



Photo by Ignacio "Igg" Rubalcava

Sean Lambur, Plans Analysis and Integration Office chief, addresses local mayors and Lt. Col. Paul (P) Pfahler, U.S. Army Garrison commander.

Garrison hosts first mayor's meeting

Housing, installation passes, Baumholder's future highlight discussion

By Ignacio "Igg" Rubalcava
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District and city mayor of Baumholder, Peter Lang and five other mayors from the surrounding communities met with the commander of the U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder, Lt. Col. Paul Pfahler, at the Rheinlander Community Club on Smith Barracks on May 19 to discuss topics including off post housing for Soldiers, installation passes, and the future of the Baumholder military community as it pertains to leadership and day to day operations.

Col. Pat Matlock, 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team commander, was also present and announced that about 4,000 Soldiers will deploy in early 2011 to Afghanistan and only about 300 170th IBCT Soldiers will remain in Baumholder during the deployment.

The other mayors who attended included Friedrich Marx, Idar-Oberstein first delegate; Dieter Schmitt, Hahnweiler mayor; Bernd Alsfasser, Heimbach mayor and assistant district mayor; Bernhard Sauer, Rohrbach mayor; and Leo Werner, Rückweiler mayor.

Addressing the topic of housing, Pfahler said that of the 1,500 American housing units on Baumholder, only 1,200 will remain after renovation is complete. This means there will be more Soldiers living in the German community. A recent U.S. Army Europe policy change directs that staff sergeant Soldiers and below will live on post and all others will live off post, except for key and essential commanders and command sergeants major. This will lead

to a somewhat older group of Soldiers living among our German hosts. Pfahler said these individuals will likely need larger houses, which coincides with larger housing allowances because of their rank. This will funnel more money into the local economy over the next two years and beyond.

Pfahler then brought up the topic of installation passes (currently over 3,000). He said that too many passes exist that have been issued to people who only visit sporadically. He said the garrison is currently trying to determine who should be allowed to come on post, taking into consideration social events, visiting friends, business, and jobs. This action will drive down administrative costs as well as facilitate prudent force protection measures.

Pfahler told the mayors that other people will receive passes according to their needs. Of course, if the garrison hosts an event and German guests are invited who do not have permanent passes, an access roster will be used to allow them entry into the kaserne for the purpose of attending the event.

The terms and conditions for installation access will be outlined on the pass. Pfahler then explained that facilities like fitness centers, the bowling center and paintball field, are for U.S. personnel

and always have been, despite past practice. "Maintenance for these facilities costs money. If non-U.S. personnel use these facilities and get hurt then there is a liability issue," said Pfahler. If people abuse the privileges of their pass, a one year ban from the post was proposed, which all the mayors agreed was fair.

The future of Baumholder has several changes in store, the most eminent and significant being the garrison change of command July 14. The new U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder commander will be Lt. Col. Sam McAdoo who will be accompanied by his wife and children. There will also be numerous personnel changes within the garrison as their tours expire and they return to the States.

Since his arrival almost a year ago, Pfahler has made many changes in the Baumholder military community and some changes were very fast. "Please know that nothing is going to slow down; things will continue to move faster than in the past," said Pfahler. He explained that with the guidance of Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, Installation Management Command commander, the focus is on the customer and customer service, so the focus and manner in which business was accomplished in the past must adapt.

Pfahler reflected that initially his focus was on the post, "everything inside the fence," which was needed. At one year he believes the focus must shift more outside and into the community. "We should have had a mayor's meeting within the first six months of the change of command, and continued this every six months to facilitate communication. Looking back, this is something I would have done much differently." Pfahler thanked the mayors in attendance for their patience, assistance, and understanding during his short time in command.

This meeting was the first of its kind and Pfahler plans to make this a recurring event, holding one in the spring and a second in the fall. The mayors all agreed this forum was a good idea and an excellent way of exchanging information.

Pfahler told the mayors that he will depart Baumholder on July 14 to work in Heidelberg for Gen. Carter Ham, Commander, U.S. Army in Europe. "I do not want to leave for many reasons. Baumholder and the surrounding communities are beautiful places with friendly people; they remind me of home in Ohio. There is also still much to accomplish within the Baumholder Military Community to make it a better place for our Soldiers, families, and civilians and it truly is a small part of "The Army's Home" here within Germany." Pfahler concluded by thanking the leaders present for their support, camaraderie and friendliness and wished them the very best in all their future endeavors.

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