First decade of the 21st Century in U.S. Army in Europe

By U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

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Jan. 1, 2001, dawned on a relatively peaceful U.S. Army in Europe led by Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs and Command Sgt. Maj. David Lady. Ten years later, the winter sun still rises after physical training has started, and we still have troops in Kosovo, but now Gen. Carter Ham and Command Sgt. Maj. Capel lead a much leaner force actively engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as throughout Eurasia.

When the decade began, the commander-in-chief was William J. Clinton. As we move into 2011 it is Barack Obama. As President Obama has said, “For more than six decades, Europeans and Americans have stood shoulder to shoulder because our work together advances our interests and protects the freedoms we cherish as democratic societies. As the world has changed, so too has our alliance, and we are stronger, safer and more prosperous as a result.”

As always, Army doctrine, organization, training, materiel, and facilities continue to evolve, but our Soldiers and their leadership remains constant. In the last decade we have moved from a division-centric force to one with a Brigade Combat Team focus—in fact, when 1st Armored Division headquarters leaves Wiesbaden, there will be no division headquarters in Europe.

And here is a stone cold, 100 percent guaranteed prediction for Jan 1, 2021: Soldiers and Families will still faithfully serve the United States of America.

SOME THINGS CHANGE:

In 2001, 60,000 Soldiers served in USAREUR, in 2010, 40,000. In 2001 we still used lira, marks, francs, and pesetas, making travel “colorful. In 2010 we have the ease of the Euro across much of Europe, at a pretty good exchange rate of $1.32 to 1€ (as of December 29, 2010).

In 2001 USAREUR had responsibilities for more than 100 countries across four continents. In 2007, U.S. Army Africa was organized to provide oversight to 53 African countries, so we now have responsibilities for only 51 countries across three continents (full disclosure: we count North America as one of our continents because Greenland, which is part of Denmark, is officially North American).

In 2001, birds tweeted. In 2010, The USAREUR commander, and most celebrities, it seems, Tweet routinely.

In 2001 more than 8,000 Soldiers were keeping the peace in the Balkans. By 2010 that was reduced to 800.

In 2001 the Academy Award went to “Gladiator,” a film about fictional Roman warriors in Italy. In 2009 it went to “The Hurt Locker,” a film about fictionalized American warriors in Afghanistan.

In 2001 USAREUR had nearly 100 more sites or bases than in 2010. The Plant Replacement Value for facilities closed is $8 billion (that’s billion with a “B.” By comparison, the total PRV for all continental U.S. closures announced in 2005 is $7 billion). We continue to transform, but savings are already more than $250 million annually.

In 2001 there were 19 NATO members. Since then, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have joined.

In 2001 France was the reigning World Cup champion. In 2010 the late Paul the Octopus told us that Spain would beat the Netherlands. He was right. In 2006 Germany hosted the 2006 competition won by Italy over France (and it is something memorable to be stationed in a country that hosts or wins the World Cup).

SOME THINGS REMAIN THE SAME:
Soldiers and Families still serve faithfully. Nearly 200,000 Soldiers have served here in the past decade. Approximately 100,000 have deployed, and 200 have given their lives in combat.

The pound sterling remains the official currency of the United Kingdom.

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center is a centerpiece of medical treatment for servicemembers wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since 2001, LRMC has treated almost 70,000 patients from 47 coalition nations, including more than 12,000 combat casualties with a 99.5 percent survival rate. Europe is a great place to train, including the chance to conduct exercises with our partners at our training areas and in their countries across the continent.

In 2001 the New England Patriots were headed to their first Super Bowl victory, and in 2010, they look to be headed to their fourth Super Bowl victory. Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels are great places to train, and it is colder and muddier there than here—wherever "here" is.

U.S. Army in Europe remains a critical piece of the U.S. defense structure, building partners, deploying forces and providing logistical support to the fight. Forty of our European allies have deployed more than 50,000 troops to Iraq and Afghanistan; some 200 have died in action.

MILESTONES:
(Events followed by the word "Photo" in parentheses are represented by an image in USAREUR's "decade in review" Flickr gallery. Click the link to see these and other decade in review photos.)

2001
March Two killed in a RC-12K fixed-wing aircraft crash near Nurnberg
Jun An M985 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck crossing railroad tracks near Vilsieck is struck by a train, killing the HEMTT driver, the train conductor and a passenger. A U.S. passenger in the HEMTT and 23 train passengers are injured
Aug Another M985 runs off the road at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels and into a stream, killing the driver
Sep 9/11 ceremonies throughout Europe express solidarity with the U.S. USAEUR's former deputy chief of staff for personnel, Lt. Gen. Timothy Maude, becomes the most senior person to die in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon (Photo)
Sep USAEUR Soldiers deploy to Nigeria for Operation Focus Relief, a peace enforcement training initiative
Oct One killed in an AH-64 Apache helicopter crash in Poland during exercise Victory Strike II
Oct USAEUR begins indispensable logistics support to operations in Afghanistan
Dec Mariah Carey performs for Soldiers in Kosovo

2002
Jan A soldier on the Hohenfels "opposing forces" team dies when his M113 armored personnel carrier rolls over
Feb USAEUR Soldiers officially don the new black beret
Feb 3rd Bn, 158th Aviation Regiment at Giebelstadt Army Airfield, is honored with the Lt. Gen. Ellis D. Parker Award as the top aviation battalion in the Army
Feb Arnold Schwarzenegger visits US troops in the Balkans
May Pres. George W. Bush commemorates Memorial Day at the Normandy American Cemetery
May NATO announces upcoming troop reductions for the peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. At the time, Task Force Eagle in Bosnia, is commanded by the 25th Infantry Division (Light) with 2,000 U.S. Soldiers, and in Kosovo Task Force Falcon, led by the 1st Infantry Division from Wuerzburg, has 6,000 U.S. personnel
May B Co, 94th Engineer Battalion (Heavy) from Vilsieck, wins the Itschner Award as the best Eng co. in the active Army
Jun For the first time in history, a soldier, Maj. Stephan Alkins from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, receives the USAF McKay Trophy for the air evacuation of the sailors of the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen. The McKay Trophy is reserved for the "most meritorious flight of the year by an Air Force person, persons or organization."
Jul First Europe-based AH-64D Longbow Apache helicopters arrive at V Corps' 11th Aviation Regiment, in Illesheim
Aug USAEUR supports flood relief efforts in Germany and Czech Republic
Sep SPC Justin M. Brown, 95th Maintenance Co, Baumholder wins first Dept of the Army Soldier of the Year competition
Sep Co A, 201st Forward Support Battalion in Vilsieck wins 2002 Defense Maintenance Awards
Sep Army announces 12-month stop loss in support of Operations Noble Eagle and enduring Freedom
Sep 14th Transportation BN, Vicenza, wins first Army Chief of Staff Deployment Excellence Award
Oct Installation Management Agency-European Regional Office activated in Heidelberg
Oct US Army Europe Women's team wins Army Ten-Miler
Nov Soldier sitting on railroad tracks is struck and killed by a locomotive
Nov An M1A1 tank hits a sinkhole at Grafenwoehr Training Area and submerges, killing the driver.

2003
Jan 18th Engineer Brigade reactivates in Heidelberg
Jan 1st AD fields the Javelin anti-armor missile system
Mar More than 14,000 US Army Europe Soldiers deploy to Iraq including member of HQ V Corps, HQ 1st Armored Division, along with "Old Ironsides" 1st and 2nd Brigades, and elements from the 21st Theater Support Command, 5th Signal Brigade, 16th Corps Support Group, the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment, 12th Aviation Brigade, 22nd Signal Brigade, 130th Engineer Brigade, 3rd Corps Support Command, and 18th Military Police Brigade
Mar Elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team conduct the first airborne combat jump since Vietnam, opening a northern front in Iraq
Mar First wounded Soldier arrives in Landstuhl from OIF
May Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gravens assumes responsibility as USAEUR command sergeant major
Jun Two killed in an AH-64 Apache helicopter accident in Kosovo
Jun Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) visits Europe
Jul The Southern European Task Force (SETAF) deploys as core of Joint Task Force Liberia to provide support to West African military forces
Armed Forces Recreation Center Lake Chiemsee Resort in Germany closes after 58 years
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers visits U.S. troops in Kosovo and Bosnia
First group of Europe-based soldiers return for 15 days of rest and recuperation leave
The US Army in Europe transitions to Installation Access Control System (IACS) for base access
The US Army in Europe Women's team wins Army Ten-Miler
615th Military Police Company from Grafenwohr named 2003 Brig. Gen. J.P. Holland Award winner for excellence among MP companies.

2004

Jan V Corps Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Preston sworn in as 13th Sergeant Major of the Army. Preston still serves as the Army's highest-ranking enlisted Soldier—the longest serving Sergeant Major of the Army in the service's history
Feb HQ 1st Infantry Division, along with the "Big Red One's" 2nd and 3rd Brigades, deploys to Iraq
Mar Terrorist bombings kill 191 people and wound 1,800 in coordinated attacks upon Madrid's public transport system three days before Spain's general elections
May Exercise Torgau 2004 near Moscow is the first exercise of its kind involving senior U.S. and Russian personnel
May 1st ID fields the Shadow Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TUAV)
Jun Pres. George W. Bush and French Pres. Jacques Chirac along with numerous USAREUR Soldiers commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day (Photo)
Sep New Armed Forces Recreation Center, the Edelweiss Lodge, opens in Garmisch
Nov Task Force Eagle, the U.S.-led element of Stabilization Force 15, disestablishes after 9 years of keeping the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dec Commemorations mark the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Bulge

2005

Feb Pres. and Mrs. George W. Bush visit Soldiers at Wiesbaden Army Airfield
Apr Rededication of statue of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, Prussian Army officer and first Inspector General of the U.S. Army
Mar The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team deploys to Afghanistan
Jun The officer-in-charge of a rail movement operation is killed when he climbs onto an M3 Bradley loaded on a rail car and comes in contact with a power line
Jul Suicide bombers kill 52 people and wound 700 in coordinated attacks upon London's public transport system
Oct Headquarters V Corps deploys to Iraq
Oct Sgt. Jeremy Kamphuis, 27th Military Police Co., Hanau wins Army's NCO of the Year
Oct Elements of the 30th Medical Brigade, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and 123rd Main Support Battalion units deploy to Pakistan for earthquake humanitarian and relief efforts
Oct The Bundeswehr celebrates 50 years of service.
Nov 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division deploys to Iraq
Dec Gen. David D. McKiernan assumes command of USAREUR from Gen. B. B. Bell
Dec Germany-based privately-owned vehicles to begin sporting host nation tags
Dec Rhein-Main Air Base closes after 60 years as the primary airlift and passenger hub for U.S. forces in Europe
Dec The 7th Army Training Command is renamed the Joint Multinational Training Command (JMTC)

2006

Jan The 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division deploys to Iraq
Mar A Soldier and a companion leaving a drinking establishment are struck by a freight train, killing the Soldier and injuring his friend
May Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa assumes responsibility as USAREUR command sergeant major
May 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division inactivates at Vilseck
Jun Giebelstadt Army Airfield closes
Jul The first Enhanced Security Pedestrian Gate in the US Army in Europe begins testing in Kaiserslautern
Jul 1st Infantry Division Headquarters cases its colors in Wuerzburg and moves to Fort Riley, Kansas
Jul 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, Hohenfels begins 4 years of regularly deploying with our Romanian allies to Afghanistan
Aug 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division deploys to Iraq
Aug The 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, the first Combat Aviation Brigade in the US Army in Europe, activates in Ansbach
Sep Two killed in an AH-64 Apache helicopter crash in Grafenwoehr
Sep The 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment activates in Europe, moving from Fort Lewis, Wash.
Oct Two Soldiers walking on train tracks are killed by a train near Heidelberg
Oct The Army's last MASH, the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital converts to the 212th Combat Support Hospital

2007

Feb President Bush and Secretary of State Robert Gates announce the creation of Africa Command.
May The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team deploys to Afghanistan
May Soldier dies of wounds sustained during live-fire exercise at Grafenwoehr Training Area.
Jun USAREUR celebrates 65 years of service
Aug 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment deploys to Iraq
Aug Joint Task Force-East (JTF-E) proof of principle (PoP) exercise begins
Sep Headquarters, 1st Armored Division deploys to Iraq for 15 months
Sep US Army Garrison Giessen, including Ray Barracks, Friedberg, Elvis' caserne, closes
Oct Secretary of Defense Robert Gates attends annual Conference of European Armies in Heidelberg
Nov Six killed in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crash in Italy.

2008
Jan 1st AD Soldiers receive the new Improved Outer Tactical Vest replacing Interceptor Body Armor
Mar 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate) formed by reflagging 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Schweinfurt
Apr President Bush visits Task Force-East in Romania
Apr 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division deploys to Iraq
Apr 5th Signal Command's 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion wins the Army Deployment Excellence Award
May 18th Engineer Brigade deploys to Iraq
May 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade cases its colors in Wurzburg and moves to Ft. Hood
May AAFES introduces the fuel ration card in place of fuel coupons
Jun Spc. Ross A. McGinnis of 1st Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment in Schweinfurt, is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for saving his fellow squad members' lives by throwing himself on a grenade in Baghdad in December 2006 (Photo)
Jun Wiesbaden Army Airfield commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift
Jul The 266th Finance Command, the last finance brigade in the active Army, inactivates in Schwetzingen
Aug The Southern European Task Force in Italy conducts its final airborne operation as SETAF and in Dec. officially assumes its duties as the Army component of AFRICOM: US Army Africa
Aug The Army’s first deployable medical support command, the 30th Medical Command (Deployment Support), formed by reflagging the 30th Medical Brigade
Oct Two monuments in Chatal-Chehery France dedicated on the 90th anniversary of Sgt. Alvin York’s WWI actions that earned him the Medal of Honor
Oct Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Beam assumes responsibility as USAREUR command sergeant major
Dec The 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade deploys to Iraq

2009
Feb The Joint Multinational Readiness Center’s Operations Group deploys to Ft. Bragg to train 2nd Bde, 82nd Airborne Division
Mar Soldier killed by a train near Grafenwoehr
Apr Thirteen USAREUR units win at Chief of Staff, Army Combined Logistics Excellence Awards
May 30th Medical Command deploys to Afghanistan
Jun USAREUR's first Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles arrive in the Port of Antwerp (Photo)
Jul Headquarters, V Corps deploys to Afghanistan as the core of the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command
Jul 170th Infantry Brigade formed by reflagging 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division at Baumholder
Jul 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers become the first to fire the Army's new M777 howitzer in Europe (Photo)
Jul The 173rd ABCT becomes the first USAREUR unit to train with the MRAP
Nov Germany commemorates the 20th anniversary of fall of the Berlin Wall (Photo)
Dec The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team deploys to Afghanistan
Dec Commemorations mark the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Bulge.

2010
Jan Headquarters, 1st Armored Division deploys to Iraq
Feb Three killed in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crash near Mannheim
Apr Fourteen 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers receive the German Gold Cross medal for April rescue mission in Afghanistan
Apr USAREUR’s first Lakota light utility helicopters arrive for duty in Hohenfels. (Photo)
May 170th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers march in Moscow’s Victory Day parade
May First Patriots to Poland exercise begins
Jun The 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment deploys to Afghanistan
Jun Grafenwoehr Training Area celebrates its 100th birthday
Aug V Corps Headquarters deploys to Afghanistan as core of Intermediate Joint Command Afghanistan
Aug Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel assumes responsibility as USAREUR CSM
Oct Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta of the 173rd ABCT receives the Medal of Honor for his actions in Afghanistan in 2007 (Photo)

About us: The U.S. Army in Europe, with NATO and other coalition partners from throughout its 51-country area of responsibility, trains for, conducts, and supports contingency operations. Headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany, USAREUR has forces throughout Germany as well as in Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Romania, and in Afghanistan and Iraq.