Citizen

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Step into Fall

Making Cider Pages 6 & 7

Stuttgart dodges, weaves, jabs to a back-to-back boxing Championship belt Pages 10 & 11

Partnership keeps nature at Panzer Training Area thriving Page 12

A letter from the editor

A swe move from summer to fall, more than just the leaves are changing on our Army post in Germany. In this month's magazine we hope to share a more earthy-side of our garrison.

First, we take you to Michael Dodd's 8th Grade outdoor classroom where students teamed up with our environmental division and some local german apple cultivators to make some delicious cider (and yes we drank some to ensure its quality). What surprised us was that every apple picked, smashed and pressed was from Patch Barracks, what surprised us even more was that the environmental team has been maintaining apple trees that predate our base by grafting and replanting them. So that means an apple you pick and eat on Patch tastes the same as it did when German farmers harvested their orchards here before the post event existed.

We also take you on a trek through our training area, which like many training areas across the Army is actually a wilderness teeming with life. This year, like they do every two years, Germans and Americans teamed up and cleaned up our local training area.

Our center spread this month is a blow-by-blow account of the IMCOM-Europe Boxing Championship, a truly spectacular event that brought some of the best military fighters across Europe into one ring. One of the many events of the Swabian-American Biergarten, it brought more than 500 men and women dressed in Lederhosen and Dirndls ringside to the Panzer Gym. Over a night of five bouts, the Stuttgart Boxing team was able to retain their championship belt, while a boxer from Vilseck was named the night's top fighter. We hope you enjoy the photos as much as we enjoyed taking them. And if you thought the S-A-B was this year's last garrison event, you would be wrong. Our Family & MWR team is gearing up for a spectacular Frosty Fest, which will have everything from the annual Army-Navy football game, a bazaar and tons of other events. Check out Family & MWR's preview, I'm sure it'll get you excited for another great garrison event.

Additionally, some of the best travel in Germany is in the fall so we've shared a quick guide on what to see and do this November across our European home, and we are proud to highlight that for the first time ever CYS Sports had an all-women officiating team for a soccer match.

Finally, after a few issues where we've had to sadly say goodbye to members of the staff here in the Public Affairs Office, we are happily welcoming our new director, John Campbell. He's coming to us from the Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and has already hit the ground running. Welcome aboard John!

We also want to wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving, please check out some recipe books in our library article to aid in creating the perfect feats, and please join us in thanking our service members this Veteran's Day via livestream this Nov. 11.

Your Citizen Team

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An attendee at the USAG Stuttgart Retiree Appreciation Day laughs during a Q/A segment with Garrison Commander Col. Matt Ziglar at the Panzer Community Center, Oct. 22. The RAD provided military retirees and surviving spouses in Southwest Germany briefs on their benefits and a place to meet other retirees. It was the first such event since 2019. Photo by Bardia Khajenoori

Cover image:

Stuttgart in fall and surrounding vineyards. Photo by marako85/Shutterstock.com





16 & 17 From the historian: A brief history of Robinson Barracks

Meet your LRC!

18



3

At the Patch Library

By Geoff Morris

Stuttgart Citizen Volunteer

November in many ways is a celebration of the land. From the changing colors of our landscape, the bounty of our harvest, and a celebration and recognition of those who came before. Please enjoy these selections from Charles Shultz's Charlie Brown Thanksgiving to James Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans, all available now at the Patch Library.

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

In A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving, the popular animated special created by Charles M. Schultz, Charlie Brown (voiced by Todd Barbee) finds himself hosting a Thanksgiving meal for his friends. At first, the characters are ambivalent and somewhat negative about the holiday.



But thanks to some philosophical words from Linus (Stephen Shea) and Marcie, the Peanuts gang comes to realize the true meaning of the holiday.

Cherokee Rose: The Trail of Tears

Find out about these Native Americans and the many problems they had with the newly created United States. Find out the many ways the Cherokee tried to change their way of living to fit in with the new nation. Learn about the terrible and sad journey the Cherokee were



forced to take. Why couldn't the United States live in peace with the Cherokee Nation? Who was John Ross and how was he cheated? Where are the Cherokee people today?

The Last of the Mohicans

The wild rush of action in this classic frontier adventure story has made The Last of the Mohicans the most popular of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales. Deep in the forests of upper New York State, the brave woodsman Hawkeye (Natty Bumppo) and his



loyal Mohican friends Chingachgook and Uncas become embroiled in the bloody battles of the French and Indian War. The abduction of the beautiful Munro sisters by hostile savages, the treachery of the renegade brave Magua, the ambush of innocent settlers, and the thrilling events that lead to the final tragic confrontation between rival war parties create an unforgettable, spine-tingling picture of life on the frontier. And as the idyllic wilderness gives way to the forces of civilization, the novel presents a moving portrayal of a vanishing race and the end of its way of life in the great American forests.

Heritage Cookbook

Better Homes and Gardens Heritage Cook Book. The exciting story of food in American life. Featuring 705 recipes from our rich history including colonial, ethnic, and modern favorites. 1975 Large size hardcover. 400 pages. Index. Nicely illustrated.

Pocahontas

Disney's animated POCAHONTAS centers on the titular daughter of Algonquin chief Powhatan, who isn't happy with her upcoming arranged marriage to Kocoum. British settlers arrive in the area, and Pocahontas (voiced by Irene Bedard) falls for John Smith (Mel

Gibson). Meanwhile, greedy Governor Ratcliffe (David Ogden Stiers) is certain the Native Americans have access to gold riches and is determined to get his hands on the treasure. Pocahontas and John Smith meet in secret, and when they're discovered it creates a dangerous tension between the Europeans and the Algonquians. The only hope for preventing war lies with Smith and Pocahontas.

Thanksgiving Is...

Thanksgiving is turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. It is a holiday for remembering the Pilgrims and the Indians. Most of all, it is a time to share with family and friends, and a time to give thanks for many blessings.

Thanksgiving Day Thanks

Laura Malone Elliott and Lynn Munsinger have created another holiday story about the lovable characters from A String of Hearts.

Perfect for a teacher's classroom or a child's home bookshelf, Thanksgiving Day Thanks tells





the story of Sam trying to figure out what he's thankful for.Sam also works on a special project to share at the Thanksgiving feast — his own version of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade!

Remember the Titans

It's important to know for REMEMBER THE TITANS that it wasn't until 1971, 17 years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, that black students came to T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Va. Every other team in that football-loving district was



still segregated. But the white T.C. Williams players were confronted with not only a whole new set of black players, but a black coach, Herman Boone (played here by Denzel Washington). In a matter of a few weeks, Boone has to make them into a team and it has to be a winning team, because the school board is looking for any reason to fire him so they can reinstate Coach Yoast (Will Patton), now demoted to assistant. Boone takes the boys to a college near Gettysburg for training. It's impossible to say which is the tougher workout for the team - the physical challenges of drills and practices or the emotional challenge of overcoming a lifetime of anger and prejudice. Like all great coaches, Boone and Yoast teach the team that they have it within themselves to be great as well. And they realize that they get as much from the boys as the boys get from them.

Good Will Hunting

In Good Will Hunting, Will (Matt Damon), who grew up as an abused foster child in tough South Boston, works as a janitor at MIT. When he solves complicated math problems that stumped the students, a professor searches for him, only to find that he's in jail for



hitting a policeman. The professor promises that he'll work with Will and will get him psychiatric help. When Will manages to scare off a string of therapists, the professor seeks out his estranged friend from college, Sean (Robin Williams). Like Will, Sean is the survivor of a tough Southie upbringing is still struggling with his own loss – which means Sean is able to help Will realize that he's not betraying his friends by using his gifts to enlarge his world. Along the way, Will falls in love with Harvard pre-med student Skylar (Minnie Driver). She and Sean teach him that the walls he built to protect himself from pain are no longer needed and are in fact getting in his way.

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Girls run the field

By Tom Hlavacek

CYS Sports

From player to referee it was an all women's affair on the Panzer Kaserne soccer pitch this past September — a first for Stuttgart Child & Youth Services.

Two of the garrison's CYS girl's teams competed, while a three-women officiating crew refereed the game.

"[Referring] was a tremendous experience, because the girls could see they can be involved in all parts of the game, and not just

as players and coaches," said Lt. Col. Aimee Mowry, one of the three female refs after the game.

Mowry, who played soccer as a cadet at West Point, was joined by Yiching Houghton, a mother of two girls who run cross country and play volleyball at Stuttgart High School, and Leidy Reyes-Jimenez, a college student at Munich's Medical University.

A diverse trio, they all took the step of attending CYS's officiating clinic this summer, to certify as official referees for the fall sports year.

Houghton hoped that some of her fellow mothers watching the game would become encouraged to join the officiating ranks.

"I hope some of the women watching today were motivated to join us as officials."

All three called the experience challenging but full of rewards. They said that officiating helped build mental toughness, good people skills, and a thick skin from when fans didn't quite agree with a call.

If you enjoy playing sports, but want to add a new dimension and outlook to your favorite sport, please contact the CYS Sports office. Not only does officiating help keep you fit, it's a paid job!



Leidy Reyes-Jimenez, Lt. Col. Aimee Mowry, and Yiching Houghton, Stuttgart CYS' first all-women officiating team pose for a photo before their first officiated match, Sept. 29 at the Panzer Kaserne turf field.

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Making Cider

A local apple cultivator teaches Patch Middle School students how to press apples into cider. Photo by Paul Hughes

By Marcus Fichtl USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

In Germany there is no more important fruit than the apple. From apfelstrudel, a pastry, to apfelschorle, a popular drink and even apfelwein, a cider, they define the sweeter side of the German gastronomic landscape. And with 2,000 species of apples growing naturally in Southwest Germany, including more than two dozen varieties found growing across the garrison, it's no wonder why the apple is such a dominant force.

The apple's ubiquity is also why Patch Middle School's science teacher Michael Dodd teamed up in October with the garrison's environmental division for the tenth year in a row, to not just harvest some of the local apples on base, but to churn them into apple cider.

"Today was all about focusing on the ecology of the apple," said Dodd. "The questions we try to answer are: what kinds do we have here on base, how does it relate to what's going on in the environment, how is an apple grown, what does an apple do when you cut it open, and how do we use apples?"

After a short presentation from local apple cultivators that described the use, variety and value of apples, the 8th grade students were divided into four teams. One team washed the apples, the next cut the apples, the third group mashed them, and the final team used all their might to squeeze the apple mash into cider.

While naturally growing apples on a military

base may seem odd, Directorate of Public Works Environmental specialist Inga Gebhard said the apple trees are not just an ecological boon, but part of the garrison's cultural heritage, with many of the apple trees predating the creation of the installations across Stuttgart.

"These trees can be more than a hundred years old, many originating from the farms that were there before the base," said Gebhard.

Gebhard added that through grafting, replanting and cultivation by the environmental team, the apples picked from the trees today are the same as those that German farmers picked in the 19th century. And more importantly are free to use for anyone from Patch to Robinson Barracks.

"The apple trees are here for the community, they can harvest them and use them at home," she said

As the class wore on, hundreds of apples had been transformed from their fruit form into some hard earned, and hopefully, delicious cider. Dodd hoped his students didn't just make great tasting cider or simply apply classroom science, but that they got to understand the community they live in a little better.

"They can now say that when they see an apple tree in their backyard, they know why it's here and why it's an important part of our environment," he said.

Our verdict on Patch Middle School's 8th Grade Cider: A little sour, a little sweet, 100 percent Patch Barracks made, and much more delicious than anything you can find at the store.



The first step to making the perfect apple cider is to thoroughly wash your recently picked apples. Photo by Marcus Fichtl





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Jeep

Loads of winter-themed fun planned for USAG Stuttgart

By Novelda Sommers

FMWR Marketing

With the right amount of layers and a warm pair of boots, there's no reason to hide indoors when temperatures drop. U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Family and MWR plans to give the community many reasons to get out and make some memories to close out 2021, from a holiday-themed play to a winter festival and so much more. So, bundle up and go check out these events.

All happenings are subject to change or cancellation due to COVID-19 mitigation measures. Entry to some events may require vaccination or testing documentation.

Frosty Fest

MWR pulls out all the stops for this winterthemed extravaganza to create a magical, memorable celebration for USAG Stuttgart families and their guests. Past celebrations have included a carousel, snow tubing, ice rink, climbing wall, tree-lighting, pictures with Santa Claus, and more. The Garrison Tree Lighting will also take place.



Details are still in the works, but look for it all to happen the afternoon of December 3 at Panzer Kaserne, on the Parade Field. Admission is free.

Christmas Markets Are Back

MWR Tours is once again offering magical excursions to some of the region's most popular Christmas markets. Visit Trier Christmas Market on November 20 or the Strasbourg Christmas Market on December 4. You'll be driven in safety and comfort to your destination and turned loose to shop, explore and warm up with a cup of glühwein or hot punch.

Buses have plenty of cargo room to stow purchases. You can snooze, read or chat while someone else does the driving. Keep checking our Facebook page or stuttgart.armymwr.com for tour dates.

If you want to enjoy a market close to home, the MWR Holiday Mini Bazaar takes place December 4-5 inside the Patch Fitness Center.

Ugly Sweater Fun Run

Put on your ugliest sweater and join MWR Sports and Fitness for a 5K run at 9 a.m. on December 4, starting from Patch Fitness Center. Register between November 1 and December 2 at any of the fitness centers (\$15), or same day (\$20). The first 250 to register get free shirts. Santa Claus is expected to put in an appearance.

What if you don't own an unattractive sweater? No worries, Patch Arts and Crafts Center can help. The Thursday before the run, you can go to the store, across from the Patch Food Court, and ugly-up your sweater with pompons, paints and various craft supplies that will be on hand. To-go kits will also be available for purchase, so you can work on your sweater at home.



EFMP Sensory Santa Holiday Party

Meet Santa and Mrs. Claus for photos and cookies in a sensory-friendly environment at ACS Headquarters (Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne) on December 4, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This special event supports children who struggle with

high-stimulation environments. By offering appointments for your family to enjoy this time-honored holiday tradition privately, your child will be able to interact and engage in the way that best works for them. EFMP can take family Santa photos with participant cameras/phones. Registration



open through December 1. For complete information, visit stuttgart.armymwr.com.

Army-Navy Flag Football

The rivalry is intense. The stakes are high. The bravado and trash talk, notorious. It's the Army-Navy flag football game, December 3 on Panzer Kaserne. Will Army win back the trophy taken by Navy in 2019? (Last year's game was canceled). We shall see who has the toughest players.

As of press time, MWR Sports and Fitness was looking for a few more participants, including coaches. Airmen play on the Army team, and Marines join the Navy players. If you're interested in participating, email caitlin.b.oblaender.naf@army.mil.



Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol

Comedian Bengt Washburn plays the starring role as Scrooge's deceased business partner Jacob Marley beginning 7:30 p.m., December 3, at Stuttgart Theatre Center on Kelley Barracks.

This is not the traditional "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. In this adaptation by Tom Mula, Marley has a chance to escape his own eternal punishment by attempting to redeem Scrooge. Reviewers have called the play moving and darkly comedic.

Performances are 7:30 p.m., December 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18; plus matinees at

3 p.m., December 5, 12, and 19. Adult tickets are \$18 each, students and children are \$13. The minimum age to attend any performance is 5 years. Ticket reservation information is available at stuttgart.mwr.com.

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Special Gifts for Golfers

Stop by the Stuttgart Golf Course pro shop for your Christmas gifts. The store will have select items discounted from 10 percent to 75 percent off, starting on November 26 at 8 a.m.

Buy your golfer some apparel or merchandise emblazoned with the Stuttgart logo. Gift certificates for green fees or range use make great presents, too. While you're in the store, enter to win a free drawing for prizes. A child enjoys one of the many rides that will be at this year's Frosty Fest.

2 A Family poses with Santa, who will once again be making a visit to Stuttgart this year.

3 Soldiers face off against Sailors and Marines in the classic Army-Navy game.

Fall of the Wall remembered as 'thanksgiving'

Editor's Note: This story was originally published in Wiesbaden's Herald-Union in 2009 commemorating 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. This Nov. 9 will mark the 32nd anniversary of the real and symbolic disintegration of the divide between East and West Germany. A piece of the wall can be seen on Patch Barracks outside the EUCOM headquarters building.

> and for meril **Commentary by Anemone Ruege** USAG Wiesbaden 🙀

On my way home from work on Nov. 9, I bought a German newspaper to remember my experiences as an East German teenager and to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall some two decades ago.

I read the records of contemporaries, of an East German border policeman who struggled to make the right decision, of curious Berliners who were pulled along in the current of events with hundreds of Trabi cars heading for the other side of the separated city. I read of a reporter's fateful question and one of the most consequential and most glorious errors, or premature announcements, at a press conference ever: "As far as I know ... yes, starting immediately it is possible for them to go through the border.'

Many have asked me where I was on that evening, 20 years ago, and what I felt. For the longest time I couldn't remember anything in particular, and then I recalled why. We thought it was a trick of the communist regime. We were waiting it out in our little village in Southeast Germany, dreading the tanks that were standing by.

But then, a week later, my dad packed us four kids in the Trabi car and we hit the concrete Autobahn for Berlin. Emotions well up with the memories standing in front of a shopping mall in the first snow, blinded by the thousands of Christmas stars that

seemed to fill the cold dark sky. I remember thinking, "So it is true, after all." Not long before that, I had stood in the kitchen with my dad and counted the years until I turned 18 so I could at least apply for a visa to check out if golden West Germany was just a fairy tale. Working a factory East

Germany's retarded textile industry was not exactly my dream, but about the only outlook. I had grown up learning that you better keep your dreams of the big wide world to yourself.

Now I was there. I wasn't bitter about the years spent in the confinement of the Eastern Bloc. I wasn't overwhelmed by the glittering of capitalism. I was just utterly pleased to find that even the faintest hope was rewarded with such wonderful reality. I remember us children with our fashionable East German plastic glasses standing at the counter that was supposed to present us with our "welcome money" from the West German government and had just closed down, and dad explaining what a long way we had come. We each walked out like Bill Gates with our DM100 bill. I also remember how some of us, under the wise investment counsel of dad, took our first real money and put it in the offering for orphans in Bethlehem at the church around the corner, with the exhilarating joy of being able to make a difference somewhere.

F I remember how we stopped at a gas station on the way and I, thrilled by the splendid choice, made my first Western purchase - a deodorant. Not until weeks later when it was almost empty did I realize it was a gentleman's fragrance. East Germany wasn't very good

at fragrances. I remember how hot and tasty the hot chocolate in the plastic cup was that the Salvation Army was passing out to the strangers in the street.

What a Thanksgiving.

I just opened a bottle of Rottkäppchen sparkling wine that had been waiting for the right moment, and I toasted to the god of history.

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Stuttgart dodges, weaves, jabs to a back-to-back boxing Championship belt

RINGSI





Sgt. Damani Davis scores a punch on his opponent.

2 A ring girl dressed in the traditional German dirndl announces the beginning of a match.

USAG Stuttgart's Neil Huga takes a fall. 4 The USAG Stuttgart Boxing team shows off their boxing championship belt.

Blood flies in the boxing ring.

b The ref announces Sgt. Damani Davis as the winner of his fight.



Story and photos by Marcus Fichtl

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs

Blood, sweat and fists flew as the USAG Stuttgart Boxing Team retained their title at the IMCOM-Europe Boxing Championship on Panzer Kaserne, Oct. 16.

Sergeant Damani Davis, assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment out of Vilseck and the night's top fighter, said this is just a first step in what he hopes is a long career in the ring.

"I fought tonight because I want to be on the U.S. Army Boxing team, and when my enlistment is up, I want to go professional," said Davis.

The USA Boxing-sanctioned event took place in the middle of the three-day Swabian-American Biergarten, and welcomed an audience of 500 SAB patrons dressed in the traditional German dress of Dirndls and Lederhosen.

Five bouts with three two-minute rounds took place over the night, as a T.V. crew showcased in real time (and via instant replay) every hook, jab and uppercut to jumbotrons set up around the Panzer gym and to a worldwide streaming audience.

The night kicked off in style with a tense fight between Davis and local Stuttgart boxer Xavier Baugus.

Davis was first caught off guard with the lefthanded, southpaw fighter, but was able to maintain his aggressive style throughout the three-round bout.

"I'm not used to fighting southpaws, so I had to change up my technique," Davis said. "Thankfully I had the speed and skill to still do what I wanted to."

While the second match saw a quick technical knockout, the night's third fight brought blood to the canvas as the red corner boxer suffered a bloody nose from his blue opponent. The fourth match had Vilseck's Mark Bunkley best Stuttgart's Neil Huga, and the night's final fight pitched Stuttgart teammates Seth Gunn and Cody Josher against each other, with Gunn coming out on top.

Davis attributed his night's success to the ethos he shares as a Soldier – "you have to eat, breathe and sleep boxing."

"Being a Soldier translates directly into being a boxer, you have to have that will, that courage and commitment," said Davis. "The Army isn't a job, it's a lifestyle, same thing with boxing."





A team of volunteers head off into the Panzer Local Training Area.

Partnership keeps nature at Panzer Training Area thriving



U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart hosted the twelfth 'Landscape Protection Day' on October 23, with volunteers gathering at the Panzer Local Training Area (LTA) on a brisk Saturday morning to maintain one of Baden-Württemberg's most biodiverse natural habitats.

The event has been held every two years since 1997 and is a joint effort between the garrison's Environmental Division, Federal Forestry Office, and local nature and conservation groups.

"This is an area that's incredibly important to the whole region for the protection of native species," said biologist Rolf Gastel, chairman of the Leinfelden-Echterdingen branch of the German Nature and Biodiversity Conserconservation value of the LTA, which was unprotected at the time. Its future use was also in question then due to uncertainty about whether U.S. forces would remain. Their recommendations for action later came to fruition with further research studies and the establishment of official management plans, in which efforts like Landscape Protection Day play a role.

"It's a very valuable partnership for both sides [the Army and the nature organizations]," Gastel said.

Col. Matt Ziglar, garrison commander, greeted and thanked the assembled group before the day's work began. He presented certificates to Gastel and Karl Stäbler, a representative of the Schwäbischer Albverein and longtime organizer and participant of Landscape Protection Day, in recognition of their work and dedication over the years.

Volunteers divided themselves into teams to focus on different areas and tasks, and a number of attendees were professional biologists or ecologists who could articulate the "why" behind specific actions.

For example, grasses and tree saplings starting to settle over an area of sand needed to be removed to allow various species of wild bees and beetles to reproduce there, explained Inga Gebhard, a geo-ecologist with the garrison's Directorate of Public Works.

Military training areas like Panzer's offer an unfertilized and comparatively undisturbed environment which is rare in urbanized Europe, where land is at a premium and most available space is inevitably used

actively in some way.

Tank maneuvering exercises prior to the 1990s actually created open soil and habitats prime for settlement by unique plants, animals, and amphibians. But now that tanks haven't maneuvered in the LTA for three decades, the habitats now have to be kept suitable by hand something that Thomas Peissner, a NABU member for fifty years, is happy to



Volunteers remove grass and tree sapplings to protect the biodiversity of the Panzer Local Training Area. The agile frog — one of the rarer species of frogs in Germany, according to NABU — finds a suitable home at the Panzer Local Training Area.

vation Union, known as NABU.

Gastel literally wrote the book on the subject when he and other professionals authored a 1994 text demonstrating the exceptional help accomplish.

"If we don't do that, a lot of endangered species will no longer have a place to live," Peissner said, emphasizing the importance of the biennial maintenance effort. "For me, it's a great thing that this cooperation functions so well."

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Unbe-leaf-able: places to see amazing autumn Colors in Germany

by MilitaryinGermany.com

Forests are an essential part of Germany. Naturally, autumn is one of the most beautiful seasons around. Golds, oranges and reds are yours to be had all over the country. Get out there and immerse yourself in autumn's grandeur!

One of the chief benefits of living in Germany is that nearly everyone is close to trees. That may sound odd, but consider this: few natural wonders are more wondrous than Germany's forests in autumn.

Germany is famous for its forests, and with good reason. They can be found nearly everywhere, and can be appreciated from almost anywhere. When you drive beautiful two-lane roads through, say, the Black Forest, it's like you've entered into a whole new world. It is literally incredible.

Best of all, you can almost always find (free, no-fee) hiking spots along the way. If you stop and go for a walk (or run, or mountain bike ride), you can lose yourself for hours and come back refreshed.

Spessart forest

Photo by Huy Xiao/Shutterstock.com

Since autumn is upon us, here are four great places to begin your leaf appreciation tour.



Black Forest

Even though the Black Forest is famous for its evergreen trees, autumn colors can be found in abundance. Best of all, the ambiance of the Black Forest is perfect for the fall season. There are golden fields, long shadows, gothic villages and comfortable gasthauses in which to warm yourself. As night begins to fall, things might even start to seem a little spooky.

Where to start: This region is ideal for driving, and there are a ton of jumping off points. Start in Pforzheim and wind your way south along Highway 294 to Freudenstadt. Or begin in Baden Baden and dive into the heart of the forest along Highway 500. Whatever route you choose, you won't be disappointed.



Hessen Spessart Nature Park

The Spessart is a heavily forested range of small, old mountains that stretch from northern Bavaria into Southern Hessen. Going there is like visiting an ancient, almost archetypal version of Germany. Autobahns and large cities disappear, replaced by vast stretches of what feels like well-cultivated wilderness. Parts of the forest are populated by hundreds-year old oak trees, towering beech trees and deep silence. It's especially gorgeous in autumn.

Where to start: Begin in Biebergemund, and wind your way southeast along Highway 276 to Lohr am Main. It will give you a great taste of the Spessart, and will provide ample opportunities to take small side roads north or south into the forests.



Castle Trifels. Photo by LianeM/Shutterstock.com

Palatinate Forest

For those who live in or near Kaiserslautern, you have natural gold right in your back yard. The Palatinate Forest is absolutely beautiful during the autumn. From a distance, the hills can almost seem like a painting: grand splotches of gold, green and orange intermingle. It's outstanding. And there are an abundance of places to hike and bike in the forest. It's a must-do.

Where to start: For adventurers, plug "Johanniskreuz" into your GPS and just start driving. Once you get there, pick a direction, go, and enjoy. For those who need a little more precision, Highway 48 from Kaiserslautern to Burg Trifels is tough to beat.

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Vineyards

Autumn is harvest season for German vintners. This much is true. But for anyone who has witnessed hillsides of vines packed with golden leaves, autumn is also leaf-peeping season. Fortunately for most Americans living in Germany, you're rarely far from great wine regions.

Where to start: The Mosel Region has loads of picturesque views, especially above towns like Piesport or Bernkastel-Kues. Of course, there are also amazing vineyards to see in the Pfalz region or the Nahe region.

From the historian: A brief history of Robinson Barracks



gate. Photos courtesy of U.S. Army

By Bill Butler EUCOM Command Historian

Until the early 1900s, the "Burgholzhof" area where Robinson Barracks is currently located was used primarily for agricultural purposes. A large farmstead and brick observation tower bearing the area's name were its most notable landmarks. In 1927, the local army parade ground, which until then had been located on the Cannstatter Wasen (now known as the site of the annual Volksfest) was moved to the Burgholzhof. Later in 1934, the remaining land was acquired for the German Army from private and Stuttgart city ownership. Military construction began immediately, and the new permanent post, named Flandern Kaserne, opened in 1936, while the adjoining Grenadier Kaserne saw its completion in 1937. The two kasernes became the home of the 119th Infantry Regiment, an organization inheriting the lineage of the 1st Württemberg (later, the 119th Grenadier) Regiment, which had

been garrisoned in the Stuttgart area since 1673 and more recently had fought with distinction in Flanders during World War I. One battalion of the regiment was later stationed at Grenadier from fall 1938 onward.

Regimental and battalion headquarters were housed in former Building 111 on Flandern. The regiment included three machine-gun companies, which had horse-drawn equipment only, and some of the buildings on the post, now used for other purposes, served as horse stables at the time. After the 119th departed to fight in France and later on the Eastern Front as part of the 25th Infantry (later, Panzer-Grenadier) Division, the garrison served as a replacement training center and hosted numerous signals units and special service troops.

Soon after the end of combat operations in May 1945, both Flandern and Grenadier were utilized as internee and displaced persons (DP) camps. Flandern was used by the United Nations Refugee Relief Association (UNRRA) from December 10, 1945 to June 11, 1948. Grenadier first served as an internee camp from September 10, 1945 to January 4, 1947, then as a DP camp under International Refugee Organization (IRO) control until late 1948.

Both installations were taken over by the U.S. Army in 1949 and would function as the site of the U.S. Military Logistical Support Headquarters for the Stuttgart area until 1993. Flandern was officially renamed Robinson Barracks in 1950 in honor of 1st Lt. James E. Robinson Jr., a posthumous Medal of Honor recipient who died in action near Kressbach, Germany on April 6, 1945. Grenadier retained its pre-WWII name throughout its service as a U.S. military post and generally served as a hub for Army engineer units.

Robinson Main Gate, June 1965

Several new structures, such as schools, a shopping center, chapel, theater, dispensary, and others were added over the ensuing decades in order to meet the increasing requirements of the American forces stationed in this area. While the land between Robinson and Grenadier originally served as a German Wehrmacht training area with machinegun, rifle and pistol ranges, the need for additional dependent housing made it necessary to use a portion of this site for the construction of apartment buildings. In the course of ten construction phases that were carried out from 1950 to 1957, the larger Robinson-Grenadier housing area was developed to its full size. Additional lodging and other support facilities were added over the next two decades and the school complex was expanded. At its peak operational capacity in the 1980s, Robinson hosted over 4,000 soldiers and civilians and over 675 families occupied the combined housing areas.

Following the end of the Cold War, the original kaserne buildings of both Robinson and Grenadier were turned over to the German government by 1993. Those portions of the garrisons were later repurposed by the city of Stuttgart from 1996 to 2006 into new residential developments known by the area's original name of Burgholzhof. The remaining military family housing areas were consolidated under the Robinson Barracks name and continue to function in that capacity, along with the school, commissary, and exchange facilities.



One of the old German buildings repurposed after the Americans took over the post.

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By Cameron Porter

405 AFSB Public Affairs

Name:	Ana Mettler
Job title:	Quality Assurance Inspector
Assigned:	Quality Assurance Branch, Transportation Division,
-	Logistics Readiness Center Stuttgart,
	405th Army Field Support Brigade
Location:	Panzer Kaserne, Stuttgart, Germany
Experience:	I've been working at LRC Stuttgart for a year and two months.
-	Before that, I was a Department of Defense background
	investigator for two years at Fort Carson, Colorado.
Hometown:	Houston, Texas
Family:	I have been married for almost 18 years and have
	three boys, ages 17, 13 and 8.

Q: Can you explain what you do and what you are responsible for at LRC Stuttgart's Transportation Division?

A: I'm responsible for inspecting outgoing and incoming household goods and unaccompanied baggage shipments. For any shipments going back to the states, my team and I ensure these shipments meet U.S. Department of Agriculture standards, such as barbeque grills and patio furniture ---- they must be free of dirt and insects. During our inspections, we also make sure the moving companies are following the contract, and we will mediate between the moving companies and the service members so if there are any issues, they are resolved in a timely manner in order to expedite the moving process.

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Q: Why is the service your team provides to the Stuttgart military community so important?

A: Moving itself is a very stressful time - not only for the service member but for the spouse and for all the other family members. Us just being there gives them a voice and gives them some reassurance. Part of what we do when we go into people's homes during their moves includes advising them on what they can do to ensure there are no issues. If their household goods hit customs for a random inspection and there are issues they can be held back for



that reason. Personally, I feel that what we provide does help relieve some of the stressors associated with the moving process. We help them to be better aware of the requirements and their responsibilities, which can alleviate a lot of issues and additional stress.

Q: What do you enjoy about your job, and what motivates vou?

A: I have a really good team, and we enjoy working with each other and communicating with each other. Also, I'm a military spouse myself so I know how hard the moving process can be. I've been there. I enjoy helping them, and this job affords me that opportunity.

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The Big Question: What are you thankful for?

1.





- Henry Hayes Life, family, the opportunities I've had to serve my country – and still being alive!
- 2. Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Levens My faith, my spouse, and my children.
- Medreka Davis
 My family, friends, the opportunity to work in Germany as a civilian, and my [Central Processing Facility] team.
 - . Margherita Whittington I'm thankful for my age (100). I never dreamed I would get

to be this old!









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