

## Post notes

### Christmas party

The training support center holds its Christmas party Dec. 20 from 12:30–4:30 p.m. Services will be limited.

### Traffic flow changes

Directorate of public works officials have announced that Mass Avenue, which runs parallel to Prussman Avenue, has been permanently changed to a one way street in the direction of the traffic circle in the middle of Smith Kaserne. The street will be one way beginning at Building 8112 all the way to Chicago Avenue.

### AAFES is hiring

There are retail and food positions available at the Baumholder, Ramstein, and Kaiserslautern Army and Air Force Exchange Services facilities. Starting pay for food is \$7.58 an hour and starting pay for retail is \$7.33 an hour. Persons interested may inquire at the Human Resources Office in Building 8402. The HRO is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information call mil 485-7334 or civ (06783)6-7334.

### Mailing deadlines

Postal officials at the 1st Personnel Command recommend mailing packages early to ensure they reach the United States in time for the holidays.

To ensure a Christmas delivery, mail them no later than the following dates:

- Priority parcels, Dec. 11
- First class letters, Dec. 11
- Express mail, Dec. 18

### Grand opening

The Rod and Gun Club Winter Garden is now open. The Winter Garden is a new addition to the club that has been retrofitted with a special exhaust system for smokers, since the club became smoke free as of Dec. 7.

For more information call the Rod and Gun Club at mil 485-6345.

### Harley night

Dress in your favorite “biker” outfit and head down to the Rod

and Gun Club Dec. 13 for Harley Night. The fun begins at 9 p.m. For more information call the Rod and Gun Club at mil 485-6345.

### New Year's party

Make plans to welcome in 2003 at the Rheinlander. The party begins Dec. 31 at 7 p.m. and ends at 1 a.m. after celebrating the new year. They'll have a full bar, party favors and a champagne toast at midnight. Dinner will be served until 11 p.m. There's no cover charge and reservations are welcome.

### Outdoor Recreation

Baumholder Outdoor Recreation is offering the following trips in December:

- Dec. 14, Amsterdam Express, \$65
  - Dec. 15, Frankfurt Zoo, \$25 adults, \$15 children
  - Dec. 15, Black Forest ski trip, \$55 adults, \$35 children
  - Dec. 21, Paris Express trip, \$65
  - Dec. 21, Garmisch ski trip, \$95
  - Dec. 28, Switzerland ski trip, \$95
- For more information on any trip call mil 485-7182

### Auto Skill Center

Baumholder Auto Skills Center offers the following classes in December

- Dec. 11, Auto Detailing for winter 6–7 p.m.
- Dec. 17, How to Buy a Used Auto noon – 1 p.m.

For more information on any classes or services call mil 485-6344.

### Arts and Crafts

Call now to set up an appointment for holiday family portraits. Also, the center offers all Christmas molds at 50 percent off during the month of December. Call mil 485-6687 for more information.

### Get a job at NOW

Resumes for the Newcomer's Orientation and Welcome Position are being accepted through Dec. 13. Persons may bring their resumes to Army Community Services, Building 8746, second floor. For details, contact Camille Jackson, ACS employment readiness program manager at mil 485-8188.

### Financial help

The new Baumholder Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance specialist is ready to help community members. FSSA is a program designed to help service members and their families with additional financial assistance.

Active duty and reserve component service members may participate in FSSA, provided they meet eligibility criteria established by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. FSSA is voluntary for service members, but the service member must apply and be certified to receive assistance. The maximum entitlement is \$500 per month. At this time the program is focused toward large families of six or more, including the service member, who have no other income.

Persons who think they might meet assistance requirements may call Army Community Service at mil 485-8188 for an appointment. All information is confidential and walk ins are welcomed Mondays through Fridays from 1 to 5 p.m. Bring your end of month Leave and Earning Statement and all dependent's social security numbers.

### Monday footbowl

Join the Baumholder Bowling Center every Monday night for “four quarters” of bowling. Every Monday you have a chance to win prizes, including trips from Enjoy Tours. Call mil 485-6569 for more information.

### Spouses club

The International Spouses Club holds a special meeting dedicated to holiday traditions in different countries Dec. 17 at 10:30 a.m. in the Army Community Services lounge, Building 8746.

Persons who would like to volunteer to share their traditions, recipes and food with the group may call ACS at mil 485-8188.

### Angel tree returns

Each holiday season, the Angel Tree program helps children in the Baumholder community in need have a Merry Christmas. The tree will be located at the entrance to the post exchange and will have ornaments with children's name on them. People who wish to participate select an ornament and purchase a gift for that child. Sponsored by the Baumholder Community Spouses Club, the Angel Tree program helps children who:

- Are 12 years old or younger
- Qualify for the free lunch program
- Belong to families designated



Photos by Ignacio “Iggy” Rubalcava

### Sound check

Restless Heart lead guitarist, Larry Stewart tunes up during a sound check in preparation for the USO sponsored show, Operation Season's Greetings, that recently came to Baumholder. The musical performance by Restless Heart and Jamie O'Neal (insert) at the Wagon Wheel Theater drew a lively crowd of more than 600.

as “in need” by unit command

- have an information form on file with the unit Family Support Liaison

The information included on each angel ornament will be the age, gender, child number, and the child's wish gift.

Those who wish to help may contact Melissa Mullins by email at [JBMMAM@YAHOO.COM](mailto:JBMMAM@YAHOO.COM) or by phone at civ (06783) 6-903886.

### Work with WIC

Choctaw Management Services Enterprise has a full time and part time position for a registered dietitian, nutritionist, registered nurse, or home economist with a bachelor's degree, to work at the Baumholder WIC Overseas office beginning in

the February through March time frame. Experience in prenatal, maternal or infant nutrition is required. A Registered Dietitian preferred and experience with WIC desirable. Applicants must have a current driver's license and be willing to travel.

For consideration, e-mail resumes, a cover letter and a copy of applicable licenses to either: [april.parsells@cntymail.104asg.army.mil](mailto:april.parsells@cntymail.104asg.army.mil) or [cathleen.holmes@ramstein.af.mil](mailto:cathleen.holmes@ramstein.af.mil) or fax them to: civ (06783) 6-8049. Persons may also apply at the Baumholder WIC Overseas office, Building 8746, Room 1. For more information call April Parsells at civ (06783) 6-8003 or Cathleen Holmes at (06371) 47-4620.

## Post notes

### Emergency care providers needed

Emergency placement care, formerly known as foster care, is a voluntary short-term program that provides 24-hour care in a certified home for eligible children who cannot be cared for by their family or legal guardian. It is not predictable when a child may need care. Therefore, it is important to the 222nd Base Support Battalion and the rest of the military community that certified emergency placement care providers are available when needed. The 222nd BSB Family Advocacy Program is currently recruiting potential emergency care providers. Persons interested in becoming a provider or who you have questions about the program, may call Wanda Crawford or Doris Price at mil 485-8188 civ (06783) 6-8188.

### Have it your way

The Baumholder Youth Services Program offers something for everyone. How can YS make such a claim? Because high school and middle school students are responsible for planning and scheduling their own activities. If there is something students want to see offered in Baumholder, they can make it happen. The staff is there to help guide and mentor the students as they develop programming ideas and plans of action.

### Don't forget parents

Baumholder Youth Services has an open door policy that allows

parents and interested community members to visit the facility to see what's going on in the center and how employees are getting the job done. Everyone is invited to take a look at the programs and activities offered.

To make sure the needs of both youth and the parents are being met, YS needs parental feedback so parents are invited to meet the staff, see the facilities, and let the staff know what they can do to make their child's stay in Baumholder a more enjoyable and memorable experience.

So, if after a long day's work parents want to come in and shoot a game of pool with their child, check on his or her homework in the homework center, help them complete a crafts project or just sit and chat over a burger and fries, Youth Services is the place to do it.

### Quality standards

Baumholder Youth Services programs are affiliated with the Boys and Girls Club of America and the 4-H. By being affiliated, Youth Services lives up to the standards of these nationally known programs.

How do we make sure we are living up to their standards when each organization has its own standards for quality programming and excellence and their own inspection tool?

To meet their standards, Baumholder Youth Services programs are inspected several times a year by representatives of the organizations and by Army personnel.



Contributed photo

Capt. Wesley Dabney receives his German Armed Forces Performance Badge in Gold from Col. Lothar Lenz, commander of the Fifth Inspectorate of the Artillery School.

## U.S. soldiers earn German award

Not many soldiers earn the honor to wear a foreign badge. Therefore, when seven U.S. soldiers from Baumholder were recently presented the German Army's marksman badge, it was indeed a special day for them.

On hand to present the "schützenschnur," the German Army's marksman badge, were Lt. Col. Lothar Lenz, commander of the Fifth Inspectorate of the Artillery School; German Command Sgt. Maj. Karl-Heinz Sietzer; and German Sgt. Maj. Jürgen Neu. All three came to Baumholder's 222nd Base Support Battalion headquarters to make the presentations.

One of the soldiers who received

the award was 222nd BSB Command Sgt. Maj. Jose Fontanez, who is now the 104th Area Support Group command sergeant major. Other soldiers receiving the award include Capt. Wesley Dabney, then 222nd BSB Headquarters, Headquarters Company commander; 1st Lt. Louis Wright, 1 – 94th Field Artillery; Sgt. 1st Class Gilbert Rowen, 123rd Maintenance Support Battalion; Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Bates, 1 – 94th FA; Staff Sgt. Larry White, 47th Forward Support Battalion; and Sgt. Luis Miranda, 47th FSB.

Lenz additionally commended Dabney who also fulfilled the requirements for the German Armed Forces Performance Badge in Gold.

"You thoroughly deserve this honor," said Lenz.

Lt. Col. Todd A. Buchs, 222nd BSB commander, expressed his gratitude for the good relationship that exists between the 222nd BSB and the inspectorate which has existed for many years. "I'm happy that U.S. soldiers from Baumholder always given the opportunity to participate in shooting events with the inspectorate. It is an honor for a U.S. soldier to earn and to wear a badge of a foreign nation," said Buchs. After the presentations, Buchs took the opportunity to introduce Command Sgt. Maj. Ann McDaniels, the new 222nd BSB command sergeant major.

## Ed center notes



Get your degree in 2003. Now is the time to plan your college schedule. Visit an educational counselor at Baumholder's Army Education Center, in Building 8332 and learn how to complete all your general education requirements at Baumholder.

Army tuition assistance now pays 100 percent of tuition expenses for soldiers with an annual fiscal year cap of \$4,500 and a per semester hour cap of \$250. Call the educa-

tion center today at mil 485-8491 for more information.

The MG James Ursano Scholarship Fund for Dependent Children of Soldiers is available for the upcoming college year. High school seniors interested in this program may download an application at [www.aerhq.org](http://www.aerhq.org). Call Bill Badger at mil 485-8491 for more information.

Soldiers are now allowed to contribute an additional \$600 to the GI Bill, which results in an additional \$5,400 of education benefits. Talk to an education counselor for details.

The City Colleges of Chicago offers video and on-line courses that may be completed in spite of a busy training schedule. Call mil 485-6664 for more information.

Personally owned firearms testing is now available on a weekly basis. Persons wishing to test may

schedule at the Baumholder Army Education Center by calling mil 485-7557.

The University of Oklahoma field representative from Ramstein Air Base visits the Baumholder Army Education Center monthly. The representative may be reached daily at mil 480-6807.

Is a hectic duty schedule preventing you from earning your college degree? Unit College Courses may be the answer. The education center can help coordinate a college course which works around duty/training schedules. Talk to an education counselor at the education center for details.

The Army Continuing Education Services offers a variety of programs to assist soldiers in obtaining their college degree, GED, certification or licensure. Stop by the center for more details.

# Consumers be aware of shopping pitfalls

By Maj. B. Jones, Jr.  
Staff Judge Advocate

With the holiday season fast approaching and gift purchasing at a premium, it is important to keep in mind some basic information that could save a lot of frustration and expense down the road.

Although it has become increasingly convenient to purchase goods over the internet and through catalogues, especially for people stationed overseas, there are potential risks that may not be readily apparent when shopping in this manner.

The Federal Trade Commission has recently published a number of practical tips and shopping guidelines that, if followed, should result in a more enjoyable shopping experience.

For additional information on consumer affairs, you can visit the FTC website at <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2002/11/holidayshop.htm>. If you feel that you have a consumer issue that requires legal attention, contact the Legal Assistance Division at the Baumholder Law Center by calling mil 485-7456. The FTC offers the following holiday shop-

ping tips:

- Know with whom you're dealing. Confirm an address or phone number to contact if you have questions or problems.
- Protect your privacy. When online, look for the company's privacy policy, or ask the customer service representative when on the phone.
- While online, order only on a secure server.
- Pay the safest way. A credit card offers the most consumer protection.
- Can you get your money back?

Check out refund and return policies before you buy.

- Read the fine print. Take some time to click on any hyperlinks leading to warranty or rebate information, additional costs, or other key information.
- Check delivery dates. A Federal Trade Commission rule requires sellers to ship items as promised or within 30 days after the order date, when no specific date is promised.
- Review Warranties. You have the right to review a warranty before you purchase a product. Reading the warranty before you buy

can help you understand exactly what protection you will get if something goes wrong later.

Compare prices. Don't forget to factor shipping and handling fees into the order cost.

● Track your purchases. Keep records of your order.

● Keep receipts. You may need them to return an item or reconcile your credit card statement. Ask for gift receipts to include with your gift.

Protect yourself by observing these guidelines and happy shopping.

# No reason to wait for last minute tax filing

The holidays are here and that means that the tax season is around the corner. The Baumholder Tax Center opens Feb. 3. There is no reason to wait until the eleventh hour on April 15 to file your taxes. The BTAC will remain open until June 27. The BTAC is located in building 8670, next to the Community Bank. The BTAC offers tax

assistance preparation for federal and state income taxes, as well as electronic filing. The advantage of electronic filing is that it is more accurate than paper returns, and you get your refund faster, usually within four weeks.

The BTAC offers free tax service to all service members, their family members and eligible Depart-

ment of Defense and Department of the Army civilians. Internal Revenue Service trained tax assistants will prepare both federal and state tax returns. Why pay a commercial preparer when the BTAC is free? Tax filers can save upwards of \$200.

The BTAC will be open from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fri-

days. Persons may schedule an appointment starting Feb. 3. Simple tax returns such as the 1040EZ can be prepared on a walk-in basis.

Customers must bring their W-2s, social security cards, a copy of Their 2001 tax return and all other tax documents they may have such as the 1098 and 1099 tax forms. Upon arrival at the BTAC custom-

ers must complete a simple questionnaire. This questionnaire enables BTAC, assistants to expedite a tax return. Assistants at the BTAC look forward to serving customer tax needs. Persons who would like to volunteer to receive free IRS tax training may contact the legal assistance office at mil 485-6506 or civ (06783)6-6506.

# Do you really need a new set of encyclopedias?

The Legal Assistance Division would never tell soldiers how to spend their hard-earned paychecks. What they can do is inform soldiers on questionable sales practices and the legal consequences of entering into these types of agreements. Therefore, before signing a long-term contract for the purchase of goods or services ask yourself the following questions:

- Why did the salesperson ap-

proach me? Could it be because I am young, wear a junior rank on my collar and therefore appear vulnerable?

- Can I get this product or service somewhere else for less?
- Would I be interested in buying this product if it was displayed on the shelf of the PX with a price tag? Am I buying the product because I really want or need it or because I am being pressured?

● Does the salesperson have my best interest in my mind? Are they more concerned with my enjoyment of the goods or their commission from the sale?

- Am I being rushed into the contract? Would it be better to take some time to sleep on it?

In short, use your own judgment. No one will watch out for your interests better than yourself. Do not count on the salespeople to do

it because it's not their job. Their job is to sell you the product or service whether you need it or not.

If the sales contract is signed in Germany, host nation law may apply. If the contract you sign with the seller does not specifically state that United States law applies, German law will apply to the transaction. The German laws governing these types of agreements differ according to the circumstances under which the seller sold you the item.

● If the item was sold to you exclusively by phone, Internet, mail or fax, you have 14 days to withdraw from the contract. You need to write a letter to the seller communicating your intent to withdraw. The seller should receive the letter some time within 14 days. Make sure you retain the certified mail receipt.

● The same rules apply if the seller sold you goods after coming to your house uninvited by you.

● German law does not have special provisions covering buying from AAFES contractors. Discuss your right to rescind with the salesperson. Demand all guarantees of right to rescind in writing.

● If you encounter a problem after the sale, the seller has the right to attempt to correct any problems with the product before you can

request a refund.

However, if you and the seller sign a contract agreeing that United States law applies, you can withdraw from the contract for any reason until midnight of the third business day following the transaction. For example, if you signed a contract Thursday, you have till midnight Tuesday to withdraw. You must communicate your intent to withdraw in writing. Therefore, be sure to ask for the company's mailing address. Send your notice of withdrawal certified mail in order to have proof. The seller should notify you of that right at when signing.

If the company tells you that they only take payment through an allotment that might be a cause for concern. It is typically easier to stop writing checks than to stop an allotment should you encounter difficulties with this seller down the road.

Finally, just because a company appears on post and markets to soldiers, it does not mean the company is endorsed by the Army. Before you sign a contract, consider coming by the Legal Assistance Office to review it with any attorney. It might just save you money and headaches over credit problems.

## Guardsmen reflect on duty, mission, families

### Pennsylvanian Task Force keeps watch over U.S. installations

Story and photos by  
**Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava**  
222nd Base Support Battalion  
Public Affairs Office

Task Force Keystone comprised of Pennsylvania National Guard soldiers from the 213th Air Defense Artillery Battalion has been on duty providing force protection for U.S. military installations throughout Europe since July of this year.

Although they've been here for only just about five months, many soldiers from Task Force Keystone, with a few days of time off in between, have been mobilized and away from their families since October 2001, one month after the Sept. 11 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.

"A month after Sept. 11, myself and a lot of people from my platoon were activated for airport security in Lancaster and at the Philadelphia airport," said Sgt. 1st Class Gary Decola, a platoon sergeant for the 213th Air Defense Artillery. "We did that for eight months. Myself and a few others got mobilized directly from that to Indian Town Gap. We worked at a mobilization support cell to send soldiers to Bosnia and also to Europe.

I got off that duty on July 4 to honor our freedom and I mobilized with my unit on July 5th to come over here to Europe with the rest of the battalion to provide force protection support for all the U.S. installations in Europe,"

The battalion has soldiers providing force protection duties as far south as Vilchek, Italy and as far north as The Netherlands.

Not to take anything away from the active duty soldier who is always on the move, but with almost back to back mobilizations, being a Guardsman lately has had its challenges.

"Being completely away from your family six months to a year is a little bit tough," said Decola. "The

active duty soldiers I don't think realize that because most of their families, their husbands and wives are here with them. When you leave 50 percent of your life at home it's a little bit hard," he said.

Despite the family separation, Decola and other soldiers from Task Force Keystone are taking their mission in stride and with a rather patriotic flavor.

"My soldiers are very proud to have been able to have been called up to do this mission

I can say I couldn't be prouder to be here and be a part of it. But I have a supportive wife and three children at home that are anxiously waiting for me to get home," said Decola.

Home for Decola is Reading, PA. His "home support group" includes his wife Wendy and their three sons, Eric, Brian and Nicholas. Decola explained that Brian and Nicholas are his step children from a previous marriage of his wife. "We're kind of like the Brady Bunch, we get along great. They all do sports and I coach football for them. I'm very much into their lives.

"I think, not only is it hard for us sometimes to deal with being away from home but I think it's sometimes harder for our families," he said.

But in addition to families, Guardsmen from Task Force Keystone have had also to put their jobs on the back burner until they return home.

Decola, for example, has put his job as a construction foreman with Hafer Petroleum on hold. "I build gas stations for a living. We



Spc. Eric Johnson, in foreground, and Cpl. Anthony Ricci pull their overwatch shift at Baumholder's north tank trail gate. Johnson is a construction foreman from Schuylkill Haven, PA and Ricci is a warehouse supervisor from Allentown, PA.

also do car washes and everything that has to do with the petroleum industry,"

"It's an excellent company to work for. The founder of our company, Larry Hafer, was also in the National Guard. He's given me the amount of support that is absolutely incredible," said Decola.

"I've been with the petroleum industry for about 17 years and I've been with this company now for five years and the amount of support I get from them with the military is excellent," he said.

The company Decola works for is located on the outskirts of Reading in Birdsborough, PA. "It's a small company. We have 52 employees but they take real good care of us.

They are not your typical flag wavers where when something happens, all of a sudden everybody is patriotic. They've been like that ever since I've been with them," he said.

Spc. Johnathan Rowe, another of the many force protectors from

Task Force Keystone, has also put his job in Pennsylvania on hold for an undetermined period.

Rowe is a diesel mechanic at Bergey's Incorporated in Hatfield, PA who also enjoys the full support of his boss when Rowe is away with the National Guard.

"He's very supportive and backs me up 100 percent. There's no problem," said Rowe. "He just wants to know when I'm ready to come back. And that's uncertain right now."

Rowe has never been on active duty but he has been with the Guard for eight years. He was attached to the 213th Air Defense Artillery specifically for the current mission. This is his first deployment and he's very positive about his first tour in Germany. "It's a nice country. The people are nice and I'm just over here doing my job," he said.

His wife Debra, understandably, was not as thrilled as he was to be deployed. "She wasn't too happy

but in the long run she's very supportive. She knows this is what I like doing and she's very supportive. I call her every day," he said.

Although Rowe is enjoying his stay in Germany he admits there are

a few things that he has had to adjust to. The most obvious adjustment he's had to make is the language.

"Understanding the daily rituals people have, like when you're done eating at a restaurant you put your spoon and silverware at two o'clock. The

way to pronounce things, like how to say "Guten Tag," is another one of the biggest things that I have to get adjusted to," he added.

Like Decola, Rowe, a resident of Quakertown, PA, is also glad to be doing his part for the country.

"The U.S. is making sure that everyone has freedom. I'm proud to be part of that mission. I do the best that I can so that I can enjoy the freedoms that I have back home when I'm not doing this," he said.



Sgt. 1st Class Gary Decola



Spc. Johnathan Rowe