

U.S. Army Europe, German Army Forces engage in future ops, transformation during round table talks

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By **U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs**



HEIDELBERG, Germany -- U.S. Army Europe command and staff and the German Army Forces command and staff came together for the annual GARFCOM-USAREUR roundtable talks in Heidelberg Nov. 29 to discuss and share information on topics of mutual interest concerning their commands and the way ahead for the two partners.

This year's event, hosted by USAREUR, marks the 15th year the two commands have met, forging upon their partnership. Maj. Gen. James C. Boozer, USAREUR deputy commanding general, and Brig. Gen. Jürgen Setzer, GARFCOM chief of staff, chaired the conference.

During his opening remarks, Boozer highlighted the importance of holding these talks, which started in 1996.

"This has been an important event for us, an event that has been marked by almost 15 years of partnership and round table talks between the German Army Forces Command and U.S. Army in Europe," Boozer said. "The partnership that has been developed cannot be overstated. We've had a partnership with the German Army or Bundeswehr for 65 years, but this is a very special partnership for USAREUR in particular because of that relationship we had."

The 15 years also marks the end of the German Army Forces Command, which will merge with the German Army Staff to become one Army Command in 2012, as part of the German Army and Bundeswehr restructuring and transformation. The Army Command will be based in Strausberg, Germany.

"This year is a little special because this will be the last bi-lateral roundtable talks with the German Army Forces Command as we know it, but it doesn't mean we won't continue to have talks with the German Army," Boozer said. "We will certainly continue to do that."

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GARFCOM was created in 1994 from the restructuring effort caused by the changing security situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany. During that same period, the Germany Army transitioned from territorial defense to an Army with an increased role in NATO and multinational formations.

"Soldiers from our two armies are working together successfully fulfilling the mission abroad in Afghanistan and Kosovo, where USAREUR and GARFCOM are both force providers in the theaters," said Setzer. "Cooperation is key to success."

Besides transformation and restructuring, the two command staffs discussed and shared information on training and exercises cooperation, and current and futures operations during the day-long event.

"The roundtable talks were a very excellent example for joint thinking and acting," Setzer said. I'm very thankful for the USAREUR chief of staff for hosting the roundtable talks and I'm very confident it will further foster our cooperation."