determining if schools should be delayed or cancelled, or if late reporting is warranted.

A decision to delay or cancel school because of weather must be made between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. in order to notify school bus drivers by 5 a.m. Once the decision is made and announced — regardless of delaying, cancelling, or continuing as normal — it cannot be changed due to the inability to communicate with all the bus drivers.

The most severe weather conditions within the garrison footprint are used as the basis for the decision-making criteria. If one installation is red, every installation in the garrison is considered red. A uniform procedure to delay schools and work is maintained so that the garrison may respond quickly to emergency weather conditions and protect the safety and well-being of all community members.

When a two-hour delay is called, the intent is to give commuters up to two additional hours to get to

work — not to have people wait two additional hours before they depart for their offices. This is especially important for those who live in areas where side roads are not plowed often and the snowfall is hard to negotiate. Those who have a long commute and need more time during bad weather should speak with their supervisors.

USAG Stuttgart announcements of work delays or early releases are for garrison employees only. They will be notified by their supervisors or managers.

For those who work for U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command and Special Operations Command Europe or other organizations, work delays or early releases are only authorized by their leadership. These personnel should be contacted by their chains of command regarding extreme weather conditions, delays and early releases.

School and work delay, closure and road condition information is available through American Forces Network radio (102.3 FM and 1143 AM), the USAG Stuttgart website (www.stuttgart.army.mil) and the U.S. Army Europe website (www.hqusa.eur.army.mil). Community members may also call the USAG Stuttgart Road Conditions Hotline at 431-3744/civ. 07031-15-3744.

The garrison commander urges motorists to review safety tips for driving in snow and ice, take Autobahns where possible because they are salted, and use extreme caution when taking secondary roads.

Germany tightens laws defining winter tire requirements

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

A new law passed by the German parliament that more clearly defines the use of winter tires in Germany went into effect Nov. 29.

U.S. Army Europe Office of the Provost Marshal officials said the law now states that motor vehicles, including motorcycles and four-wheel-drive vehicles, must have clearly marked winter or all-season tires when there is black ice, snow, slush, ice or frost on German roads.

“A winter tire is any tire marked by the manufacturer with the snowflake logo or M+S symbol, which stands for mud and snow [‘matsch und schnee’],” said Tom Lorenzini, of the USAREUR Vehicle Registry. All-season tires can have this M+S symbol, he added.

The German automobile club, Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club, or ADAC, recommends tires bearing the snowflake logo (seen behind this article) — sometimes called the “three-mountain” logo — because those tires meet the highest standards for winter driving.

The minimum legal tire tread depth for Germany is 1.6 mm (or 0.06 inches), although ADAC recommends 4 mm (one sixth of an inch) for winter driving. Other countries have more stringent requirements — Austrian law mandates a 4 mm tread depth for winter tires, and other European countries have distinct winter driving laws as well. OPM officials said drivers should check with local authorities before crossing borders.

In some areas of Germany, snow chains may be required during the winter season, but only as directed by police or road signs, such as a sign showing a tire with snow chains inside a blue circle. The maximum speed limit while driving a vehicle with chains is 50 kph.

While the law does not mandate calendar dates during which snow tires are required, German drivers often use the helpful rule of thumb “von O bis O”

Under the new rules, fines have been doubled. Drivers caught using summer tires in ice, snow or slush will be fined €40 — up from €20 in previous years ...

(from O to O), meaning snow tires should be put on in October and remain on until Ostern (Easter).

Under the new rules, fines have been doubled. Drivers caught using summer tires in ice, snow or slush will be fined €40 — up from €20 in previous years. Those who cause an accident or obstruct traffic because of inappropriate tires during winter conditions, will be slapped with an €80 fine — up from €40. In addition, some insurance companies may deny coverage to motorists driving with summer tires on wintry roads.

Safety experts warn, however, that winter tires are no magic potion against accidents. Drivers should always drive at reasonable speeds and keep a safe following distance from other vehicles.

Drivers who are unsure about winter tire requirements can contact their local vehicle registration or safety offices. A list of vehicle registration locations and other information for U.S. forces personnel who drive in Europe is available at the USAREUR Registry of Motor Vehicles website at www.hqusareur.army.mil/rmv.default.htm.

Editor's Note: This article was compiled from a report by Robert Szostek of the USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal and other sources.

News & Notes

Shuttle bus announcements

Shuttle buses suspended: During the upcoming holidays, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart shuttle bus service will be suspended Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

More shuttle buses to SAAF: The U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Directorate of Logistics has implemented five additional shuttle bus runs to Stuttgart Army Air Field.

The installation bus schedule is available on the secure USAG Stuttgart intranet site (CAC log-in only) or by calling the USAG Stuttgart Transportation Motor Pool at 421-2389/civ. 0711-729-2389.

(This information was provided by USAG Stuttgart Directorate of Logistics.)

Stuttgart MP court-martialed

Pvt. 1st Class Sean P. Dunlavey, assigned to 554th Military Police Company, 709th Military Police Battalion, was convicted by a military judge at a General Court Martial Nov. 18 in Stuttgart of one specification of violating Article 80, Uniform Code of Military Justice, attempted possession of child pornography.

Dunlavey was sentenced to be reduced to the grade of E-1, confined for two months and to forfeit half of two months' pay and allowances.

(This information was provided by 21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office.)

Holiday traffic, store hours

In Baden-Württemberg, German schools are on holiday vacation from Dec. 22 to Jan. 8.

Motorists can expect heavy Autobahn traffic Dec. 23-24, Dec. 27-28 and Jan. 7-9.

German stores will close at noon on Dec. 24 and remain closed through Dec. 26.

Stores will also close early at 3 p.m. on Dec. 31, and remain closed on Jan. 1. In addition, German stores will be closed Jan. 6 for Three Kings Day.

(This information was provided by the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Government Relations Advisor.)

Mandatory TARP briefings

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart will hold Threat Awareness and Reporting Program briefings for military, civilian, contractor and local national personnel. Family members are also encouraged to attend.

Briefings in English are scheduled in the Patch Theater Feb. 7-11 at 9 and 11 a.m., and 1 p.m.; a 3 p.m. briefing will also be held on Feb. 8 and 10.

In the Kelley Theatre, English briefings will be held Feb. 14-17 at 9 and 11 a.m., and 1 p.m.; on Feb. 15 and 17 a 3 p.m. briefing is also scheduled. On Feb. 18, briefings will be held at 9 and 11 a.m.

Briefings in German will be held Feb. 7, 9 and 11 at 3 p.m. in the Patch Theater, and Feb. 14 and 16 at 3 p.m. in the Kelley Theatre.

All military and civilian personnel are required to attend a TARP briefing at least once a year.

For more information, call the Stuttgart Field Office at 430-4586/civ. 0711-680-4586.

(This information was provided by the Stuttgart Field Office.)

USAG Stuttgart Religious Services
Holiday Service Schedule

Dec. 24
 4 p.m., Catholic Mass, Patch Chapel
 5:30 p.m., Lutheran candlelight Christvesper, Panzer Chapel
 6 p.m., Protestant candlelight service, Patch Chapel
 7 p.m., Protestant candlelight service, Robinson Barracks Chapel
 Midnight, Catholic Mass, Patch Chapel

Dec. 25
 9 a.m., Catholic Mass, Patch Chapel
 Noon, Catholic Mass, Robinson Barracks Chapel

Dec. 31
 11:45 a.m., Catholic Mass (St. Sylvester), Patch Chapel
 10:45 p.m., Gospel, Church of God in Christ night watch, Panzer Chapel

Jan. 1
 9 a.m., Catholic Mass (Mary, Mother of God), Patch Chapel
 5 p.m., Catholic Mass (Vigil of Epiphany), Panzer Chapel

Weekend services will continue as scheduled.
 For more information, call the USAG Stuttgart RSO at 431-5079/civ. 07051-15-5079

Cook

Continued from page 1

area just outside the perimeter.

“Our base was repeatedly attacked with mortar and rocket fire on numerous occasions during our combat tour,” the ODA commander said. “During every attack, Sgt. Rodriguez-Torres remained calm, ensuring all foreign national personnel, to include assistant cooks and linguists, were accounted for before maneuvering to the mortar pit to assist with counter-fire missions.

“He went above and beyond what is expected of a support Soldier working with seasoned Special Forces operators.”

Rodriguez-Torres, who hails from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, said that despite being a cook, it is always his duty to be a Soldier first.

“One second you’re cooking a meal and the next, you hear the alarm going off, and immediately afterwards you hear the blast of the RPGs, mortars or rockets; then you find yourself reacting and running to the mortar pit to assist the gunnerymen,” he said. “Even though I’m a cook, I know that I’m a Soldier first, and as a Soldier, [I am]

“One second you’re cooking a meal and the next you hear the alarm going off ... then you find yourself reacting and running to the mortar pit to assist the gunnerymen.”

Sgt. Javier Rodriguez-Torres
HSC, 1/10th SFG(A) cook
Bronze Star, CAB recipient

mentally prepared for any situation or circumstance.”

On one such morning, as he was about to prepare breakfast for the Soldiers on the FOB, the alarm went off, and as he dived to the ground, a 107 mm rocket blasted 10 feet above him.

The blast was so close that he could feel the heat of the projectile, yet he instinctively checked on his three local national cooks to ensure they were not injured, and he led them to safety in the bunkers.

Afterwards he ran to a mortar position and fired mortar rounds at the enemy to help defend the FOB.

Towards the end of the combat tour, the ODA commander submitted a list of forthcoming tour award write-ups and recommended Rodriguez-Torres be awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

“I initially received resistance with a comment of: ‘A cook? We’ve never had a cook receive a BSM,’” said the ODA commander. “I replied by sending the BSM citation in which I depicted Sgt. Rodriguez-Torres’ phenomenal performance, to include his tireless work ethic and courage under fire. After that, the award was processed without any further question.”

During the award ceremony, Rodriguez-Torres was humble and spoke softly about his actions during his tour. Afterward, he praised the Special Forces operators he served alongside.

“This has been a once-in-a-lifetime

accomplishment that would not be possible without the training and mentoring offered by the ODA and the courage that the unit has,” Rodriguez-Torres said. “It’s incredible to see these men honoring and battling for their country without hesitating to risk their lives.

“For me, this is something that I did in the situation, but for them it’s something they do on a daily basis. As I hold the Bronze Star Medal in my hands, I can’t help but think of the leadership and teamwork that enabled me to earn this award.”

Attending the ceremony, while in Stuttgart as part of the Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Georgene Davis, a U.S. Army food advisor who has been around Army cooks for more than two decades, said she was in awe as she listened to Rodriguez-Torres’ citation being read.

“I’m just inspired by what this young Soldier accomplished in Afghanistan,” Davis said. “He put himself in harm’s way, displayed remarkable courage and showed that cooks are Soldiers first. His actions should make every Soldier in the entire food service specialist field proud.”

554th MP Co. war dog returns home to rest

By Gloria Colon-Buzatu

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

In the military community, it’s customary to honor fallen defenders of freedom. Here, the 554th Military Police Company extended the tradition to a military working dog.

Bodie, a MWD who began her military career on July 31, 2003, was euthanized Oct. 14.

The 554th MP Co. K-9 Section held a memorial ceremony to honor the war veteran Nov. 24 in the Panzer Community Chapel.

Over her career, the 10-year-old black and tan German shepherd completed five six-month combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. She was on her sixth deployment in Afghanistan when her tour was abruptly interrupted.

After arriving on Oct. 1, Bodie’s handler, Sgt. Richard Rivera, 554th MP Co. K-9 Section, noticed signs of fatigue in his dog.

“Bodie’s body began to swell around the abdomen, taking on the shape of a pear as each day passed,” he said.

After two weeks of observation and tests by a local veterinarian, the prognosis wasn’t good: Bodie had the equivalent of gradual heart failure. Bodie was medically evacuated to the Dog Center Europe, at the U.S. Army Europe Regional Veterinary Command in Kaiserslautern.

As Rivera brought Bodie back to Germany, he prepared himself for the worst.

“Did I want to believe it? No,” Rivera said, recalling the day he received the news that it was time to end Bodie’s suffering. But he said he didn’t want to see her suffer a minute longer.

Not every handler gets to say good-bye to their partner, but Rivera did.

He recounted his farewell. Rivera said he took



Martin Greeson

Sgt. Richard Rivera, 554th MP Co. K-9 Section, takes time for a photo with his military working dog, Bodie, who was euthanized Oct. 14. In a memorial ceremony held in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Nov. 24, Bodie was remembered for her loyal duty during in her seven-year military career.

a final look into Bodie’s dark brown eyes and she looked back. Rivera said he could see her pain, and he said goodbye.

There’s a bond between a dog and its handler that only the handler can explain, said Staff Sgt. Kenneth Rosenthal, the 554th MP Kennel Master who planned Bodie’s memorial.

Rosenthal said a working dog is assigned multiple handlers throughout its career. Bodie had five. (She partnered with Rivera for 17 months).

However, each handler earns the unconditional loyalty from his or her dog until its last breath, he added.

Bodie’s partner was Sgt. Rivera, and the memorial gave him, along with friends, colleagues, and community leaders, a chance to grieve, said Rosenthal.

It’s tradition at a military funeral to display a pair of combat boots, an inverted rifle, a helmet and dog tags. For Bodie’s memorial, an open dog crate with her leash, collar and water bucket was placed on the

chapel altar.

During the memorial, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ken Bellinger gave the invocation, and Rosenthal, the eulogy.

Rivera then read “Guardians of the Night,” a working dog’s poem, which was followed by a video of Rivera and Bodie training and working together.

Perhaps the most poignant part of the memorial was when three bells rang, one after the other, symbolizing Bodie’s call home. The first ring signified calling out to the dog to start her journey home; the second bell signified that Bodie was home for the last time; and the third bell signified that she had laid her head down to rest.

As taps began, Rivera walked up to the crate and placed one of Bodie’s play toys on top of the crate. He slowly closed the door and rendered a salute.

Military working dog Bodie Tattoo E075 leaves behind a legacy — and paw print — as a trusted patrol and explosive detection expert for the USAG Stuttgart community and the Soldiers of the 554th MP Co.

Kindermusik: *Music, rhythm classes for young children give moms, tots special time to bond*

By Tanya Fogg Young
Special to The Citizen

Enraptured, Jane Ellsworth, 2, stood looking up at the “music machine,” listening to recordings of the sound of footsteps gradually fading away, while in a recent “Kindermusik Our Time” class.

“She’s walking slowly, huh?” teacher Jennifer Buxkemper asked her young student, and she nodded in response. “Do you think she’s going to go faster?”

Jane and her three classmates, each holding hands with their mothers, “walked to the grocery store” in a circle as Buxkemper rhythmically hit a wood block with a stick to duplicate different speeds of footsteps. It was an exercise teaching the musical terms of *allegro* (fast) and *adagio* (slow).

The Kindermusik Our Time class for ages 18 months to 3 years is one of three that Buxkemper teaches for varying age levels from newborn up to 5 years through the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Child, Youth and School Services SKIES (Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills) Unlimited program.

Parents or caregivers sing, play, listen, dance and learn musical terms along with the children in the music and movement program, Buxkemper said. Creators of the more than 30-year-old Kindermusik program, designed for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, say that it helps in their language, cognitive, emotional, physical, social and musical development. All Kindermusik educators are trained and licensed.

The offerings in USAG Stuttgart also include the eight-week “Kindermusik Village,” for children newborn to 18 months, and “Kindermusik Imagine That” for youngsters ages 3 to 5 years old. Both the “Our Time” and the “Imagine That” classes are 15-week sessions.



Susan Huseman

Tami Gale assists her son Soren, 19 months, as he attempts to play a bell with a stick in time to a beat during a Kindermusik Our Time class Dec. 3.

Parent Darlene Hatfield, who was a marching band clarinetist in high school and college, attends the Kindermusik Village class with 9-month-old son Caleb. Noting that music seemed to be among the only things that calmed her infant, Hatfield said the class seemed the perfect choice for a mother-son activity.

“I get to have fun with my baby, and I love watching him start to recognize music,” Hatfield said. “When I play the music at home, he bounces up and down. I hope he will learn to love music as he gets older.”

“... it’s the part of our day that lifts our moods.”

Shelly Marston
Kindermusik participant

Buxkemper, a 30-year music educator, has taught Kindermusik in the Stuttgart area for more than 10 years and described it as a family affair in which her husband Alan, director of the Stuttgart Entertainment Branch, and sons Andrew and Peter “... have taken part in all levels of the Kindermusik curriculum.”

Parent Laura Ellsworth, whose daughter Jane is in Buxkemper’s Kindermusik Our Time class, is no stranger to the music and movement program. When her son Michael, now 7, was a toddler in Hong Kong, he also participated in Kindermusik. “It’s nice that it’s global, so that when you move from place to place, you can stick with it,” she said.

Shelly Marston, whose 18-month-old daughter, Brooke, is enrolled in the Kindermusik Village class, plans to continue participating in Kindermusik or a similar program when the family relocates from the Stuttgart area to Florida in the coming weeks.

“This is a special activity for us,” Marston said of the mother-daughter time. “We dance and listen to music throughout the day, and it’s the part of our day that lifts our moods.”

Enrollment for Kindermusik is ongoing throughout the current semester, and children and their parents or caregivers can start the classes at any time.

For more information, call CYS Services Parent Central Services at 430-7480/civ. 0711-680-7480.

Cooking class all about ‘baking’ spirits bright

Story & photo by Susan Huseman
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

Ingrid Arnold brings German culture to Americans — one bite at a time.

For almost 20 years, Arnold has taught Stuttgart military community members how to prepare traditional German dishes through the United Service Organizations Stuttgart.

During this time of year, Arnold shares her favorite German Christmas cookie recipes with her students.

“German cookies are more labor-intensive than American cookies,” she told a class of 11 students Dec. 4. “Each cookie is a piece of art.”

They are also meant to be served as a light snack, with coffee or tea. “They’re not meant to fill you up,” Arnold said. “If you’re hungry, eat a sandwich.”

After a discussion of ingredients, students were set to work slicing “Vanillekipferl” (almond crescent) cookie dough, rolling out Teegebäck

(tea cake) dough, while others prepared dough for “Glühweinrauten” (mulled wine diamonds), “Honigkuchen” (honey cake) and “Lebkuchen” (gingerbread) — all under Arnold’s watchful eye.

She spotted a few imperfect cookies before they made it to the oven and had the students repair them.

“The eyes are eating too,” Arnold told the class. “Food has to look nice — especially cookies.”

“I’m very picky,” she admitted, but her insistence on perfection does not squelch her students’ enthusiasm.

Many, like Mary Hunsaker, are repeat students. This was her fourth cooking class with Arnold in six months. “I’ve learned to make Apfelkuchen, Rouladen and Spätzle,” she said.

The Dec. 4 session was Hunsaker’s second Christmas cookie class. “There are so many to learn how to make,” she added, as she heated up a sauce pan of honey for the Honigkuchen.

Teaching Americans is second



Shiella Saltysiak (from left) and Anne Warrell listen as Ingrid Arnold describes how to make vanilla sugar, a staple in German baking, with a vanilla bean and sugar during a German cooking class focused on holiday cookies.

nature to Arnold. She also teaches for the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart German Head Start program, educating newcomers about the local language, culture, customs and courtesies.

But she said this isn’t the only way to get acquainted with the German way of life. “You can learn the culture also by eating and drinking,” she said.

For these students, it’s a sweet lesson that’s easily devoured.

The USO and Arnold will offer German cooking classes in the USO kitchen on Jan. 22 and Feb. 26.

For more information, visit www.uso.org/Stuttgart or call 431-3505/civ. 07031-15-3505.

In the Raw: learning to 'cook' raw, vegan-style

Story & photo by Susan Huseman
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

Julia Child had her copper pots; Rachael Ray a vintage Chambers stove.

But for Master Sgt. Valetta Stewart, or "Chef V," as she calls herself, her kitchen essentials consist of a super-powered blender, a food processor and a dehydrator.

"I don't have a stove. I don't have an oven," said Stewart, a reservist assigned to U.S. Africa Command.

Her lack of major kitchen appliances is by choice — Stewart is a vegan raw food enthusiast.

She teaches a raw food "cooking" seminar at the Stuttgart United Services Organization.

Because raw foods are not heated above 116 degrees Fahrenheit, the class is less about "cooking" and more about chopping, mixing and blending.

"Today is all about eating, trying new things and experimenting," Stewart told a recent class of 14 students.

For two hours, in between discussions on where to shop for organic foods, herbal remedies, fasts and kitchen gadgets, students were treated to lettuce wraps filled with couscous salad and guacamole, a chopped salad of broccoli, cauliflower and a myriad of other fresh vegetables, a paté made from almonds, a breakfast couscous with raisins, a chunky paste made of raw apples and nuts, and several smoothies made with combinations of zucchini, bananas, avocado, nuts, apples, berries and coconut water.

The students tried all the dishes, eagerly accepting second and third samples. "The number one thing is taste. As long as it tastes good, they'll eat it," Stewart said.

People eat "raw" for more than taste, though. "Raw food is very, very



Master Sgt. Valetta Stewart, a raw food enthusiast, uses a spiralizer to make "spaghetti" from a zucchini during a USO-sponsored raw food "cooking" seminar Nov. 30. Stewart will take community members on a vegetarian shopping trip through Stuttgart Jan. 8. The tour is offered through the USO.

good for you," said Stewart, who has eschewed meat, dairy, bread, cooked and processed foods for about seven years. "Most people on a raw food diet feel more energetic and have a stronger immune system."

Acne, allergies, weight gain and many chronic illnesses are all rooted in the foods a person eats, she added.

Lest you find Stewart's raw vegan diet extreme, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture attest to the importance of fruits and vegetables in attaining health.

"Most fruits and vegetables ... may also play a role in preventing certain chronic diseases. When compared to people who eat only small amounts of fruits and vegetables, those who eat more generous amounts, as part of a healthy diet, tend to have reduced risk of chronic diseases. These diseases include stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and perhaps, cardiovascular disease and hypertension," according to www.fruitsandveggies-

matter.gov.

Even Weight Watchers International has joined the band wagon. Last month, the global weight management services company revamped its point system to reflect current scientific research. All fresh fruits and most vegetables now have zero points, meaning a person can eat as much of them as they want.

However, for Stewart, it's not about weight management, it's about health.

Her mother, father and two siblings died from diseases such as emphysema, asthma-related conditions, hypertension and heart disease. If they had changed their diets, their health would have improved, she said.

While she couldn't influence these family members to change, it did not dampen her passion to inspire others.

She approached the USO last summer and volunteered to teach a raw food class. "What's the point of having knowledge, if you don't share it?" Stewart said.

USO tour manager Elizabeth Plotner

“The number one thing is taste. As long as it tastes good, they'll eat it.”

Master Sgt. Valetta Stewart
Vegan raw food enthusiast

said the USO staff was skeptical at first. "But four days later, Valetta brought in several [raw] dishes — chocolate cake and rum balls. They were delicious."

From the beginning, Stewart's classes have been a hit. "We offered the first class and had 15 participants, with 15 to 18 on the waiting list. And from then [on], we started offering it twice a month. Valetta is so enthusiastic, meticulous and engaging. It's been a nice addition to our class schedule."

Stewart is scheduled to leave Stuttgart in June. Those who can't take her class still have the opportunity to clean up their diets, however, by simply incorporating more raw fruits and vegetables into meals, Stewart said.

"When you have a chance to eat something that is raw, fresh or natural, eat it," she said. "If that means juicing, then juice — even if it's just at breakfast."

"Within days you will be able to see a difference in some aspect of your life."

The USO will offer "Raw Shopping: A Vegetarian Stuttgart Tour" on Jan. 8. Stewart's Rawsome Kitchen class is scheduled for Jan. 11, Jan. 27 and Feb. 28, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. To sign up, visit the USO Stuttgart office, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne, or call 431-3505/civ. 07031-15-3105.

This is the final edition of The Citizen for the year. We will return to print Jan. 13. Have a joyous holiday!

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Dental program puts family members on job market

Story & photo by **Brittany Carlson**
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

Finding a job is tough for military family members overseas. But, with the American Red Cross/ Europe Regional Dental Command Dental Assistant Apprenticeship Program, it doesn't have to be like pulling teeth.

Military ID cardholders ages 18 and up seeking work in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart — and in the greater dental community — can apply for the free course, offered through the ARC and Patch Dental Clinic.

Students will learn the dental assistant's job, which includes prepping dental instruments for the doctor, taking X-rays and charting patients' teeth — a career that averages a salary of \$27,000 in the U.S. and has a great outlook, according to Patch Dental Clinic Commander Dr. (Col.) Julio Gonzales.

They'll also be among the first considered for hire at the clinic when new positions become available, Gonzales said.

"It's sort of a dual benefit," he said. "If we have a shortage of assistants, we can hire from that pool."

The course can cost thousands of dollars in the States, but is free to community members here because graduates aid the clinic in its mission: to provide timely and efficient care to service members, he added.

In the past two years, the clinic has hired four dental assistants through the ARC program, according to Sgt. 1st Class Michael Cordova, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the dental clinic.

One of these assistants is Hikari Sutton, who graduated from the program last year.

"It's great to be able to actually have a kind



Hikari Sutton, a dental assistant at the Patch Dental Clinic, prepares dental tools for appointments Dec. 6. Sutton is a graduate of the ARC/Europe Regional Dental Assistant Apprenticeship Program.

of outlet — something to actually get into [the] work[force]," she said.

The course begins around November each year and includes 80 hours of classroom lessons, followed

by 200 hours of practical work at the dental clinic.

Students must complete the 200 hours within a few months to earn their certificate of training.

"With the time frame ... everything's still fresh in their mind[s]," Cordova said. In addition, "It gives us time to have people programmed in. When we have PCS season, we'll have people hired."

In the classroom portion, Patch dentists teach lessons on the anatomy of a human mouth, the 31 different dental tools used, and how to spot and treat cavities, among other subjects. During the clinical portion of training, students assist dentists in a variety of procedures, under supervision.

"It can be challenging," said Amy Murray, an Army spouse in the program. However, it's worth gaining a portable career, she added: "You can move with it."

All dental assistants hired by the Patch Dental Clinic become certified in radiology as part of their position. Additionally, those who work 3,500 hours or more at the clinic may be able to have their online Certified Dental Assistant exam paid for by the Europe Region Dental Command.

To apply for the dental assistant program, family members first fill out an application at the Red Cross Office, then go through an interview process with an assistant, an NCO and the clinic commander.

"The main thing I'm looking for is if they care about people, if they'd like to help people," Gonzales said.

If they have that, he believes they'll go a long way in the field of dental health.

For more information, call the American Red Cross Stuttgart branch at 431-2812/civ. 07031-15-2812.

Family & MWR Featured Events

www.stuttgartmwr.com



HOLIDAY CONCERTS

SONGS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Special Holiday Concerts featuring Jennifer Buxkemper (Soprano) & Alan Buxkemper (Pianist)

December 20

Monday 7:30 p.m.

Stuttgart Theatre Center on Kelley

For more information call:

DSN 421 3055, CIV 0711 729 3055

December 22

Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

Brewed Awakenings Cafe on RB

For more information call:

DSN 420 6037, CIV 0711 819 6037



NEW YEAR'S EVE

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTIES

Welcome Year 2011 with Family & MWR!

December 31

Friday 5 p.m. - 1 a.m. Patch Community Club

Cost: FREE! (music finger foods, toast)

For more information call: DSN 430 5433, CIV 0711 680 5433

Friday 8 p.m. - 2 a.m. Galaxy Bowling & Entertainment Center

Cost: \$35 Kids, \$40 Adults (bowling all night, finger foods, toast at midnight, party favors, door prizes)

For more information call: DSN 431 2575, CIV 07031 15 2575

Friday 7 p.m. - 2 a.m. Manolito's Restaurant at

Swabian Special Events Center

Cost: Free entrance & Toast, \$30 All-You-Can-Eat buffet.

For more information call: DSN 430 8205, CIV 0711 680 8205



WELLNESS

LOSE TO WIN - BODY CHALLENGE

Lose to Win is a 16 week program to help you lose weight, improve physical fitness and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Orientation session: January 6 or 7

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Patch Theater

For more information call: DSN 430 2354, CIV 0711 680 2354

AFAP CONFERENCE

Make a difference in your community by submitting issues for this year's conference at www.stuttgartmwr.com

For more information call:

DSN 431 3362, CIV 07031 15 3362





Brittany Carlson

Command group serves Turkey Day meal

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Commander Col. Carl D. Bird (from left) and Command Sgt. Major Anthony M. Bryant, garrison command sergeant major, dish out turkey, ham, crab legs and all of the fixings during a Thanksgiving meal served Nov. 24 at the 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Dining Facility on Panzer Kaserne.

Holiday closures

Most organizations and facilities in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 in observance of the Christmas and New Year federal holidays.

Because many facilities may have altered schedules during the holiday period, be sure to call ahead and verify a facility's hours of operations. The following are additional closures:

- **Community Banks** — closed Dec. 24 and Jan. 6; open

Dec. 31 from 9 a.m. to noon.

- **The Stuttgart Law Center** — closed Dec. 23-25, 30 and Jan. 1. The Law Center will be open normal hours for notary and power of attorney services Dec. 20-22, and 27. Walk-in Wednesdays, however, will be cancelled, and attorney availability will be limited.

- **Swabian Special Events Center** — closed Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1.

- **Le Rose Restaurant** — closed Dec. 24 to Jan. 2.

- **Kelley Club** — closed Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1-2.

- **Panzer Education Center** — closed Dec. 24 and 31; limited services Dec. 27-30.

- **Stuttgart Army Health Clinic and Dental Clinic** — closed Dec. 23-24 and 30-31.

Contact the Military Police in case of an emergency at civ. 0711-680-116. For immediate health care needs, call the Nurse Advice Line at civ. 00800-4759-2330.

- **USO** — closed Dec. 24 to Jan. 2.

- **1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Dining Facility** on

Panzer Kaserne — closed Dec. 25-26, Dec. 31 and Jan. 3.

- **Army and Air Force Exchange Service Panzer PX** — open Dec. 24 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Dec. 26, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Dec. 31, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Jan. 1, noon to 8 p.m.; Jan. 2, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The PX will be closed Dec. 25.

- **All Stuttgart commissaries** will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. On Dec. 24, the Patch Commissary will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Panzer Commissary will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the Kelley Commissary will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Health clinic inclement weather policy

Per U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart guidance, the Stuttgart Army Health Clinic will not be affected by two-hour delays, and appointments will remain at their current times.

If you miss your appointment because of inclement weather, the staff will do their best to get you seen that day.

The clinic closure policy, in response to road conditions, is as follows: green/amber: business as usual; red: delay/early closure determined by clinic commander; black: closed.

Submit AFAP issues

The U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Army Family Action

Plan program is seeking new ideas to improve the quality of life for U.S. Armed Forces communities worldwide.

Submit an issue to the 2011 AFAP conference either in person at Army Community Service; online at www.stuttgartmwr.com/ACS/afapissue, or by filling out a form and dropping it in AFAP ballot boxes located throughout each installation.

The deadline to submit an issue is Jan. 25.

For more information, call 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

AFAP seeks conference volunteers

Volunteer for the 2011 Army Family Action Plan conference and make a difference in the community. A variety of positions are available, including delegates, facilitators, recorders and issue support personnel. Volunteers must commit to the entire conference, which will run Feb. 10-11.

For more information, call 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

USO German classes start again

Conversational German language classes at the United Service Organizations will resume on Jan. 10.

A class schedule is available online at www.uso.org/stuttgart.

The USAG Stuttgart command group would like to wish the community a safe and happy holiday season.

Happy New Year!

Garrison New Year's Eve parties:

- **The Galaxy Bowling Center New Year's Eve Celebration** will be held Dec. 31 from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the bowling center, on Panzer Kaserne. The event includes all-night bowling, finger foods, party favors, a midnight toast and door prizes. Cost prior to Dec. 31 is \$30 for children/\$35 for adults. Cost at the door is \$35 for children/\$40 for adults. For more information, call 431-2575/2719/civ. 07031-15-2575/2719.
- **The Backlot Bar New Year's Eve Party** with live DJ will be held Dec. 31 at the Patch Com-

munity Club. The free event includes finger foods and a midnight toast.

- **The Manolito's New Year's Eve Celebration** will be held Dec. 31 from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Swabian Special Events Center on Patch Barracks. There is no cover charge. An all-you-can-eat buffet will run from 7-10 p.m. and costs \$30 per person. Reservations for buffet are recommended. The event will include music by DJ Nick and a free toast at midnight. For more information and reservations, call 430-8205/5758/civ. 0711-680-8205/5758.

GAWC accepting grant requests

The German American Women's Club of Stuttgart is accepting applications for grants from the proceeds of the 2010 Pfennig Bazaar. The application deadline is Jan. 15.

Instructions and the application form can be found online at www.gawc-stuttgart.org.

For more information, e-mail gawcwelfare@hotmail.com.

HHG warehouse fire town hall

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart will conduct a town hall meeting Dec. 22 from 1-3 p.m. in the Panzer Chapel for those affected by the warehouse fire that destroyed the household goods of many community families. The meeting is designed to share information and address issues.

CMRs seek volunteers for holidays

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Community Mail Rooms on Patch Barracks, Kelley Barracks and Panzer Kaserne are looking for volunteers during the holiday season.

For the Kelley CMR, call 421-2330/civ. 0711-729-2330. For the Patch CMR, call 430-7199 civ. 0711-680-7199. For the Panzer CMR, call 431-3407/civ. 07031-15-3407.

Problem-solving workshop set

The U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Equal Employment Opportunity Office will host a Women's Career Development Workshop, titled "Lead-

ership Assisted Problem Solving" on Jan. 6 from 9-11 a.m. at Army Community Service, Room 222, Building 2915, on Panzer Kaserne.

The workshop is open to everyone. Due to limited seating, registration is required by Jan. 4.

For more information, contact Yasmin Rosa at 430-5256/civ. 0711-680-5256 or yasmin.a.rosa@eur.army.mil.

New Parent Support Program classes

Army Community Service's New Parent Support Program hosts a variety of classes and support groups covering topics such as pregnancy, breast feeding and parenting.

For more information, visit ACS, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne, or call ACS at 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

Instructors needed

Instructors are needed to teach piano, stringed instruments, woodwind instruments, martial arts, swimming, driver's education and other child/youth specialized programs for the Child, Youth and School Services Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart. Instructors must be 18 years old or older.

For more information, call 430-5606/civ. 0711-680-5606, or e-mail StuttgartCYS@googlemail.com.

SCSC seeks volunteers for 1-2 hours

The Stuttgart Community Spouses Club needs volunteers to help relocate donations of clothing and household items.

To volunteer, visit the Patch Thrift Shop Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursday from 3-7 p.m.

For more information, contact the ACS Volunteer Coordinator at 431-3330/civ. 07031-15-3330.

Take FAST class

A Functional Academic Skills Training class, designed to help service members improve their General Technical scores, will be held Jan. 10-28 from 8 a.m. to noon.

The Armed Forces Clas-

sification Test will be held Feb. 9.

A Test of Adult Basic Education 9D pre-test and command permission is required to attend.

For more information, call 431-2684/ civ. 07031-15-2684.

Enroll in college courses for spring

Open enrollment for all certification and degree programs at the Panzer Education Center will begin in January.

For more information, call your school of choice:

- Central Texas College, 431-2580/civ. 07031-15-2580
- University of Maryland, 431-2305/civ. 07031-15-2305
- University of Phoenix, 431-3428/civ. 07031-15-3428
- University of Oklahoma, 431-3304/civ. 07031-15-3304.

Put Lose to Win on your calendar

Lose to Win, U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart's version of "The Biggest Loser," starts in January. The Lose to Win Challenge is a 12-week

program designed to enhance an individual's overall fitness level and awareness.

Registration and program briefings will be held Jan. 6-7 in the Patch Theater.

For more information, call the Patch Fitness Center at 430-7136/civ. 0711-680-7136.

View local children's artwork at library

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America Fine Arts Exhibit, showcasing artwork from students in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart will run through Dec. 18 in the Patch Library from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Artwork will be judged by local officials, and winning pieces will continue to the BGCA European Art Exhibit.

For more information, call 430-7204/civ. 0711-680-7204.

USO hosts Christmas dinner Dec. 16

The United Service Organizations will host a free Christmas dinner for single and unaccompanied service members on Dec. 16 at 6 p.m. in the USO (Building 2915)

on Panzer Kaserne. Guests are welcome to bring their favorite dessert to share.

The USO also needs volunteers to help with setup and serving. To volunteer, e-mail vol.stuttgart@uso.org.

For more information, call the USO at 431-3505/civ. 07031-15-3505.

ACAP upcoming events:

The Army Career and Alumni Program will host a Veterans Affairs benefits brief Jan. 25 from 8 a.m. to noon.

ACAP will also host a Transition Assistance Program workshop Feb. 1-3 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and an Interview Preparation seminar Feb. 11. The seminar is designed to help those leaving active duty service prepare for the Association of the United States Army Job Fair on Feb. 18.

All classes will be held at the ACAP office in Building 2915 on Panzer Kaserne.

For more information, call 431-2191/2192/civ. 07031-15-2191/2192.

Send community-wide announcements to stuttgart-media@eur.army.mil.



Birgit Thompson

Last day for Angel Tree program is Dec. 16

Staff Sgt. Jay Harris selects an angel ornament containing the wish of a needy child from the Angel Tree inside the Panzer Post Exchange. Throughout the past month, community members have been selecting angel ornaments from Angel Trees throughout the community, purchasing gifts for the child corresponding to the angel, and dropping them off in boxes next to the trees for Army Community Service personnel, who will match the gifts with children. The last day to drop off Angel Tree gifts is Dec. 16.

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Holiday fest

USAG Stuttgart's Winterfest



Temperatures were well-below freezing on Dec. 3, but that didn't keep families in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart from coming to Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation's annual Winterfest event, held from 4-9 p.m. next to Husky Field on Patch Barracks. Perhaps it was because several community youngsters took the stage to sing or dance, including the Patch Elementary School Chorus, PES German Immersion Class (with partner school Schönbuch Schule), Child, Youth and School Services Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills dance classes and several Boy Scout and Cub Scout packs. Or, it could have been because the children were begging to go on the "Buckin' Rudolph," carousel or toboggan ride.

To help community members stay warm, local organizations set up fest booths to sell bratwurst, hot chocolate, Glühwein, cookies and other goodies. Those who stayed until 6 p.m. were rewarded by a visit from Santa Claus himself, who arrived in traditional Winterfest style in a fire truck and participated in lighting the trees with help from U.S. Africa Command Commander Gen. William E. "Kip" Ward and Garrison Commander Col. Carl D. Bird. Santa also took pictures with children at the Patch Multi-Crafts center.

The U.S. Army Europe Dixieland Band kicked off the Winterfest entertainment Dec. 3 with jazzy Christmas favorites, including "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer."

Brittany Carlson



Joseph Branch, 10, goes home free of charge from the



Susan Huseman

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Commander Col. Carl D. Bird, left, and U.S. Africa Command Commander Gen. William E. "Kip" Ward welcome the crowd to the 2010 garrison Winterfest Dec. 3.

Brittany Carlson



Fun, community-style

festivities rings in season with music, food, rides and Santa



Brittany Carlson

Girls are thrown off Santa's most famous reindeer on the "Buckin' Rudolph" ride, one of several rides provided by the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation at the USAG Stuttgart Winterfest Dec. 3.



Susan Huseman

Santa Claus arrives in a fire truck during the USAG Stuttgart Winterfest Dec. 3, where he helps light the trees, before heading to the Patch Multi-Crafts Shop to hear children's wish lists and take photos.



Brittany Carlson

Mike Ouellette (left) and Ron Wilson, representing the FMWR Business Operations division, grill bratwursts and chicken for customers at Winterfest Dec. 3.



Brittany Carlson

[Above] Shauna Grau, 5, waves at her mother from her tiger mount on the carousel during USAG Stuttgart's Winterfest Dec. 3.



Brittany Carlson

Katherine McCormick, 4, slides down a ramp of rollers with a plastic toboggan on the "Toboggan Run" ride during Winterfest Dec. 3.



Brittany Carlson

[Above] Marie Engelbrecht (second from right) and Amaya Henderson (right), both in fifth grade, wish the community a Merry Christmas in song with the Patch Elementary School chorus, directed by Rayanne Bowker, during Winterfest.



[Left] Rhys Williams, 3, peeks at his mother from between the bars of the carousel teacup at Winterfest Dec. 3.

Brittany Carlson

See more photos at www.flickr.com/photos/usagstuttgart/.



Brittany Carlson

The U.S. Army Europe Dixieland Band warms up the crowd at Winterfest Dec. 3 with jazz versions of classic holiday tunes.

Celebrating Christmas in Germany

Story & photo by Carola Meusel
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

Christmas in Germany casts a magical spell on cold and dark winter days. It's a time to celebrate long-standing family traditions, regional customs and values.

During their everyday routine, Germans pause and sit back to enjoy Christmas cookies, meet with family and friends at home or go to the many local Christmas markets, where they can taste hot Glühwein and Christmas punch.

"The most precious thing for me during the holiday season is the anticipation of Christmas. Everything is beautifully decorated and everything glows — this is very important during the darker winter season," said Dr. Martin Kilgus, a radio journalist with SWR International in Stuttgart.

The holiday season in Germany officially begins with Advent. Historically, Advent is the season in which Christians awaits the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas day.

An Advent tradition in Germany is the Advent wreath. The wreath is made out of fir tree branches and decorated with dried fruits, pine cones, glittering Christmas ball ornaments or stars. Four candles represent the light brought into the world by Jesus Christ. A candle is lit each Sunday until Christmas Eve.

During the 20th century, the Advent calendar was introduced in Germany to help count down the days before Christmas Eve ("Heilig Abend," or holy evening). The typical Advent calendar is made out of paper and has 24 doors, one to open each day from Dec. 1-24. Children will find holiday season-inspired images or chocolate behind the paper doors. Some calendars also have boxes or small bags filled with presents to open each day.

Most people in Germany also begin to bake Christmas cookies during the Advent season.

"During the holiday season, I used to bake gingerbread, cinnamon stars and Gutsle [Swabian word for shortbread cut-out cookies] with my mother. The baking used to announce Christmas," said Kilgus, reflecting on his childhood memories.

"To this day my favorite cookies are the sugary cinnamon stars," he added.

The holiday season for Linda Tillmanns, an elementary and middle school teacher from Düsseldorf, officially commenced every year with the so-called "Weckmann."

"The Weckmann is a small cookie man fashioned out of sweet yeast dough. His eyes are made out of raisins, and he always carries a clay whistle in his arm. When the local bakeries started to sell the Weckmann,



Linda Tillmanns takes a closer look at a Christmas ornament on display at the Cannstatter Christmas Market on Dec. 4. Decorating a Christmas tree is one of many holiday traditions Germans observe during Advent each year.

Christmas wasn't far," Tillmanns said.

Dec. 6 marks the birthday of Nikolaus, Bishop of Myra (known today as Turkey), and is celebrated in Germany as St. Nikolaus' (Santa Claus) Day. Legend has it that on his birthday, Nikolaus would don his precious bishop's coat, fill a big sack with nuts, apples, tangerines and honey cake, and load it on the back of his donkey. He then picked up his staff and walked along the streets, giving away the food to those he met.

Today, children place their boots outside their doors on the night of Dec. 5 in hopes that St. Nikolaus will leave some goodies in their shoes. Early on Dec. 6, most children find their boots filled with candy, gingerbread, toys, tangerines and nuts. In other cases, St. Nikolaus, also called "Weihnachtsmann," (Christmas man) visits children during the day in kindergartens and schools, or makes a grand entrance during the evening hours at home.

He is often accompanied by his helper, Knecht (servant) Ruprecht. Knecht Ruprecht carries all the presents for the children in a big sack on his back and

During the holiday season, I used to bake gingerbread, cinnamon stars and Gutsle [Swabian word for shortbread cut-out cookies] with my mother. The baking used to announce Christmas.

Dr. Martin Kilgus

Radio journalist for SWR International
in Stuttgart

has a birch switch hanging from his belt for those children who misbehaved during the year. While St. Nikolaus typically has a long white beard and wears a red coat with a red Santa hat, Knecht Ruprecht wears a brown or black coat and has a long gray beard.

Martin Kilgus has a St. Nikolaus Christmas ornament that he cherishes.

"I have this old porcelain St. Nikolaus figurine with a tea light in the middle. Every year during the holiday season, no matter where in the world I am celebrating Christmas, I put out my Nikolaus figurine to get into the holiday spirit," Kilgus said.

In Germany, Christmas Eve is celebrated with close family. Traditionally, the gift exchange takes place in the afternoon, followed by a festive meal. The choice of meal varies from goose with red cabbage, dumplings or potatoes, to fish, or, typical for Swabia, Saitenwürstle (sausages) with potato salad.

Many people in Germany visit extended family and friends on Dec. 25 and 26, also called the first and second Christmas days.

The exchanging of gifts takes place under the festively decorated Christmas tree.

Linda Tillmanns decorates her tree each year with real candles, angels, birds and St. Nikolaus figurines. "It's wonderful sitting under this tree with family and friends singing Christmas songs together," she said.

Kilgus also has special memories related to Christmas trees.

"My dad grew Christmas trees in our garden," he said. "We used to cut the tree and decorate it with glass ball Christmas ornaments and Lametta (tinsel) in the afternoon of Dec. 24. I was decorating and setting up the nativity scene, while my mother was cooking calf tongue with rice for dinner."

Calf tongue may not be part of everyone's holiday plans, but whether you're German or American, the holiday season can be filled with laughter, joy and even a little bit of magic. For Kilgus, part of this magic comes from simply being with loved ones around the Christmas tree, upwrapping presents and nibbling on Christmas cookies — together. Despite the cold outside, he enjoys the warmth that comes from being with those he loves.

"I simply enjoy the time with family and friends; everybody comes home for the holidays," Kilgus said.

In the words so many Germans will be saying to each other this month: "Fröhliche Weihnachten" (Merry Christmas)!

... The bells never sound sweeter as during
the Christmas season.

It sounds like angels are singing about
peace and joy

Traditional German Christmas song

Friedrich Wilhelm Kritzinger, German theologian (1816-1890)

What's happening in FMWR



photos.com

Join Rock Climbing Club on Panzer

A new Rock Climbing Club now meets on Panzer Kaserne Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. and Thursday from 7:30-8:30 a.m. in the Panzer Fitness Center. Climbing is free, and equipment rental is \$5 per person, per session. Participants under 18 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, call 431-2774/civ. 07031-15-2774.

Learn fashion design

The U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Arts and Crafts program will host a new series of courses on fashion for teens and adults from January through May, titled "Fashion Design: The Art of Style." Each class will focus on developing a new skill for making tailored clothing. In June, students can exhibit their designs in a fashion show.

Classes for teens begin Jan. 6. Teens can register for the class at Child, Youth and School Services Parent Central Services in Building 2347 on Patch Barracks.

Adults should register by Jan. 4 for classes that begin Jan. 11.

For more information, call Kelly Sarles, Stuttgart Arts and Crafts director, at 430-4061/civ. 0711-680-4061.

RB Club new hours

The RB Club has new operating hours. The lounge will be open with bar food on Wednesday and Thursday from 4:30-10 p.m., Friday from 4:30-11 p.m., and Sunday during NFL football season from 6-10 p.m.

Holiday concert features local family

Hear holiday songs performed by Alan and Jennifer Buxkemper, a husband and wife team and ac-

complished pianist and vocalist, in concert this month. Concerts are scheduled for Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m. in the Stuttgart Theatre Center on Kelley Barracks, and Dec. 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Brewed Awakenings Cafe on Robinson Barracks.

For more information, call 421-3055/civ. 0711-729-3305.

Attend German Immersion Winter Camp

Children can learn about German culture and participate in fun activities on and off base with the Child, Youth and School Services German Immersion Winter Camp, set for Dec. 20-22 at The Hub on Patch Barracks. The camp is for children ages 6-12, and all campers must be enrolled in CYS Services.

For more information, call 430-7480/civ. 0711-680-7480.

Fitness items on sale

The Nonappropriated Funds section of U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation will host a fitness equipment sale Dec. 20 from 9-11 a.m. at the Central Receiving Warehouse, located in the fenced area across from the Panzer Commissary. The sale will include spin bikes for \$50, weight plates and dumbbells for 40 cents per pound, and weight bars for \$12 per bar.

All forms of payment will be accepted. All purchased items must be removed at the time of sale.

For more information, call 430-7136/civ. 0711-680-7136.

Kelley Club now open Saturday

The Kelley Club now has weekend hours. The club is open Saturday from 4:30-7:30 p.m. for dinner, and the lounge is open from 4:30-10 p.m.

The club is closed Sunday, except during NFL football season (through Feb. 6), when it will be open from 4:30-10 p.m.

FMWR is hiring

A variety of regular and flexible positions are available through the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Directorate for Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

For more information, stop by the Nonappropriated Fund Human Resources Office at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center in Building 2948 on Panzer Kaserne or call 431-3119/civ. 07031-15-3119. Visit <http://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/eur/employment/naf/index.htm> for vacancy announcements.

For MWR updates, e-mail mwrmarketing@eur.army.mil.



Coming to Patch Theater

Dec. 16 — Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 17 — The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (PG) 6 p.m., Case 39 (R) 9 p.m.

Dec. 18 — Secretariat (PG) 4 p.m., The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (PG) 7 p.m., My Soul to Take (R) 9 p.m.

Dec. 19 — Secretariat (PG) 2 p.m., The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (PG) 4 p.m., Case 39 (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 20 — The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (PG) 6 p.m.

Dec. 21 — Secretariat (PG) 6 p.m.

Dec. 22 — My Soul to Take (R) 6 p.m.

Dec. 23 — Case 39 (R) 6 p.m.

Dec. 24 — Megamind (PG) 3 p.m.

Dec. 25 — Nostalgia Day: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (1964) 1 p.m., How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1966) 2 p.m., A

Christmas Story (1983) 3 p.m., Visit from Santa Claus, 4 p.m., TRON: Legacy* (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 26 — Megamind (PG) 2 p.m., TRON: Legacy (PG-13) 4 p.m., How Do You Know (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 27 — How Do You Know (R) 6 p.m.

Dec. 28 — Life as We Know It (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 29 — The Social Network (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 30 — Megamind (PG) 6 p.m.

Dec. 31 — Little Fockers (PG-13) 3 p.m.

* First-run rates apply.

For more information on the movie schedule, including synopses and a sneak peek at upcoming movies, visit the garrison website at www.stuttgart.army.mil and click on "Patch Movies."

The Patch Theater staff would like to wish the community Happy Holidays!



Walden Media

Globetrotters visit USAG Stuttgart

The Harlem Globetrotters basketball team performed in U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Dec. 5 in the Patch Fitness Center in an exhibition game against the Washington Generals.

The 85-year-old team, famous for record-breaking basketball feats

combined with comedy, visited Stuttgart during its ninth holiday military tour, sponsored by Navy Entertainment and Armed Forces Entertainment. The tour included stops in five countries. During the second half of the game, the team played with a special camouflage ball, in honor of service members.

Harlem Globetrotters guard Rocket Rivers (#17) shows off his ball handling skills as Washington Generals players try to steal the ball during the game Dec. 5.



Following the Harlem Globetrotters' exhibition game Dec. 5 in USAG Stuttgart, Globetrotter Turbo Pearson (#44) signs autographs for community children. The game was part of a European tour of U.S. military installations.



Photos by Brittany Carlson
Cheese Chisholm (#11) completes a slam dunk after being on Hammer Harrison's (#31) shoulders during the Harlem Globetrotter versus the Washington Generals exhibition game in USAG Stuttgart Dec. 5.

SPORTS SHORTS

Register for spring sports

Registration for Child, Youth and School Services spring sports, which include soccer and baseball/softball, from Jan. 10 to Feb. 28, 2011.

All interested participants must have a physical valid through June 7, 2011.

To register, visit Parent Central Services in Building 2347 on Patch Barracks. For more information, call 430-7483/7480/civ. 0711-680-7483/7480.

Ski with ODR

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Outdoor Recreation, a part of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, will host several upcoming ski trips.

These include a trip to Zillertal, Austria, Dec. 18; Feldberg, Dec. 21; the Black Forest/Triberg, Dec. 28; Obersdorf, Jan. 8; Ski Weekend in Chamonix, France, Jan. 14-17; and Lermoos, Austria, Jan 29.

For more information, or to sign up, call 431-2774/civ. 07031-15-2774.

CYS Services offers martial arts for kids

Tae Kwon Do, Capoeira, or Aikido — choose your form of martial art and build strength, balance and confidence with a Child, Youth and School Services class.

A variety of class times are open to children ages 6 and older. Participants must be registered with CYS Services.

For more information, call 430-6281/civ. 0711-680-6281.

Garrison news is now available via e-mail. To sign up for news flashes and briefs, send an e-mail to stuttgart-media@eur.army.mil, with the subject: "add me to your mailing list."



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<http://baptist-stuttgart.com>

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December 24, 2010
2:00 pm and 8:00 pm



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(26266)

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MONDAY & WEDNESDAY (1845-2130)

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MONDAY (1845-2130)

BEHS 210 Introduction to Social and Behavioral Science (3)
(26262) 50/50 Hybrid Class: Combines on-site with online instruction; meets face-to-face Monday

TUESDAY & THURSDAY (1700-2200)

BIOL 201 Human Anatomy and Physiology I (4)
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GERM 112 Elementary German II (3)
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IFSM 201 Introduction to Computer-Based Systems (3)
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TUESDAY (1845-2130)

FINC 330 Business Finance (3)
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BMGT 364 Management and Organization Theory (3)
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ENGL 241 Introduction to the Novel (3)
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THURSDAY (1845-2130)

PSYC 321 Social Psychology (3)
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WEEKEND CLASS (0900-1600)

GERM 334 German Life and Culture II (3)
(26338) Class Dates: 22/23 Jan; 5/6 & 19/20 Feb; 5/6 Mar

WEEKEND SEMINAR (0900-1730)

HIST 314D The Darfur Crisis (1)
(25306) (26/27 Feb)

MGST 198J Motivation and Performance in Organizations (1)
(25316) (5/6 Mar)

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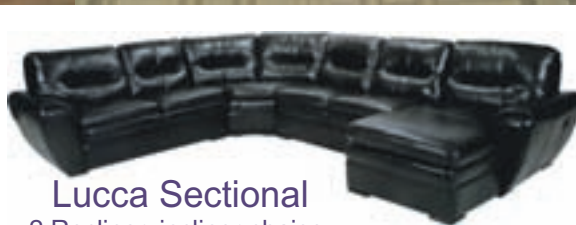


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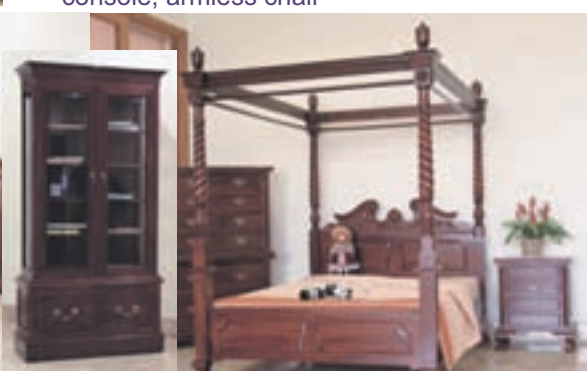
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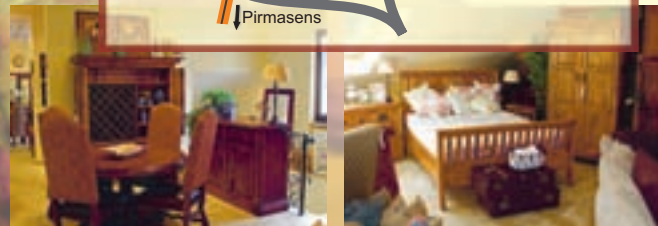
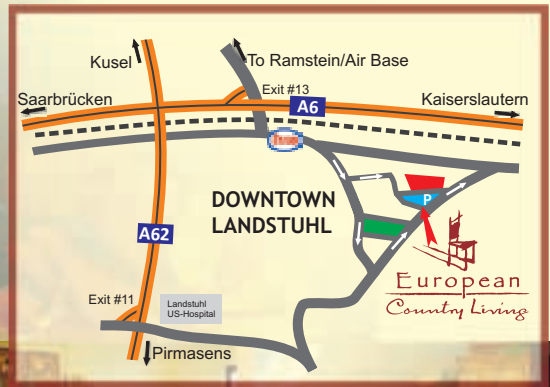

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