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2021 AMC David G. Harris Public Affairs Competition

# STUTTGART Citizen

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# A 20 Year Reunion

## GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

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High School

# Germany

Czech Republic

Belgium

Luxembourg

France

Austria



The days are getting shorter, the air a little crisper and soon we'll be trading in our Maß of Germany's finest beer for a cup full of glühwein – Germany's sweetly spiced mulled wine. If the September fest period is why you come to Germany, the winter's postcard-perfect Christmas markets are why you stay. And thankfully in this edition of the Stuttgart Citizen we have a story both on our festive September as we take you to the 46th Annual Soldier Wasen, and then provide you a guide to Germany's top Christmas markets.

You'll join our editor, Marcus Fichtl, on a nostalgic tour of his alma mater, Heidelberg High School. Walk the halls with him and see what's become of the home of the Lions. Stick around in the story and learn a little bit about the history of DoDEA's beginnings in 1946 to today's cutting edge learning and 21st Century Schools – including the brand new Patch Elementary School.

Our newest member of the Citizen team, Balmina Sehra, introduces herself with a heartfelt commentary on the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Of English and Indian roots, and a German upbringing, Balmina says the monarchy had always played "background music" to her life. Now with a change of conductor, she asks herself the same question she asked her mom when Princess Diana passed away, "Why are you sad?"

This magazine wouldn't be a government publication without a few practical stories as well. Inside you'll find a guide to holiday mail shipping (hint: the earlier you ship, the better), and some energy (and money) tips. Did you know that every degree Celcius you lower heat you save six percent on your heating bill? That means lowering the radiator dial from 4 to 3, which lowers the heat from 24 to 20 C, will save you 24 percent on the next bill.

Also, did you know that one of the Army's top Soldiers works in our Religious Support Office, or what happens when Marines, German school children and candy mix?

Sadly, we mourn the passing of Richard Roberts, the longtime artistic director of Stuttgart's Theatre Center, who passed away in October. Honored with a Special Recognition Award of the American Association of Community Theatre in 2020, Richard's unique touch brought stories to life for Stuttgart's multicultural troupes and audiences since 2008. Richard, you will be missed!

*Please enjoy the magazine, your families and each other. See you next in 2023!*

*Your Stuttgart  
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Unless otherwise indicated, all seven-digit phone numbers in The Stuttgart Citizen are DSN numbers and all longer numbers are civilian.

Soldiers march down the Cannstatter Volksfest on their way to the Soldaten Wasen.  
Photo by Marcus Fichtl



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U.S. Army Materiel Command  
2021 David G. Harris Public Affairs Competition

The 2022 Swabian-American Biergarten kicked off with the ceremonial tapping of the keg on Sep. 17. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

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**Cover image:**

A map of DoDEA schools closed (red pin) and open (green pin) since 1946. Cover image adapted from a map provided by the America Overseas Schools Historical Society.

Cover art based on Renee's illustrations, Lyudmyla Kharlamova/Shutterstock.com

Compiled by **Bardia Khajenoori**

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Many people see the holiday season as a time to enjoy the company of loved ones and partake in family or cultural traditions together. The holidays can also present opportunities for a slightly slower pace of daily life, with the chance to grab hot chocolate and a blanket and make up for lost time with a good book.

This selection of new arrivals to the Patch Library includes seasonal or thematically-appropriate titles to enjoy with younger children as well as a broad mix of fiction and non-fiction works for older readers with a variety of interests.

## Peppa Pig and the Christmas Surprise

By **Neville Astley and Mark Baker**

It's Christmas morning, and Santa has left presents under the tree for everyone. But no one is more delighted than Grandpa Pig, whose gift is something he's always wanted: a drone! Everyone rushes outside to try it out, and Peppa and George love watching where it flies. But when its battery runs low, the drone is supposed to fly home.

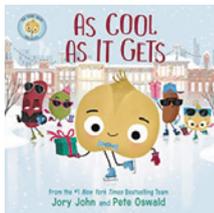
Where is that? Could it be . . . the North Pole? As Peppa and George watch and wait, they spot friends having wintry fun while Grandpa's gift flies farther and farther away. What kind of Christmas surprise will it take for him to get it back?



## As Cool as it Gets

By **Jory John and Pete Oswald**

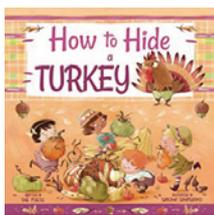
When the Cool Bean picks the name of the coolest of the cool beans, Beanadette, out of a hat for the annual gift exchange, he's not feeling very merry or festive — he's feeling pressure! Beanadette is definitely expecting the coolest present of all. Will the Cool Bean find the perfect gift in time for the party?



## How to Hide a Turkey

By **Sue Fliess**

Thanksgiving is all about showing kindness and gratitude to everyone you love—and if you're careful and clever, you can help a turkey friend find his own family, too!



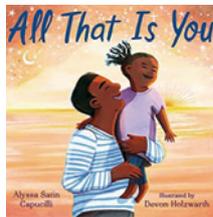
So, grab some supplies—scissors,

colored paper, glue, and string—and get ready to make a mask to keep your turkey friend safe. Then maybe you can work together to hide him until he can find his family flock!

## All That is You

By **Alyssa Satin Capucilli**, illustrated by **Devon Holzwarth**

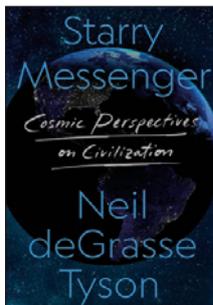
From the bestselling writer of the Biscuit series comes a picture book ode to the intergenerational bonds of love and joy shared between family and friends, featuring a diverse array of communities. With imaginative, exuberant language, *All That is You* celebrates the treasured bonds of love, joy, and inspiration shared by us all.



## Starry Messenger: Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization

By **Neil deGrasse Tyson**

Bringing his cosmic perspective to civilization on Earth, Neil deGrasse Tyson shines new light on the crucial fault lines of our time—war, politics, religion, truth, beauty, gender, and race—in a way that stimulates a deeper sense of unity for us all.

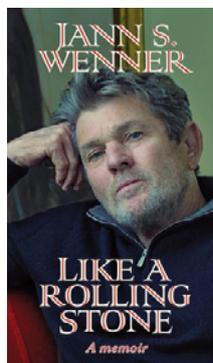


From insights on resolving global conflict to reminders of how precious it is to be alive, Tyson reveals, with warmth and eloquence, an array of brilliant and beautiful truths that apply to us all, informed and enlightened by knowledge of our place in the universe.

## Like a Rolling Stone: A Memoir

By **Jann S. Wenner**

Rolling Stone founder, editor, and publisher Jann Wenner offers a memoir from the heart of the rock and roll generation: from the triumphs of the Beatles and the Stones to Bono and the Boss, from Burning Man to the White House. Jann Wenner has been called “the greatest editor of his generation” by his peers. His deeply personal memoir brings



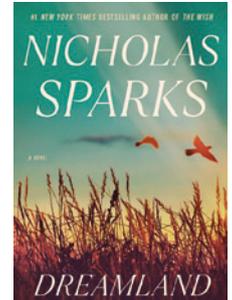
you inside the music, the politics, and the lifestyle of a generation, an epoch of cultural change that swept America and beyond.

## Dreamland

By **Nicholas Sparks**

From the acclaimed author of *The Wish* comes a powerful novel about risking everything for a dream—and whether it's possible to leave the past behind.

In the course of a single unforgettable week, two young people will navigate the exhilarating heights and heartbreak of first love. Hundreds of miles away, a mother fleeing an abusive husband with her six-year-old will put her love for her young son to the test. And fate will draw all three people together in a web of life-altering connections. . . forcing each to wonder whether the dream of a better life can ever survive the weight of the past.

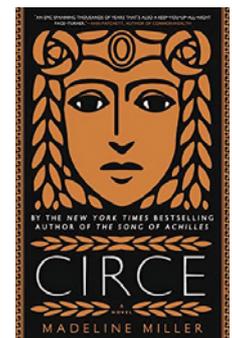


## Circe

By **Madeline Miller**

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child—neither powerful like her father nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power: the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves.

Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts, and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology. But there is danger, too. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from or with the mortals she has come to love.



Summaries and cover art courtesy of Goodreads and/or publishers

## Stay as resilient as a Lakota bow

By Chaplain (Maj.) Jason Hesseling

Command Chaplain, Special Operations Command Africa

There are few occasions more disheartening than being the last person at the baggage claim carousel. The last bag is off-loaded, the carousel stops moving, your bags are nowhere to be seen... Lost baggage is just one of the many hardships faced by our military families during a PCS, adding stress to an already stress-filled season. Finding housing, struggling with jet-lag, forming new relationships at the unit or at school or in the neighborhood all demand a resilient and flexible mindset.

The Lakota holy man Joseph Marshall speaks about the resiliency of a Lakota bow. It is drawn back time and time again to its breaking point to send arrows flying, yet each time the bow returns to its resting state. It may last decades because of three reasons: first the carefully selected wood from which the bow is made, second the efficient and effective design of the bow, and third the skill of the craftsman who made it.

This illustration nicely correlates to us military families as we examine our resilience. Lakota bows are made from flexible yet strong wood. It takes a certain amount of grit to serve in the military or to be a military spouse or child. Not everyone has what it takes to pack up and move across the world every two or three years, yet military families make this part of their routine. It requires some great inner strength and even greater flexibility, much like the wood of Lakota bows.

It takes a good design and good plan to PCS successfully. Military families

know the importance of communicating with your sponsor, planning in advance, using packing lists, and getting tied in with all the support agencies and organizations we can. We rely on the support offered from Army Community Services, the Chaplain's Office, the Housing Office, Military and Family Life Counselors, the School Registration office, the Transportation Office, the USO, and of course our unit. These are the folks that help us plan for the move, and then execute a well-designed plan.

And finally, the skill of the craftsman. This is where our faith and our hope take center stage. Even if our PCS plan falls apart, or we feel stretched to our breaking point because of the move, we can place our faith in a loving creator who has endowed us with remarkable gifts and strengths and resiliency. These gifts and strengths are brought out in those communities that sustain and nurture our faith – our families, our chapels, our neighborhoods, and our units.

During its lifetime, the Lakota bow will be drawn thousands and thousands of times. It will be stressed toward its breaking point at times. In our life we will be stressed and tested, just as the bow. That is the time to remember, we are made of strong, yet flexible wood, we have a solid plan and people who will help us, and we have faith grounded in our communities of support.



For a full schedule of holiday services provided by the USAG Stuttgart Religious Support Office, visit [StuttgartCitizen.com](http://StuttgartCitizen.com), the RSO page on [home.army.mil/stuttgart](http://home.army.mil/stuttgart), or the USAG Stuttgart mobile app.



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# "WHY ARE YOU SAD?"

**By Balmina Sehra**  
 USAG Stuttgart Public  
 Affairs

I believe I was about six years old when Princess Diana, or 'Lady Di,' passed away. My mother was watching news clips and reports on our small box TV when she said that she felt very sad about what had happened. This did not make sense to me: why would she be sad about some person passing away whom she only knew through television? Never having met in person or even spoken a single word to this practical stranger, why would it affect her? In my very limited childish view, I simply could not understand my mother and just brushed off her comment as a weird thing grown-ups say (which I found myself doing quite often back then). However, years later, I am confronted with the same weird feeling after the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, and I find myself stumbling for words when people ask me, "why are you sad?"

I never took particular interest in the Royal Family, nor did I have strong feelings about them either way. Although I grew up here in Germany, I have roots in both England and India. The British

monarchy seemed to play as background music in my life—I kind of knew what was going on but never cared too much about the details. I was in England studying at the time of Harry and Meghan's wedding, and for the first time in my life, I got to experience the effects the Royal Family has on everyday life in England. Everywhere I went, the royals seemed to be the topic of the day. People spoke about the wedding, but there was also a lot of speculation about their private lives and yes, sometimes criticism directed towards the monarchy and whether they still had a place in modern society.

And yet many people are left with this sense of sadness after hearing of the death of the queen. Despite the fact that she got to live to such an advanced age, social media and the internet are full of blog posts of people feeling empty and lost after hearing about her passing. In a way, she was living history — our connection to the past, having served during World War II, known Winston Churchill personally, and being a figure we learn about in history books. Presidents and prime ministers may come and go, but the queen was always there, and perhaps we felt that she would never go. After all, she took over the throne at just 25, becoming one of the world's most well-known women at a time when women faced many difficulties finding their independence, and reigned for 70 years. Most of us are not able to remember a time when she was not on the throne.

Although I am happy to see a king, it fills me with sadness that the next three generations of the monarchy will not see a queen. Perhaps we did not realize how much we looked up to her for support. It may have been the hit of the recent pandemic that showed us how much we yearn for stability, and for someone to just tell us that all will be ok, no matter how uncertain the future may look. When COVID first hit and most countries faced their first lockdown, life felt scary. The future seemed dreadful and most politicians were overwhelmed; very few seemed to be able to produce a sense of calm for their people. When the queen addressed the nation, it was highly anticipated and for some reason it did manage to give the people a sense of calm. Although many cannot understand what it was about that speech that was so effective, I believe it had more to do with who was speaking rather than what was said.

Our link to a world that no longer exists has finally taken its last breath, and we are now facing an uncertain future. But perhaps one thing we can learn from the queen is that no matter how overwhelming and daunting the future may feel, we can still face it with grace and elegance.

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# Ein Prosit für German-American Friendship

Story & photos by  
**Marcus Fichtl**  
 USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

The sounds of freedom returned to the Cannstatter Volksfest Sept. 26, as 3,000 NATO troops belted out cadences and promptly marched into the Fürstenberg beer tent for the 46th annual Soldaten Wasen.

The event officially kicked off with the traditional keg tapping as Garrison Commander Col. Matt Ziglar let the beer flow with just two swings from his hammer. The first tapping in three years since the coronavirus shuttered Germany's fests country-wide in 2020.

Flanked by Stuttgart Lord Mayor Frank Nopper and Baden-Württemberg Army State Commander Col. Dieter Bohnert, and armed with the day's first "official" beer, Ziglar announced to an uproarious German-American crowd, "I can't think of a better military tradition!"

(Left to right) Baden-Württemberg Army State Commander Col. Dieter Bohnert, Stuttgart Lord Mayor Frank Nopper, Fürstenberg tent operator Peter Brandl, and USAG Stuttgart Garrison Commander Col. Matt Ziglar, enjoy the day's first official *Maß*.



"Service Members march to the tent as part of a nearly half-century tradition put on hold through two years of COVID cancellations."

Sometimes nicknamed the "NATO Beer Maneuver," the combined-joint exercise has been a Stuttgart staple since 1975 when local beer tent operators Gerd and Hans Atz invited the German Soldiers from the nearby Theodor-Heuss Kaserne for *'Zwei Maß Bier und ein Göckele'* — two liter-sized mugs of beer and half a chicken. Two years later U.S. troops joined the party, and by 1982 the invitation had been extended to all NATO forces in Baden-Württemberg.

Sergeants Lisa Tamez and Juan Colon of the garrison headquarters company, whose combined *Maß* count is strictly classified, said the Soldaten Wasen was an experience of a lifetime.

"The camaraderie that I felt, it was a feeling I hadn't felt in a long time," said Tamez. "Marching by, singing cadence and representing the U.S. Army in Germany — we made our presence known that day."

"It was like being in basic training again... minus everybody looking and recording with their cell phones," laughed Colon.

As Europop, smoke and suds slowly overtook the tent (and middle school dance shyness), the traditional trading of patches and festivities began. Patrol caps turned into hunting caps, benches turned from seats into elevated podiums for international debate, and a pair of Schmidts — one German and one American — found each other, quickly trading family histories. One attendee quipped, "soon you'll only be able to tell the Soldier's country by their boots."

"The camaraderie that I felt, it was a feeling I hadn't felt in a long time," said Tamez.





German and American troops pose for an impromptu selfie while wearing the patches of the other country.



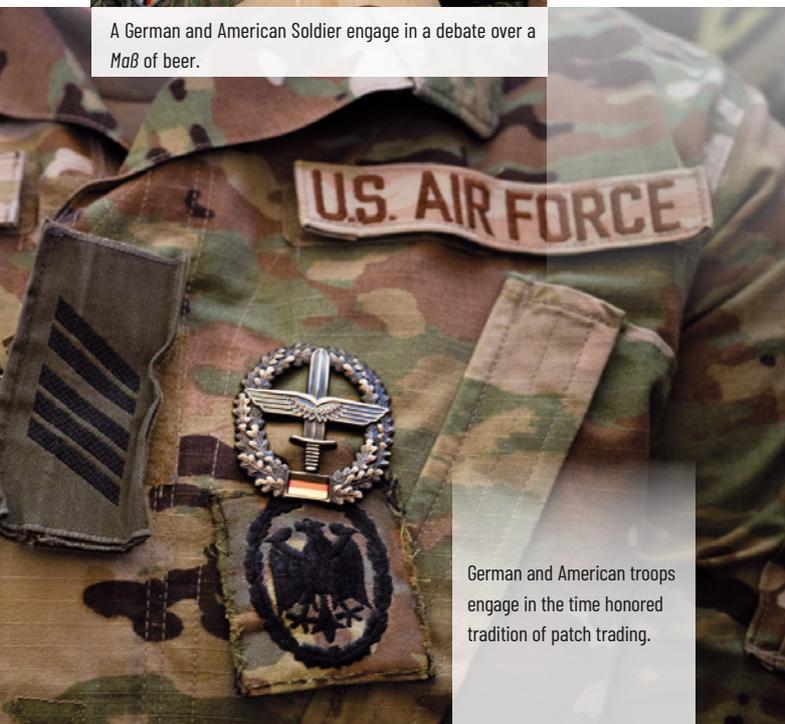
Col. Matt Ziglar celebrates after tapping the ceremonial keg with only two swings of the hammer.



Two Schmidt(t)s from two countries pose with one another.  
Photo by Air Force 2nd Lt. Gaby Gocso



A German and American Soldier engage in a debate over a Maß of beer.



German and American troops engage in the time honored tradition of patch trading.

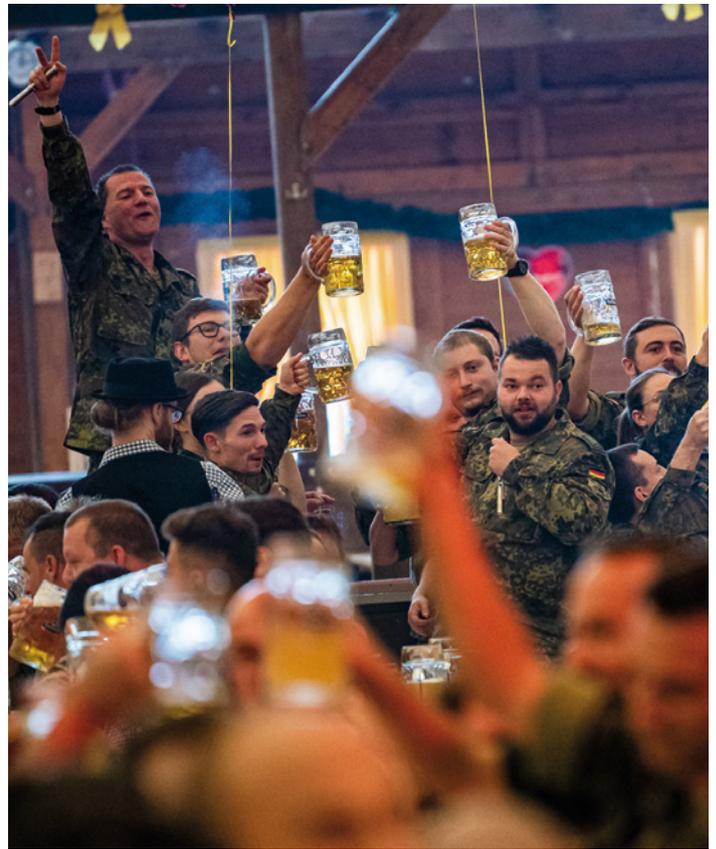
For Tamez and Colon it was during their second *Maß* that they overcame their butterflies and headed over to the German benches. In no time they were trading patches, flags and stories.

“The Germans really emphasized having a good time,” Tamez said. “They let loose and made us feel comfortable.”

Over the years the tent hosts have changed: the Atz brothers passed the baton to Schwaben Braüi’s Alexander Laub, and after Laub’s retirement in 2008 hosting duties have fallen upon Peter Brandl of the Black Forest brewery Fürstenberg. Even kegs of (supposedly non-alcoholic) beer in years past have been sent to NATO troops deployed to Afghanistan, but regardless of tent (or country) the mission of the Soldaten Wasen had always been the same – to build friendship and camaraderie.

“Being off-post at a massive event, sharing history with different military people, it’s a moment I’ll always remember,” said Colon. “And I already want to do it again.”

*U.S. Air Force 2nd Lt. Gaby Gocso contributed to this report.*



German Soldiers cheer the Americans who have arrived in the tent.



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Natalie Clarke-Knight and Mark Wamsler pose for a photo in their hometown of Schwäbisch Gmünd in 2021. Photo by Marcus Fichtl



Manuel Drescher, the final missing sibling.

# Back Together

By Marcus Fichtl

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

*Editor's Note: Last year we received a message to the garrison's Facebook page about a German-American brother and sister who were finally reuniting after 45 years. They were born to the same German mother and different American Soldiers in the nearby town of Schwäbisch Gmünd. The mother, without letting the fathers know, had sent the kids to various family members and orphanages. Natalie Clark-Knight would wind up in the United States, where she served in the U.S. Army and deployed to Afghanistan, while her younger brother, Mark Wamsler, stayed in Germany, becoming an author and schoolteacher.*

**Stuttgart Citizen:** Thanks again for sharing your story, it was one of our favorites last year. Now that it's been a year since you and Mark finally reunited, what's it been like?

**Natalie Clarke-Knight:** It's been amazing! I actually went back to Schwäbisch Gmünd at the end of August and I spent a few days with Mark. We traveled to Munich because he had a part in the small German soap. There we played around in Munich for a little bit and overall just spent a few days catching up and hanging out.

**SC: Do you really feel like brother and sister now?**

**NCK:** 100%. I think we were already well on the way, if not already there, before we even met. Because of COVID, we could not meet right away, so we had to establish that relationship over messages. And I think when you do that, you have to be a bit more descriptive. You have to try to communicate your emotions better because it's a little difficult to ascertain that from a message.

**SC: How many siblings are there in total?**

**NCK:** So there's five of us. My youngest is my sister, Darleen. She lives in Virginia with my mother. Then there is my oldest brother Roger, he lives in Atlanta. And

then there's Mark. And then there's the last one: his name was Brian at birth, but when he was adopted, they changed his name to Manuel in order to prevent bullying in school.

**SC: How did you end up finding Manuel?**

**NCK:** He was adopted by a family that lived in a very, very small town in Bavaria. In the late 70s, an American name may have caused some issues, so his adoptive parents decided to change his name to Manuel, which affected our search. But from all the publicity in Mark's and my reunification, we were able to get someone to call the Department of Children's Protective Services. They tracked him down, conveyed our message, and left it up to him if he wanted to reach out to us. Then, in early October, he contacted us! We found the last remaining sibling!

**SC: How was your first contact with Manuel?**

**NCK:** Oh, extremely positive. He shared some pictures of his family and told me about his childhood and he had a great childhood. So I'm very, very happy to hear that. He's married. He is a very successful businessman that founded his own company with a childhood friend and then sold it a few years ago to Daimler. He's absolutely open to a visit. I would have jumped on the plane the next day and come, but we're currently planning a family reunion before Christmas.

To read the previous article about the REUNION please scan this QR code



Scan me

**SC: What was the first question he asked you?**

**NCK:** He just sent me a picture of himself: "Here I am." He asked "how long were you looking for me?" He never knew he had any siblings.

**SC: How excited are Manuel's kids, your new niece and nephews?**

**NCK:** Oh, my God – incredibly excited! The kids, there's three of them from six to ten. So the reactions ranged from 'Oh, I want to go to school with one of my uncle's (Mark's) books and bring it to show and tell.' And the older one, who is starting English, she's like, 'Oh, I have an aunt who lives in the States. I can speak English with her!' So they're super excited, and of course I am too, because, you know, I love kids. So I've got a couple more nieces and nephews to spoil!

**SC: When's the next Reunion?**

**NCK:** We haven't finalized all the dates and details. But we're aiming to get together before Christmas.

# Holiday Postal Info

## Community Mail Room Extended Hours

In addition to normal Monday through Friday hours, the customer service window at all Community Mail Rooms will be open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the following Saturdays:

**November 19 and 26 | December 3, 10, and 17\* | January 7**

\*Hours on Dec. 17 start one hour earlier, with service from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

CMRs are closed on federal holidays (incl. Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day) and all Sundays.

## Army Post Office Saturday Hours

Army Post Offices at Kelley Barracks, Panzer Kaserne, and Patch Barracks will be open on the following Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.:

**November 19 and 26 | December 3, 10, and 17**

APOs are closed on federal holidays (incl. Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day) and all Sundays.

## Mail By: Recommended Mailing Dates

**23 Nov 22:** SAM / Retail Ground Parcels

**9 Dec 22:** Priority Parcels: First-Class Letters and Cards

**16 Dec 22:** Express Mail (for authorized locations)

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**Express mail:** 2-5 days

**Priority/1st Class:** 4-10 days

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**Space Available Mail (SAM):** 4-6 Weeks



## Appointments

Got a few packages to send out? Make an appointment for holiday mailing by using the USAG Stuttgart mobile app or visiting [stuttgartcitizen.com/appointments](http://stuttgartcitizen.com/appointments). Appointments are available for the one hour period prior to Army Post Offices opening for business.

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# Dial that radiator down!

By Marcus Fichtl

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

For anyone who's lived with a winter climate, there's generally a Newtonian logic to the push-pull of temperature and heating costs. When temperature goes down, there's an equal and opposite rise in your bill.

But this winter will be different.

The supply of natural gas, which makes up the majority of Germany's heating, is expected to be more constrained. In response to Europe and America's unwavering support for Ukrainian sovereignty, Russia has tightened the valve for gas heading West. German officials over the summer have estimated household heating costs to double or even triple during the traditional heating period from Oct. 1 to April 30.

Your biggest weapon for winning the fight against energy costs is understanding how your German radiator works.

Unlike most American homes, which use air ducts to heat a home, a German house will have a water heater in most rooms. On those heaters are dials generally numbered 1 - 5. The dials regulate how much water moves from the central boiler into that radiator. The larger numbers increase the flow of water and create more heat. Each number represents a 4 degree Celsius change in heat, with "1" corresponding to 12 C or 54 F and "5" setting a temperature at 28 C or 82 F.

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart's Energy Manager, Dominik Barlow, said that dial is your number one tool to reduce heating costs. "Each degree (Celsius) you reduce by, you save 6 percent on your heating bill." That means if you have your dial cranked up to "4," or 24 C / 75 F, reducing it to "3," or 20 C / 68 F will knock 24 percent off your bill.

Barlow said that you should inspect all your radiators and ensure that the radiators you have in unused rooms are set to "1." For rooms that you are actively using, close the

doors to maximize value from the heat you are producing.

When searching for a new place to inspect the home's energy efficiency rating, newer units will have ratings of A or B, while older, unrenovated buildings may have ratings of D and E. Barlow said that while heat rises and can make an attic apartment warmer during the summer, what you want for the winter months is a place in the middle surrounded by people using their heaters above you, below and next to you.

While heating costs will be the top concern for most, there may be some increases in German electricity costs as well, as about 15 percent of it is supplied from natural gas plants. Barlow had some simple tips there as well.

"Make sure you replace your bulbs with LED lights and use the on/off buttons on your power strips," he said.

Barlow said these tips aren't just lip service from the garrison; they're real measures taken every time the Directorate of Public Works renovates Stuttgart's many pre-World War II buildings. He said each renovation saves about ten percent on electricity, minimum 50 percent on water, and 30 percent on gas. A photovoltaic system that's being installed on most buildings is hoped to eventually provide the garrison with 30 percent of its energy needs.

But for this winter, in your home, the most important tip will be to turn the radiator dial down.

Photo by Commercial RA7/Shutterstock.com

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# A 20-Year Reunion

By Marcus Fichtl

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

There are many places I thought I would be 20 years after graduating high school, but being on a guided tour of my teenage stomping grounds was not one of them. Not that I'm particularly anti-high school; I'm just not that nostalgic, and well, my alma mater, Heidelberg American High School, closed in 2013.

High school had become to me more of a party trick than anything with deep meaning. Telling people "I had prom in a castle" would easily light up anyone's face with amusement, and sometimes, with a hint of jealousy. I assure you, we filled the romantic great halls of Heidelberg Castle with as much teenage awkwardness as any converted high school gym.

But here I was, as Mathias Schwarz, an administrator for the Julius-Springer-Schule, whisked me down memory lane.

"In 2017 we moved into the former American high school and elementary school building," Schwarz said. "Our old building was too small and completely unrenovated." He added his school teaches about 1500 students between the ages of 16 and 25.

The now-German school, while not a perfect facsimile of its American past, was an impressive homage.

The lion, which serves both as the mascot for the city and the former American school, was everywhere. Murals and mosaics from the classes of 1970 and 1990 were joined by art pieces created by the new German students at the school. The principal's office even prominently displays an old HHS Pennant.

Schwarz led me down into the basement where I had always assumed was the location of Schroedinger's high school pool, but we found the old Junior ROTC's armory and air rifle range instead. Now an unkempt storage area for musical equipment, the painted words "Honor unit with distinction" hung over a drum set and sound board.

Nearly \$30 million went into the renovation of the former high school and adjoined elementary school after the Americans handed over the keys in 2013. Schwarz said it was one of the few initial booms for the city that saw an economic hit after the deep pocketed headquarters base moved north to Wiesbaden.

Across the street, the former housing area and post were in the middle of a transformation as old stairwell buildings were gutted and redesigned. The Campbell Barracks parade field became the local town square, with multiple fountains and multiple kids diving into fountains. The front gate no longer welcomed visitors with automatic rifles, but rather with murals and an art installation blasting old AFN radio spots.

"We kept a lot of the artwork for economic reasons. There was no reason to fix or paint over something that was in good shape, said Schwarz. "But I think the real reason was to keep the legacy of this place alive."

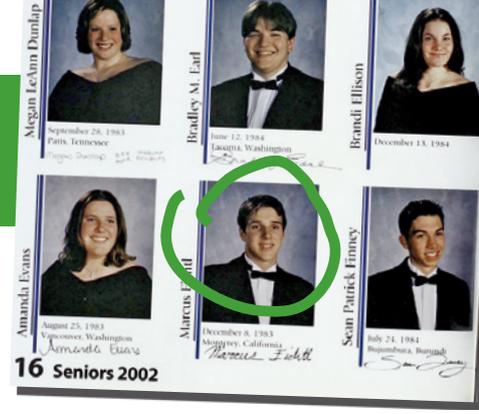
## Emissaries of Democracy and Americana

As the U.S. military transitioned its wartime machine into one of peace and occupation, families soon followed. The military estimated the need to educate about 20,800 students, including 5,800 high schoolers from an occupation force of 300,000. By October of 1946, 38 elementary schools and five high schools serving 1,297 students were founded. The first of what are now called Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools.

Some funding came from monthly tuition fees that averaged \$4 for enlisted and \$8 for officers. In 1946, a unique peacetime dividend of \$475,000 came from Class VI liquor profits to help subsidize costs.

Heidelberg, which had been mostly spared by Allied bombings during the war, was one of the first locations with a high school. Initially taking residence within Heidelberg University — Germany's oldest — the school soon outgrew its location and moved across the street to the Robert Bunsen Teachers' College, named after the inventor of the Bunsen Burner. In 1953, the school would finally move into its final and permanent home at 1 Mark Twain Strasse as construction of the housing area

A senior picture of Marcus Fichtl, circled, 2002 Heidelberg High School graduate, now-USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Specialist.



next to the new U.S. Army Europe headquarters was completed.

Repurposing German space had become a necessity for the military, as well as the schools for its children.

Many German kasernes would become Army posts, including Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, which took over the Grossdeutschland Kaserne, and Patch Barracks in Stuttgart, which took over Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's tank training grounds.

Former Nürnberg High School principal Doug Kelsey remarked that the school's stadium, "Soldiers' Field," which they used until the school shut down in the 90s, was formerly the Nazi Party's infamous rally grounds.

Berlin High School students drew a humorous picture combining the stark realities of the Berlin Airlift with prep school life for the 1949 all-German yearbook *Erinnerungen* (memories).



The Nürnberg American High School Eagles repurposed the former Nürnberg Nazi rally grounds to play American Football circa 1960. Renamed Soldiers' Field, American students would use the location for various sports until the school's closure in 1995.



“The school played their football and soccer games in the stadium where Hitler held his rallies,” said Kelsey, now the Vice President for the Wichita, Kansas-based American Overseas Schools Historical Society, an organization that collects, records, preserves and exhibits DoDEA’s past and present.

Reading through the early consolidated yearbooks entitled *Erinnerungen* (memories), military and civilian leadership identified two key components to the new overseas schools. First they served as a practical means of teaching the children of the now-permanently stationed families in Europe, but second, they were living beacons of democracy as then-superintendent Milton Evans wrote as a foreword in 1948.

“Your task in occupied Germany has been in a way, as important, perhaps more effective, than your father’s. You have, for the most part, unconsciously, presented to the German people one of the best ways of American Democratic life, the life of a typical American youth in a typical American High School.”

In 1947, Life Magazine wrote when it visited America’s first class in Heidelberg: “Where head shaven students once fought saber duels, drank Pilsner and sang *Krambambuli and Gadeamus*,

young Americans listen to juke boxes and drink milkshakes.” The story’s accompanying photos included converted German dormitories, students in lederhosen and the first school dance at the castle.

But overseas life for these early influencers was more than just sharing the virtues of blue jeans and rock n’ roll.

America’s burgeoning adults would chronicle the history many of their parents were writing.

Sometimes in jest as students did in 1949 with a cartoon depicting a flotilla of planes flying toward a pair of walled off highschoolers holding pennants. Or sorrow with poems and essays remembering the 9/11 attacks and knowing full well there would be impacts on their overseas life.

The Berlin American High School’s 1990 yearbook simply stated about the Berlin Wall falling:

“We watched history being made.”

### Lasting Legacy

As the cold war between NATO and the Soviet Union reached its zenith in the 60s and 70s, so did the population of military children worldwide. DoDEA estimates about 160,000 students were enrolled across 300 overseas schools, most of them in Germany.

Patricia Hein, who lived in Stuttgart from 1971



Patricia Hein, a former Stuttgart Stallion, and founder of Stuttgart American High School Alumni Association, in front of her Patch Barracks home in the mid-1970s.

to 1975, remembers driving down the Autobahn for the first time as cars zoomed past them on the way to her new German home explaining, “it was really something else!”

Hein attended Stuttgart High School in Pattonville, a military enclave just north of the Baden-Württemberg capital. Like Heidelberg High School, which took the Lion from its host city, SHS embraced the hometown Stallion — a distinction, she emphasized, from the current Stuttgart Panthers, who trace their legacy to Patch High School.

“We’re Stallions and proud of it,” she said.

Spending her spring breaks in Paris and summers in Spain, it was however, the Cannstatter Volksfest that led her to fall in love with Europe and Germany. “The Germans were so welcoming and nice to us Americans, we would go there every year,” she said.

The Department of Defense estimates that Hein (and myself) are one of about 15 million Americans known as “military brats” — the term of endearment

mates but the school’s historical records.

“I still remember the basketball game between Class of ‘59 and ‘75, it was like we were back in high school again,” laughed Hein. “It really brought us back to our youth and the good times.”

But as the Cold War came to an end, so did many of the DoDEA schools, including the original Stuttgart High School, which closed in 1992 and became the Erich-Bracher-Schule. What was once requisitioned and repurposed by the Americans was, in turn, requisitioned and repurposed by the Germans.

Hein said that during a reunion in Stuttgart in 2012, even though the school had been German for a decade, she could still vividly imagine the halls filled with lockers and students. Even the smell of popcorn from the old machine seemed to be wafting through the air.

“The school took us back in,” she said.

“If you’re having a bad day, visit an elementary school.”

Patch Elementary School Principal  
Sonja Rodriguez



used to label the subculture of nomadic military children. The average brat sees about ten moves in their childhood.

Hein rattled off the names of some of the more famous brats, which include the likes of Fulda High’s basketball star Shaquille O’Neal and Frankfurt’s Oscar winning best actress, Julianne Moore.

“Our most famous person from Stuttgart was probably Newt Gingrich,” Hein said. The 1959 Stuttgart yearbook lists the former House Speaker and then-sophomore as “Newton Gingridge.” The name was corrected his junior year.

After leaving Germany, Hein did more than reminisce. In the 80s she founded Stuttgart’s alumni association, bringing together not just former class-

### Into The 21st Century

“If you’re having a bad day, visit an elementary school,” said Patch Elementary School Principal Sonja Rodriguez, who was guiding me on my second school tour in as many months. This time through DoDEA’s newest 113,500 square-foot, 550 student 21st Century school.

If my solo 20 year reunion in Heidelberg had made me feel old at the age of 38, then the visit to Patch made me feel painfully ancient. But Rodriguez was right, there was no way I was going to have a bad day, I told myself as I posed for a photo in the school’s broadcast booth, pretending to announce the day’s lunch of cheeseburgers and chocolate milk.

As I walked from neighborhood to neighborhood — the open air spaces with movable walls, break out rooms, and communal lounges that have replaced the traditional classroom — it quickly became clear to me that the term 21st Century School was more than a catchy buzzword for

a new building.

Read more on next page →



The cover of Life Magazine’s 1947 July Edition, reprinted in Heidelberg High School’s 2013 yearbook. The article and accompanying photos depict American high school life in early post-war Germany.



**1** Marcus Fichtl takes to the mic at Patch Elementary Schools' broadcast booth, pre-tending to announce the day's lunch menu. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

**2** A mosaic donated by the Heidelberg American High School Class of 1970 still graces the hallway of the Julius-Springer-Schule. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

**3** By taking back the hallways and removing the walls, students at Patch Elementary School work in grade-based neighborhoods rather than classrooms. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

Dozens of lightly guided kids buzzed around me, mingling, exploring and learning the day's lesson. Teachers, rather than acting as a sole focal point for a student's education and attention, worked in teams playing off each other's strengths.

"We've reclaimed the hallways," Rodriguez proudly said. She added the neighborhoods, which are broken down by grade, can easily accommodate more than 80 students each.

According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, \$1.6 billion is slated for the 21st Century Project in Germany and Belgium alone. In total 28 projects are expected to be completed.

And while the 31 DoDEA schools and 14,000 students in Germany may be a fraction of the American student population of the 1970s, the educational outcomes are the same, with DoDEA schools regularly exceeding every state in reading and math.

As I finish my tour with Rodriguez I can only think back to my recent visit to Heidelberg, hoping these military kids in Stuttgart don't take their overseas experience for granted.

Maybe they can join me one day on Heidelberg's famous Old Bridge on their 20th year anniversary singing *Ich hab' mein Herz in Heidelberg verloren* or challenge me to a pickup basketball game — Class of '02 versus '22. You know, if I was nostalgic.



The new Patch Elementary is one of 28 '21st Century Schools' being built by DoDEA on installations in Germany and Belgium. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

Left: German students now walk the halls of former Heidelberg American High School. Photo by Marcus Fichtl

Bottom: The front of Heidelberg American High School now bears the name of its German successor, the Julius-Springer-Schule. Photo by Marcus Fichtl



# Stuttgart's Marine Forces host neighborly Halloween event

By **Balmina Sehra**  
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Members of the U.S. Marine Forces Europe and Africa (MARFOREUR/AF) welcomed families and students from a German school to Panzer Kaserne on Thursday, Oct. 20, for a Halloween event they won't soon forget. There was much to explore in front of the headquarters building, where the event was held, from the decorated vehicles taking part in the 'trunk or treat' to the haunted house. There were smiling faces everywhere and children running around in costumes holding bags full of candy.

The goal of the event was to bring the American and German communities together. "I want to drop the mystery of what is behind these gates, and show our host nation that we are good neighbors," said Maj. Gen. Tracy King, MARFOREUR/AF commander.

The Marines already exhibited their good neighborly efforts last year when they helped paint a host nation school building at the Eichendorffschule Böblingen. The volunteer labor was fundamental to the school's ability to gain funding for the project and was the first of several planned engagements with the school and its students.

"Putting this event together was a community effort," said Capt. Smith, the event's action officer. Each unit decorated a car for the trunk or treat part of the event. While the planning and setup of the haunted house took six Marines and 14 hours of labor in total, according to Smith, the hard work and sweat seemed to be well appreciated by their guests. "It was the best thing about the entire event," said one of the host nation schoolchildren with a big smile.

Some of the German guests who weren't quite sure what to expect ended up pleasantly surprised. "When we told the other teachers at school about the 'trunk or treat' event, they chuckled, as we tend to tell children that they should never take candy from a stranger in a car," said Ms. Lydia Schneider, one of the teachers at the Eichendorffschule. "But I also didn't expect it to be like this. We had no idea that the trunks would be decorated in such an elaborate way. We are absolutely amazed."

Ms. Nurton Aca, also a teacher at the Eichendorffschule, said she expected a much more formal atmosphere, but instead found one that was "familiar" and "comfortable."

Organizers already have plans to scale up the event in the future, with Smith expressing a desire to open up next year's event to the whole garrison community. He also spoke about a costume and decorated trunk competition that they were hosting later on in the day in which the winner would receive a trophy and the loser would receive a toilet bowl.

"I want this to become a tradition here," he said.



Games at the event were enjoyed by both the children and the Marines. Photo by Lance Cpl. Mary Linniman

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# 8 Tips for German Christmas Markets

By Gemma McGowan  
contributing writer

It may not feel like it just yet but Christmas is upon us! While living in a country that does not celebrate Thanksgiving, it seems like Christmas comes knocking at your door before you are done eating your kids' Halloween candy after they go to bed. At first, Advent calendars, Stollen cakes, Spekulatius (Spice) cookies and decorations start appearing all over the place and soon comes what we have all been waiting for: German Christmas Markets! These festive markets can put you right into the Christmas spirit and even warm the Grinch's two-sizes-too-small heart!

## Eight Tips

Because there are so many wonderful markets to see in Germany, you might just need to do some prior planning. Here are eight tips for the German Christmas Markets to make sure you see as many and enjoy them as much as possible this year.

- 1. Make a plan:** Think of briefing your family and friends like a coach in the locker room before a big game with a chart and everything. "We are going to hit up Stuttgart, hit Heidelberg the next day and then swing over to Wiesbaden in the final hours". Don't miss your favorite city! Every town/city has its own dates and are not always all December long. Some might just be open on one or more weekends, depending on the size of the town. Here is the mother of all Christmas Market websites that I have used for years.
- 2. See some big ones:** There are a few remarkable, big markets that you simply have to see during your time here. Here are some recommendations:
  - **Nuremberg (Nov. 25 – Dec. 24):** Highlights are the "Prune People" figures made out of prunes and Nuremberg roast sausages. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
  - **Rüdesheim am Rhein (Nov. 21 – Dec. 23):** Try the famous Rüdesheim coffee while watching boats float by in the upper middle Rhine Valley. Open Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. + Friday-Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
  - **Rothenburg ob der Tauber (Nov. 25 – Dec. 23):** With enchanting medieval surroundings, try the local "Schneeball" pastry then visit the biggest Käthe Wohlfahrt Christmas store. Open Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. + Friday-Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
  - **Heidelberg (Nov. 21 – Dec. 22):** Scattered across not one but five gorgeous market squares, this city's markets are a place where you can eat, shop and drink

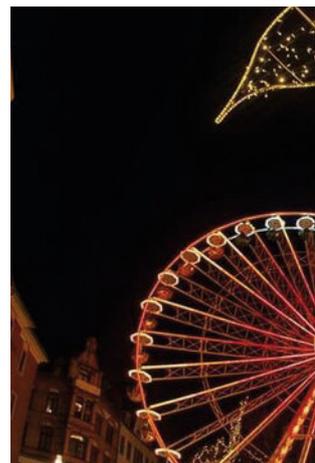
while gazing upon the hovering Heidelberg Castle. Open Sunday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

- 3. Make a weekend out of it:** For either a local market or a road trip-worthy city, try booking a room in the city center. Perhaps you can even stay at a hotel or Bed and Breakfast that looks out onto the charming lights of the market. How romantic!
- 4. Go to your local small fest:** Meet some of your neighbors at your local fest, which may only be one weekend or one night. You will meet people at their best, who will be in the Christmas spirit and enjoying the seasonal Glühwein (mulled wine). You may make new friends for life!
- 5. Dress Warm: Seriously.** Some of my coldest moments I can remember in my adult life are standing at a Christmas Market and not dressed properly for the cold. Do not let the smile in your Glühwein mug selfies say, "I am having so much fun but I can't feel my limbs anymore". Dress for the extreme cold and remember you might not be moving much at times, which would normally keep you warm. Layer your clothing and ensure no bare skin is exposed. Thick socks and gloves are a game-changer!
- 6. Bring the kids:** The markets are very child-friendly and usually have rides, games and treats for kids! The markets on the weekends can get very packed and I do not suggest trying to push a stroller through a crowd of people who are mostly standing in place. Try a body wrap or backpack carrier instead. (Extra warmth too!)
- 7. Designated Driver, Cab or Train:** Unless you are going to warm your belly with cups of hot chocolate all night, Glühwein has alcohol in it and may affect you more than you'd expect. There is also a market specialty drink called Feuerzangenbowle (say that 5 times fast) and it has rum-soaked sugar burned on top with more rum inside! The ceremony of burning the sugar is the attraction and the drink celebrates the gathering of friends. For lightweights like me, there should be no driving after this drink. Luckily, public transportation is a thing in Germany and it does not take a lot of planning to get there and back without getting behind the wheel. City center parking is usually difficult and/or expensive anyway.
- 8. Meet your friends:** More than the shopping, eating and drinking, the fests are about being with loved ones and spreading holiday cheer. Germans have an expression for this feeling of being cozy, socially accepted and friendly called "Gemütlichkeit". It comes from the noun of 'Gemüt', which means "heart, mind, temper, feeling".



Christmas Market on Stuttgart's Schlossplatz

Photo by Bardia Khajenoori



Christmas Market in Wiesbaden. Photo by Gemma McGowan



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*Author's Profile: Gemma is a mom, a veteran and an Army civilian living in Wiesbaden, Germany. With New Jersey roots, she is enjoying her extended European vacation.*



Christmas Market in Mainz. Photo by Gemma McGowan

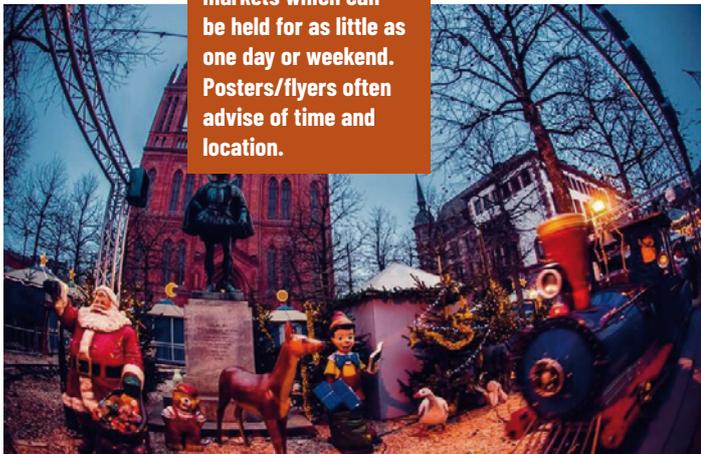


Gemma McGowan

The major local markets in the region, at Stuttgart (Nov. 23 - Dec. 23), Esslingen (Nov. 22 - Dec. 22), and Ludwigsburg (Nov. 22 - Dec. 23) are open daily. Many smaller communities and Stuttgart city districts also have their own markets which can be held for as little as one day or weekend. Posters/flyers often advise of time and location.



Christmas Market in Mainz. Photo by Gemma McGowan



Christmas Market in Wiesbaden. Photo by Gemma McGowan



Christmas Market on Stuttgart's Schlossplatz  
Photo by Bardia Khajenoori

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# From the historian –What’s in a Name?

By Bill Butler

USEUCOM Command Historian

A simple term used to identify or describe an object, a person, or a place is called a name. A personal name is a specific word associated with a particular individual by which they are known. It has long been a tradition to have a personal name, a family name, or a nickname. Names can also hold great value and meaning and even carry on an individual’s legacy long after their lifetime. Often we see them displayed at the main gates or on streets signs marking the post roads. Sometimes they are used to designate a particular building, conference room, or other facility. They all have a story, but maybe we are not always aware of what that story is or even aware there is a name associated with a particular spot. The places and spaces comprising U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Stuttgart today have such names, and each has played some part in the history of the garrison and the organizations that have served here.

The most obvious are the names associated with the main posts that make up USAG Stuttgart. Each had an original designation when associated with the German military, but most have since taken on American affiliated monikers since 1945. Patch Barracks is named after Army Lieutenant General Alexander Patch, who commanded the American Seventh Army during WWII. When that field army headquarters reactivated at Vaihingen in late 1950 to oversee the build-up of ground forces returning to Europe at the start of the Cold War, they dedicated the post in General Patch’s honor. In a similar fashion, the U.S. VII Corps renamed the Möhringen post after Army Staff Sergeant Jonah Kelley, a VII Corps infantryman who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism in WWII. Likewise, Robinson Barracks was designated in 1950 to honor Army Lieutenant James Robinson Jr., a posthumous Medal of Honor recipient who died in action near Kressbach, Germany in April 1945. As for Panzer Kaserne in Böblingen, let’s just say that was a very popular name given to several posts where former



Photos courtesy of USEUCOM Office of the Command Historian

German armored units had served during the war (there is another Panzer Kaserne still active today in the Kaiserslautern area).

Names that might not be so obvious are those associated with several of the residential complexes across the garrison. On Patch Barracks, the three family housing areas were named after Seventh Army Medal of Honor recipients: Lieutenant Robert Craig, Staff Sergeant Gus Kefurt, and Sergeant Ellis Weicht. Senior officer housing on Patch located along Florida Strasse was dedicated in memory of Revolutionary War General Baron Friedrich von Steuben, who had served the Principality of Hollenzollern-Hechingen south of Stuttgart prior to joining the American cause in 1778. In the same way, the two housing areas on Kelley were named after U.S. military notables. The senior officer housing honors American General Theodore Roosevelt Jr. and the family apartments were named after Staff Sergeant George Peterson, both being WWII Medal of Honor recipients.

Even less well known are probably the names associated with the thoroughfares crisscrossing the garrison. On Patch, the former local streets, such as Katzenbacher and Kurmärker, were renamed after U.S. states. On the other hand, Robinson’s roads retain their original German names associated with artisanal or agrarian pursuits. The streets on Kelley got their current arboreal designations when Army Lieutenant General Louis Truman commanded the VII Corps from 1963-1965. It is a popular belief that his wife, Mrs. Margaret Truman, named the streets after trees because of the post’s forested surroundings.

Perhaps the most interesting combination of street names are those found on Panzer. In spring 1978 during the 40th anniversary of the post’s official opening, new signs were dedicated in memory of both German and American soldiers, as



well as the battles where they fought during WWII. Names such as Cramer, Haarde, Elster, and Taege were taken from commanders of the German 8th Panzer Regiment, the first unit to occupy the post. Other streets, like Henry, Lindsay, and Pinder, were named after American Medal of Honor recipients of the 16th Infantry Regiment, a battalion of which was stationed at Panzer throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Additional street names were dedicated after battlefields in North Africa, such as Kasserine, El Alamein, and Tobruk, where the units had served in the war.

There are even more names to be found in the places where garrison personnel live and work. Some are clearly marked and their stories are publicly displayed, such as Clifton Hall and Devil Dog Field on Panzer. The U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) headquarters building on Patch was dedicated in honor of American General Dwight Eisenhower on the 100th anniversary of his birth in 1990. The command also named its conference and training center after Army General Bernard Rogers, the longest serving USEUCOM commander from 1979-1987. Other names associated with garrison or organizational notables can be found on a number of markers scattered around USAG Stuttgart and above the doors of conference rooms and other such spaces. Wherever you may find them, take a moment to consider these names and perhaps learn a little of their stories.



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# Holiday Cheer

from **Stuttgart Family** and **MWR**

By Joel Wasko

USAG Stuttgart Family & MWR

The Holidays are coming! Get ready to spend time with family and friends, and make unique memories in Europe this winter. New adventures, programs and events are coming up, such as the first winter soccer world championship, a slippery way to get a free turkey for Thanksgiving, and a fitness promotion to prioritize your health in 2023.

Gobble me this?! How do bowling, turkeys, and an international soccer tournament tie in together? You can enjoy all of them at the Galaxy Bowling & Entertainment Center on Panzer Kaserne! From Nov. 1-18, for a nominal fee, US ID cardholders, no matter the age, can bowl for a chance to win a turkey. Merely bowl a strike on 3 different lanes with 3 different oil patterns to take home your coveted Thanksgiving Dinner turkey. After hopefully winning your turkey, the fun continues as the Galaxy will be showing the U.S. men's national soccer team games in Qatar at the first winter world championship on their TV screens throughout the facility. Join the fun, eat good food, and watch the excitement:

- **Nov. 21, 8 p.m.** USA vs Wales
- **Nov. 25, 8 p.m.** USA vs England
- **Nov. 29, 8 p.m.** USA vs Iran

In case luck was not on your side while bowling for a turkey, everyone can still enjoy a Thanksgiving Buffet at the Golfer's Garden at the Stuttgart Golf Course in Kornwestheim on Nov. 24 from 12-5 p.m. An impressive all-you-can-eat buffet spread will be available for those that prefer to have someone else handle the cooking and cleaning, whilst enjoying the beautiful atmosphere of the golf course. Call 0171-469-0583 to make your reservation.

As December rolls around, the magical Christmas markets will abound with the scents of sugar coated almonds, glühwein and hot cocoa that will delight the senses. MWR Tours looks forward to taking you to some of the markets, such as the Nuremberg Christmas Market on Dec. 3 and the Strasbourg: Capitale de Noel on Dec. 10. However, there is one important thing that one will not find at the Christmas markets...Photos with Santa! Make sure to capture the Christmas magic with your children at these upcoming visits by Santa to USAG Stuttgart. No registration required (except for the Sensory Santa session Dec.3 at ACS), and photos are Do-It-Yourself so please bring your camera or phone with you.

- **Dec. 2, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. & 6 - 7 p.m.**  
Galaxy Bowling & Entertainment Center
- **Dec. 3, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
Army Community Service (sensory friendly, register Nov.1-30 with ACS)
- **Dec. 3, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. & 1 - 3 p.m.**  
Patch Arts & Crafts Center
- **Dec. 10, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
Patch Arts & Crafts Center (No Santa, but a special appearance by the Grinch only!)
- **Dec. 17, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 2 - 4 p.m.**

Winter sports enthusiasts across the USAG Stuttgart footprint have explored the Alps for their skiing and snowboarding endeavors, just like long time community member Patrick Swartz. Asked about his favorite ski resorts in Europe, Swartz said, "we always pin our favorite on Ehrwald, Austria, it's literally on the other side of the Zugspitze. It's laid back, a smaller place, and the ski schools are top notch."

Both MWR Tours and Outdoor Recreation (ODR) are ideal programs you can use to support your winter activities. ODR offers great value on



Santa Claus gets ready for his favorite season.

Photos courtesy of Stuttgart Family & MWR



seasonal rentals, but also one-time rentals on skis, boards, boots, helmets and more for adults and children. As Swartz said, "If you don't want to over commit and buy everything, you can rent for your kids, they can try it out a few times over the year. I always thought that was a really good value. After our rentals, our kids really took to it, so we ended up buying our own gear. But to start out, it was great. ODR was huge for us." So, if you are ready to head out there and hit the slopes, MWR Tours has several day trips planned for the winter ski & snowboard season. Each trip will take you to a phenomenal ski resort and all you have to do is hop on the bus and go have fun. Ski trips include:

- **Nov. 26, Soelden, Austria Ski Trip**
- **Dec. 17, Zugspitze, Germany Ski Trip**

The Grinch holds up a mug with his face on it during a previous visit to Patch Arts and Crafts.



- **Jan. 14, Mayerhofen, Austria** Ski Trip
- **Feb. 4, Silvretta-Montafon, Austria** Ski Trip
- **Feb. 18, Laax, Switzerland** Ski Trip

A new year, a new way to "BE STRONG". As we head into the New Year, take advantage of the opportunities and incentives being provided by the Stuttgart Fitness Centers to increase your physical activity. "Activity is important for our physical and mental health," said Anne-Marie Harcrow, Fitness Coordinator. The "BE STRONG" program powered by Healthy Army Communities is an 8-week program that offers classes, like weight room introduction, and prizes that can be earned through a points system. The goal is to introduce or re-introduce community members to the fitness centers and make them feel comfortable to return regularly. "We want to give community members the tools to be comfortable coming to the fitness centers and help them be successful at improving their fitness level," said Harcrow. Participants can register at any Stuttgart Fitness Center and earn points by swiping at fitness centers, submitting weekly step or active minute counts, and participating in various classes starting January 9, 2023. Prizes can be earned randomly throughout the program, and at the end, most points earned will receive a \$600 gift certificate for MWR Tours for first place, or a \$400 gift certificate for Outdoor Recreation for second place.

For more details on all of the above-mentioned events, programs and activities, visit [stuttgart.armymwr.com](http://stuttgart.armymwr.com)

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# Stuttgart represents at 'Best Squad' competition

By Marcus Fichtl

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

It was early September when Spc. Jordan Lewis got the call – one he couldn't refuse. "You're going to Fort Bragg and competing with Army Materiel Command's team to be named the Army's best squad," the voice over the phone said.

Within a week Lewis packed his bags and was heading to North Carolina.

Born out of the Sergeant Major of the Army Michael A. Grinston's "This is My Squad" initiative, the Best Squad Competition was created as a successor to the more individualistic Best Warrior Competition. While the top Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier would still be announced at the competition, being named the team or squad was now considered the pinnacle for an enlisted Soldier.

"I want units to really think about what makes up a squad. 'This is My Squad' isn't just about the traditional infantry squad," Grinston said in a statement. "It's about those small groups of soldiers who really know and care about each other and hold each other to a high standard of proficiency, discipline and fitness."

Lewis met his AMC Squad, which included Soldiers from Fort Bragg, Alaska, Belgium and West

Spc. Jordan Lewis, second from right, poses with the Army Materiel Command squad.

Photo by Jessica Horn



Point. And after a day or two of bonding and a few shared meals, they strapped on their rucks and marched out.

"It was tough, but I'm glad I got to share it with my squad," said Lewis.



Spc. Jordan Lewis shakes hands with the Army's top enlisted Soldier, Sergeant Major of the Army Michael A. Grinston. Photo by U.S. Army

Lewis said the competition was divided into two parts. It began with a shot to either earn the Expert Infantry Badge or the Expert Soldier Badge if they weren't an infantryman. The grueling multi-day badging event that saw fitness tests, skill checks known as warrior tasks and battle drills, and a 12-mile ruck march. But that was just the warm up.

"The next morning

after the EIB/ESB was done we hopped onto a helicopter and flew into the Fort Bragg woods," the twenty-one year old native of Champaign, Illinois said.

There, Lewis said he and his five-man squad completed different missions from clearing buildings, to disassembling weapons and stress shoots – all while patrolling miles from point-to-point in the post's dense forest.

His number one highlight during the entire competition? Hanging and launching mortar rounds, a "task" just slightly different from his day-to-day work managing finances for the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Religious Support Office.

"When you launch a mortar, because it shoots high into the air, it takes about 30 seconds to get to the target," said Lewis. "So they hand me binoculars to see if the round is on target or if the tube needs more adjustment. And then I see it 'Boom!' land directly on the tank we were targeting. It was a cool moment I don't think I would have ever had if not for the competition."



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While Lewis and the AMC squad didn't win the week-long competition, he said he was incredibly proud of the opportunity, and the fact that he was the only 56M - Religious Affairs Specialist at the whole competition.

"It felt good, representing the 56Ms and showing other people that we can Soldier too," he said.

And it's that Soldier aspect that Lewis wants to carry with him the next 18 years in his full 20 year career.

"The competition really showed me that we're always Soldiers first," said Lewis. "I got a last minute call to join the Best Squad competition, but you never know if that call's going to be the one that sends you to a combat area."

Lewis' next stop? Airborne school.

## The Adventures of T-Bone

Graphic by Zack Spencer,  
USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

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# In Memoriam: Richard Roberts



Richard was a true professional who worked tirelessly to improve quality of life for the members of our military community by enabling participation in and enjoyment of live theatre. He was a friend to all who knew him, and his legacy will live on in the memories of all he touched through his work.

He is survived by his brother, Jeffrey P. Roberts, and sister, Marlene Fjelstad.



Photos courtesy Martin C. Jelonek

By USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

USAG Stuttgart mourns the loss of our long-serving teammate Richard Roberts, artistic director of the Stuttgart Theatre Center, who passed away peacefully on Oct. 17, 2022, due to complications from a battle with illness.

A graduate of the State University of New York at New Paltz, Richard arrived in Germany in 2001,

working initially at the Heidelberg Roadside Theater. He then served as Entertainment Branch Chief at USAG Rheinland-Pfalz in 2007, heading up the “KMC Onstage” program, before taking his position in Stuttgart in September 2008. Widely known as a talented director, designer, and performer, he was honored with the Special Recognition Award of the American Association of Community Theatre in 2020 for “far reaching” and “special” contributions to the field.



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# The Big Question: What's your favorite holiday season tradition?



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Tim:

Decorating the tree with my kids.

Matt:

My parents would hide a pickle in the tree, and my sibling and I would try and find it.

Lilina:

When my husband and I put the kids to bed and wrap the presents for them together.

Vanasse:

Christmas Eve candlelight service at church.

Marie:

Going to find amazing Christmas light displays with my family.

Christy:

Baking holiday cookies that my grandma taught me how to make.

Janelle:

On Friday after Thanksgiving, we would have 'Fried Food Friday.'

Christiana:

After Thanksgiving, we go find a tree and decorate it with the whole family.

Marguerite:

"Polar Express Day:" we make cookies, put on pajamas, and watch "The Polar Express" together.

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