

New Mission Planning facilities for E-3A flying Squadrons

Operations Wing transformation continues...

By Commander Hans-Dieter Evers, OWAB, Service Manager MSS, Chairman Mission Planning Working Group (MPWG)

On Thursday, 18 October, the Component achieved another milestone in its journey into the 21st century. With the outstanding assistance of Procurement (LWPC), Security Squadron (SWSE) and the Safety Division (SOCG), new Mission Planning tables were installed in the basements of Squadrons 3 and 1. The whole procurement process lasted only seven months and is part of the Mission Support System (MSS) project.

The new layout of the Mission Planning rooms will enable the aircrews to optimize the Mission Planning process with the support of MSS, new computers (CBASS/BASS) and an optimized set-up based on Crew Resource Management (CRM) criteria. New Sun Ray workstations will also ensure that the aircrews can finally do the planning for NATO Mid Term (NMT) flights in their own squadrons. After many years of

One of the new Mission Planning computers.



Demonstration of the new set-up to Colonel Jelle Zijlstra, Deputy Component Commander.

Photos Andrea Hohenforst

drawing slides and using projectors, the introduction of electronic briefing slides via BASS last year was only the first step towards the new standard: planning on the CBASS system.

In order to get approval for the use of the classified computer system on base, accreditation of the basements as Class II areas was mandatory. Many infrastructural and safety requirements had to be met, causing a lot of coordination and work for various sections at the Component.

Thanks to the terrific support by everyone involved, every challenge was solved without major problems. In addition to the possibilities of using all available software tools on the computer to ease the planning for each sortie, aircrews now also have access to electronic

publications and can use the systems to do Computer Based Learning (CBL) as part of their annual requirements.

Due to financial agreements and the fact that Squadron 2 is temporarily working in Building 62 with limited space available, the remaining MP rooms (two for Squadron 2 and one remaining for Squadron 1) will be equipped with the same tables once the reconstruction of Building 211 (former Squadron 2 building) is finished.

After that, the MP rooms in all three squadrons will be of the same standard, providing the optimum set-up to enhance efficiency. For the MSS team the work is not done yet. More steps will follow to realize our concept to "Train As You Fight - Fight As You Train". Once the Component has completely achieved the new standard, the FOBs/FOL will have to follow. After that, we need to ensure that the same services will be provided to the aircrews during

deployed operations. The work on these aspects has already begun.

The biggest challenge remaining is the establishment of the already approved Mission Support Centre (MSC), which will be located in Building 203. The MSC is intended to facilitate a new standard of mission accomplishment (from start to finish) by centralizing the execution of all relevant mission support activities for E-3A sorties departing from MOB Geilenkirchen. Additionally, the MSC will support all E-3A deployments (to include NRF, small-scale exercises, etc.) and will also be capable of hosting external aircrews. Overall, the MSC is intended to provide simple and effective access to additional information activities such as requirements management, user training, help desk functions and direct IT support.

The initial concept paper is under development and a draft version will be promulgated to all Wings by the end of this year. There is a whole lot to do, but one needs to have a vision.

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16 November
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24/7/365 Security
See pages 6-7



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Crime Prevention

By Jose R. Ortega
Senior, IMP Criminal Investigator
& Crime Prevention Officer

Within the past few months there has been an increase in reported thefts on base. In many cases the losses could have been prevented by stricter personal and physical security measures. As legal custodians of personal and assigned NATO property, we all have a duty and responsibility to ensure equipment and resources are secured appropriately.

If you believe the property or resources left under your control and/or possession are not being properly safeguarded, or that they may be vulnerable to acts of theft or damage, report this to your superiors immediately. Supervisors may not know the situation exists and can help in correcting it.

You can also inform the International Military Police office or the base Crime Prevention & Investigations office in person or anonymously at extension 4819 or 4820. As the base's crime prevention experts, we take a proactive approach in helping you identify security measures that may help prevent a crime or loss of resources before it happens.

Commander briefs about upcoming challenges, Component's future

By CMSgt. Claus Cohnen

At commander's calls held on 22 and 23 October, the E-3A Component Commander, Brig.Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt, briefed Component members about upcoming challenges facing NATO, the E-3A Component, and the future of AWACS.

After a NATO-wide independent assessment team review, the North Atlantic Council is a massive restructure effort affecting the entire NATO Force Structure, including the E-3A Component. Brig.Gen. Schmidt stated the aim is to achieve maximum effectiveness in fulfilling all operational tasks by becoming more deployable, responsive, and affordable. Within the Component, this can potentially be accomplished by outsourcing some IT and logistics functions and eliminating administrative duplications. The Deputy Commander, Col Jelle Zijlstra, Wing Commanders and HQ Division Chiefs are currently developing the Component restructuring plan to be complete by year's end.

The Component has been rigorously working to achieve NATO Mid Term (NMT) Initial Operational

Capability (IOC). The NAEW&CF Commander, Maj.Gen. Axel Tuttelmann, has submitted a letter to SACEUR declaring IOC. Once officially approved, this will mark a significant milestone in NAEW&CF history.

In order to reduce the threat of man-portable surface-to-air missiles (MANPADS) the E-3A fleet will become the first AWACS equipped with Large Aircraft Infra-Red Counter-Measures (LAIRCM). The General explained how this

Component lead for CI and has established a working group to begin preparations. More information is available on the WISE page and will be updated frequently.

Brig.Gen. Schmidt made remarks on physical fitness, which is a key requirement for deployable forces. Starting in January 2008, the Component will conduct Unit/CC-led fitness activities once per week as part of the three hours per week authorized individual sports activities.

"The Component is under siege. If we don't change we won't survive."

technology works and will defeat the MANPAD threat. Once installed on our aircraft this capability will extend the spectrum of missions to better support NATO's worldwide mission.

From 7 to 18 April 2008, NAEW&FC will conduct a Component-wide Consolidated Inspection (CI). The evaluation will focus on verifying all Component members' knowledge and compliance with all NATO, NAEW&FC, and E-3A policies and directives. Lt. Col. Toni Jerenko from the Plans and Policy Division is the

Citing the numerous assessments and activities, Brig. Gen. Schmidt emphasized the need for change from a legacy mindset to a future focus. He stated, "The Component is under siege. If we don't change we won't survive." He thanked all personnel for all their efforts in making the Component successful over the past 25 years, but stated that "now is the time to focus on training all personnel on how to operate and maintain the NMT aircraft and be ready to meet future NATO mission requirements."

For more detailed information, the briefing is now available on the WISE homepage.

Dutch Minister receives information



Minister Jacqueline Cramer signs the guest book after her arrival at the E-3A Component.
Photo Andrea Hohenforst

By SMSgt. Johan Hijmenberg

On Monday, 22 October Mrs. Jacqueline Cramer, Dutch Minister of Housing, Regional Development and Environment paid a working visit to the NATO Air Base in Geilenkirchen.

Together with the Dutch State Secretary of Defence she continues to investigate whether it is possible to find a way of tackling and resolving the problem of noise affecting the communities on the Dutch side of the border. Earlier this year the State Council (Raad van State) in the Netherlands issued a judgement stating that the environmental effects of cutting down the trees in the Schinveld forest should have been investigated more thoroughly before permission was given to cut them down.

In August 2005 the then Minister of the Environment, Mrs. Sybilla

Dekker, granted a waiver for tree cutting in the woodland area to ensure flight safety and the operability of NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen.

As a result of the State Council's ruling, Minister Cramer has now announced that in the coming year she will conduct a more thorough investigation of the possible environmental effects of the tree-cutting. She will also discuss the issue with NATO, local and regional authorities and representatives of the local residents.

Mrs. Cramer therefore discussed the noise issue with Brig. Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt and received an extensive briefing from Deputy Commander Col. Jelle Zijlstra.

After the visit to the base the Minister departed to the community of Onderbanken to talk with local authorities and residents about the situation. Within a year Minister Cramer will present proposals for the way ahead.



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25th Anniversary design wins Czech international air show award



Capt. Mattias Koch passes on the award, a crystal beer mug, to Mr. Hay Janssen from the Graphics Office for the best aircraft design. Photo A1C Florian Hüftle



Photo PIO archive

The specially designed NAEW&CF E-3A aircraft, tail #443, was awarded the prize for best aircraft design during the Czech international air show in Brno in September this year. The anniversary design, created by Mr. Hay Janssen, Mr. Wiel Borghans and Mr. Andre Joosten from the Component's Graphics Office, was selected during the air show amongst numerous other specially painted international aircraft.

The crew from Flying Squadron 1 was presented during the event with a crystal mug as the award for the best design.

In order to show Flying Squadron 1's and the Component's appreciation, Squadron 1 representatives Capt. Mattias Koch and 1Lt. David Becker presented the mug to the creators of the 25th Anniversary design.

Saint Martin: A charming old tradition

By Heidi Soerensen

The official St. Martin's Day is 11 November: it is the feast day of St. Martin of Tours, who started out as a Roman soldier and is the patron saint of soldiers. He was a kind man who preferred to live a simple, quiet life. The most famous legend about his life is that he once cut his cloak in half, to share it with a beggar during a snowstorm, thereby saving the

play that will be performed to their parents on the evening of that day.

In addition to the celebrations in the kindergartens and schools, most of the local towns have their own lantern procession. The St. Martin's Day procession starts after the sun has set and will set off from the city hall or the local school. Often, a man dressed as St. Martin rides on a horse at the front of the procession,

followed by a large troop of children with their lanterns and their parents. Together they sing their way through the town, and musicians often accompany the procession to make sure that everyone is singing in time with each other. The St. Martin's Day procession is most likely concluded with a big bonfire. Goose meat is traditionally eaten on this day.

If you are interested in joining the St. Martin's

Day procession in your local area, look for further information in your local newspaper, or you can join one of the following processions:

Geilenkirchen:

Friday, 9 November, 1730 at the church in An St. Marien 4.

Wassenberg:

Saturday, 10 November, 1730 at the school in Burgstrasse 19.

Geilenkirchen:

Monday, 12 November, 1800 at Jülicher Straße 40.



Photo courtesy: www.google.com

beggar from dying in the cold. St. Martin's Day celebrations take place in many parts of Europe, including our local area.

The preparations for this special day have been going on during the last month. Children in schools and kindergartens have been making their own paper lanterns, learning about the saint's legend, singing the traditional St. Martin's Day songs, and rehearsing a St. Martin's Day



PLANE SPOTTER

This aircraft landed at Geilenkirchen Air Base.

Do you know what it is?

SEE PAGE 10



Photo A1C Florian Hüftle

Foggy Fields Bazaar 9-10-11 November

The American Women of Geilenkirchen (AWGK) are pleased to announce the 19th Annual Foggy Fields Bazaar.

This year's event will be held at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base, Hangar 4 from Friday, 9 November through Sunday, 11 November.

Foggy Fields Bazaar is the primary source for philanthropic funds used to support a number of American as well as NATO-nation organizations. In addition, AWGK uses monies raised at the event to provide academic college scholarships to worthy students.

Vendor products available at this year's event will include a variety of items such as antiques, clocks, furniture, rugs, collectibles, linens and much, much more! Hours of

operation will be 1000 to 1800 Friday and Saturday. Sunday's hours are 1000 to 1600. Do not miss this opportunity to purchase items from all over Europe while supporting a worthy cause!

We look forward to seeing you at the Foggy Fields Bazaar!

The AWGK is a not-for-profit organization, operating as a support and social organization within the NATO Air Base and surrounding community.

For more information: <http://foggyfieldsbazaar.checkoutmypage.com>

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When a hectic working day is over, it is a special pleasure to round off the day agreeably. Spend some time enjoyably with a few friends before going home or just sit with your partner in an agreeable ambience and have a drink or two.

After all, everybody is looking for some joy in life, something to be looking forward to. Nobody wants his life to be determined by the everyday humdrum. In most of the bigger cities now it is a lifestyle feature to get together somewhere in a cultivated atmosphere after working hours or during the weekend, without being expected to have a meal or a drink, but instead do the things you like to do, such as to listen to music, play a game of cards, enjoy a glass of good cognac or perhaps smoke a good cigar.

This can at the same time be an occasion for a brief business talk or striking up an acquaintance with new friends, people with culture and style. For those who become a bit hungry there is always the possibility to order a small, high-quality meal. In short, these people have a good time, relax and simply enjoy life!

That can also be found in Geilenkirchen now: it is not a bar, not a restaurant, but the first Place of Enjoyment in the entire surrounding area, with English, German and Dutch speaking staff. It is a place that will strike the visitor as something special as soon as he enters.

The historical inner court with a heated terrace is attractive due to its architecture, full of quietude and free of any street noises, even if the premises are directly adjacent to the street. And it should not be left unmentioned that on both sides of that street free parking places are available. Inside the premises there are a number of rooms of various sizes, each equipped for different purposes and each having its own particular ambience which attracts visitors.

The Yellow Room is equipped with a large bar and a number of high tables at which you can sit down at ease and have a drink or of course have a meal. The meals are prepared with fresh ingredients and in accordance with the guest's specific requirements by the creative chief cook of the house. The small menu card is renewed at regular intervals. The choice of drinks ranges from a good cup of coffee (at a fair price) to a variety of special wines, champagne of every price category (Moët champagne or high-quality Prosecco), with Dom Perignon at the top, or a simple glass of fresh fruit juice.

Then there is the lounge, which the visitors like to use as such; you can sit down there in comfortable big leather easy chairs, have a smoke or listen to music.



Your Place of Enjoyment,
 full of ambience
 in Geilenkirchen, where
 going out is a true pleasure.



Parsifal

Alte Haihover Strasse 2 (in Haus Basten)
 52511 Geilenkirchen +49 (0)173 1670439

The Blue Room is meant in particular for more large-scale festive occasions. It is decorated in pleasant shades of blue and finished with precious wooden furniture. This room is especially suitable for celebrations such as wedding parties, birthday, first-Communion and Christmas celebrations, etc. It is a room for the celebration of special occasions and for "simply having a good time".

The Green Room is, like the blue room situated on the first floor and can easily be reached via a wide antique staircase. This room can, among others, be rented for business meetings. Its ambience invites to special Brain Storming Sessions. Its location is a bit remote and therefore very appropriate for such private meetings. Parsifal is also meant as a setting for art exhibitions which are open to the general public. Each month a different artist will have a vernissage followed by an exhibition. The first artist to exhibit his works at Parsifal is painter Paul Schauff (www.paul-schauff.de), an inhabitant of Geilenkirchen, whose exhibition will run until November 30 next. All who are interested are hereby cordially invited to visit this exhibition. Then the Parsifal premises will be dedicated to a Christmas market, one of a special nature, at which a particularly wide range of Christmas articles will be for sale.

The concept behind Parsifal has been realized by Cor Schreurs and he wants this to be a place where nice and decent people get together and "have a good time". There is no obligation to order a meal; the guests can do as they like. Parsifal is open to everybody who is looking for a place where he can sit down fully at ease and spend some time in a relaxed, pleasant ambience. Although the premises are fitted out with first-class materials and furnishings, the guests should feel free and at home. The motto is "Live your life and have a good time". As the leisure hours mostly start at 05:00 pm, Parsifal's opening hours also start at 05:00 pm on every day of the week except Monday (day of rest) and apart from special occasions such as reunions, meetings or celebrations of any kind, for which the place will be opened earlier, upon request. After all, there should not be anything to stop us from starting a festive occasion earlier. As George Bernhard Shaw said:

"It is not the pleasure that makes life worth living, it is life which makes the pleasure (at Parsifal) worth living".

Look forward to seeing you at Parsifal, maybe with the pleasure of a good glass of wine.

Your Parsifal team

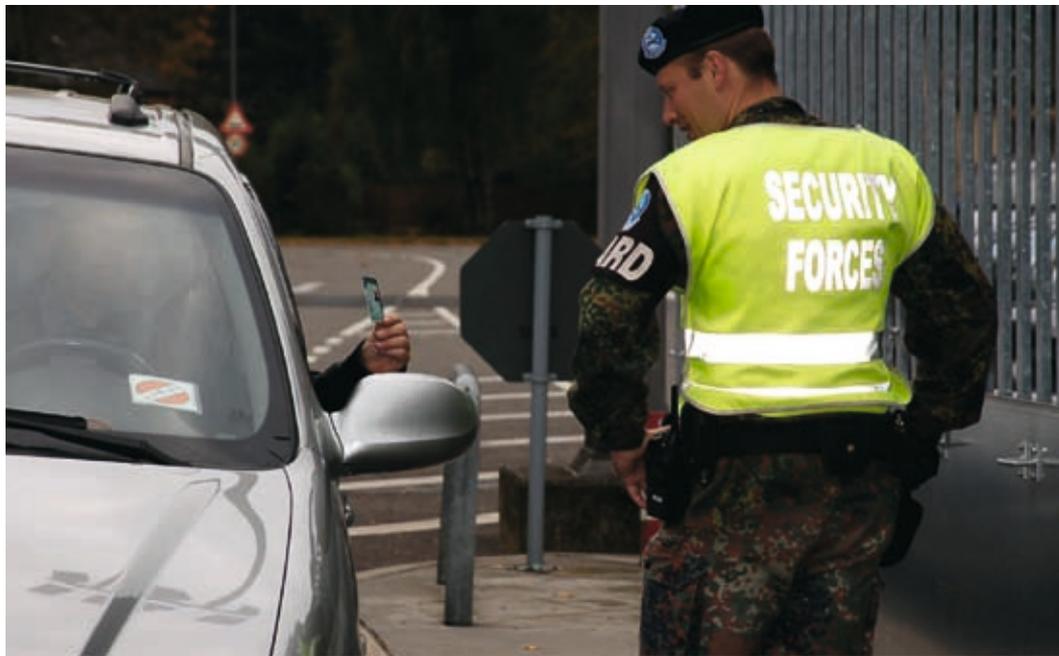
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24/7/365

A background story about the International



*Base entry control
"The first and last
people you see..."*

Photo TSgt Ingo Ruebsteck

By Heidi Soerensen

It's early in the morning and you are still waking up, as you travel in your warm car on your way to another workday at the E-3A Component. In the hazy mist the yellow waistcoats are the first things you dimly see, and when you get closer a military installation with full security is unveiled. No one enters our Component without looking one of the Civil Guards in the eye, and you cannot go onwards until he has given his approving nod. The base entry security continues while you navigate through the 'steel barriers' and then most likely your eye catches a glimpse of the International Military Police discreetly parked somewhere close to the gate, ready to support their colleagues.

Although the Cold War ended in the late eighties and early nineties, security still remains critical to our Component. The world around us has changed a lot since then, and so has the threat to military installations. In this article we would like to highlight our colleagues in the International Military Police (IMP) and the Civil Guard (CG) who work day and night to protect the world's only multinational flying unit. To get further information I went down to Building 36, where the IMP patrols have their rallying point and the CG has its liaison.

Lt. Col. Ralf Kruzycki, Commander of the Security Squadron (SWSC) welcomed me, "I am very proud to invite you for a 'walkthrough' of my Squadron. Although IMP and CG are the theme for this article, please also recognize the Force Protection Branch and the Security Branch as important players in the Security Squadron. During the last 25 years we have maintained a high level of security

with the overall purpose of ensuring that the Component can conduct its main mission. Please bear in mind that in the cold of the winter and in the heat of the summer, day and night, each and every CG and IMP makes a personal contribution to the security that we all benefit from."

The International Military Police (IMP) is an integral part of Base Support Wing's Security Squadron and is an armed force assigned to the E-3A Component. The IMP is composed of 50 professional, trained military police sergeants from 11 nations working side by side. The primary mission for the IMP is to maintain order, discipline and security by enforcing host nation law, orders and directives at the Component. Public order and public safety are the essential task for the IMP. Additionally the IMP coordinates all traffic-related issues and maintains the Base Traffic Register. Another key role for the IMP is to act as the liaison office for local German and Dutch police and customs authorities as well as other military headquarters' military police. Last but not least IMP is in charge of all crime investigations at the E-3A Component.

The Civil Guard (CG) is also an integral part of Base Support Wing's Security Squadron, but the CG is a civil force composed of a total of 82 guards, including 77 Local Wage Rate (LWR) and five NATO Civilians. Each member of the CG has a background as a professional, trained and fully educated security guard. The nationalities of the current workforce are equally split, with 50% German and 50% Dutch. Last but not least, the CG also has invaluable support from the 25 NATO guard dogs that all live in kennels here on the Component. The primary mission

for the CG is to guard and protect the E-3A Component and provide security services including base entry, flight line security, restricted area control and base perimeter control. Additionally the CG manages the dog kennels and provides bomb detection support.

The IMP and CG work together in close partnership to accomplish their security mission, which means manning the security posts and patrolling the entire Component 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Together they man a total of four alternating shifts that are on duty for 12 hours at a time. Each shift is manned by 12 IMPs and 20 CGs and led by an IMP Shift Commander and a CG Shift Leader: the IMP Shift Commander has overall responsibility for supervising IMP and CG duties. In addition to the normal manning and to respond to a more stringent threat situation the Security Squadron also has an augmentation force assigned to it. The augmentation force consists of Component military personnel from all five Wings temporarily assigned to ensure that the 24 hour, 7-days-a-week increased manning can be maintained.

Mr. Hans-Willi Dohmen is CG Supervisor and has been employed here since 1981. I was curious to hear about some of the changes the IMP and CG have experienced during all those years. "During the Cold War the threat was mainly from the east and espionage was an especially important concern. One of the examples was that the current assessment at that time showed that it was quite sufficient to have normal NATO working dogs, since the dog was primarily needed to bark, stop and in worst case bite an escaping person. In the beginning nobody thought about the need to search



*IMP patrols enforcing Component
speed limits.* Photo TSgt. Ingo Ruebsteck

for explosives. But that situation changed, and already in 1984 we got the two first explosive detection dogs, so-called bomb dogs, and time showed that we needed more dogs to provide 24 hour security coverage," says Dohmen. "Especially after 11 September 2001, things changed dramatically and everybody understood the importance of the bomb dogs finding explosives that would never be found by a human being."

Dohmen also coordinates the CG duties on behalf of the IMP leadership, and he confirms the close relationship. "The CG members are very experienced and their average age is 52 years, with more than 30 of us having worked 25 years here at the Component. We normally say that the IMP benefits from our experience and we benefit from their youth. Overall, this means that the

Security

onal Military Police and the Civil Guard



weapons or hazardous goods, but it is mandatory to check all trucks carrying fuel, liquid gas or training ammunition. During these checks the bomb dogs are always on scene searching for explosives. Outbound traffic is randomly checked for tax violations or searched for classified information, to prevent sensitive information leaving the Component. We always emphasize to Component members that the purpose of our checks is not to bother individuals, but the enforcement is part of the overall security policy."

The sound of barking dogs followed by a firm handshake from dog trainer Mr. Leon Brands welcomes me to the dog training area. Brands is a NATO civilian who has now been employed for six years in the CG. While watching a dog handler and one of the NATO working dogs doing the basic 'obedience' training he says, "CG has a total of 19 NATO working dogs and six bomb dogs. The NATO working dog is primarily used for searching buildings or wooden areas. The bomb dogs are used to sniff out explosives and find weapons. The bomb dogs are continuously being trained and familiarized with different kinds of explosives. The training is often done outside the base so that the bomb dogs 'try out' new smells."

The psychological bond between the handler and the dog is very important. A bomb dog has only one handler, in contrast to the working dogs, which have two. There is a very close relationship between the man and the dog, but there is no doubt about who is in charge. It is very impressive to see the four-year-old dog Mark obeying the commands from dog handler Mr. Heinz Schots. When training has successfully been

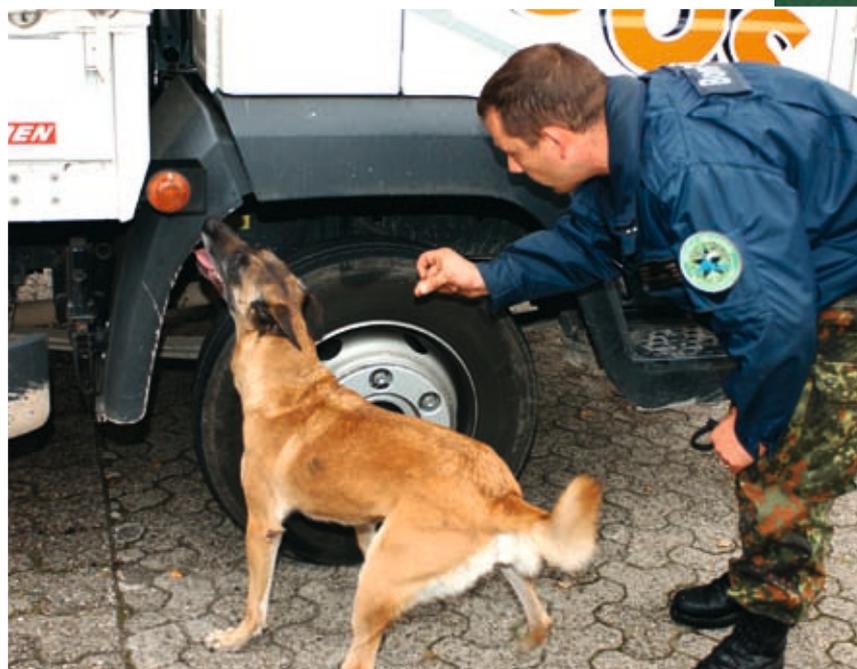
guards responsible for base entry control are very experienced and they pay attention to every unexpected detail. In the end, this enhances the level of security. Even though the tasks are divided between IMP and CG we work together very closely every day."

SMSgt Orlando Ganga, IMP Shift Commander, takes me on a patrol along the base perimeter. He has a background from the Royal Dutch Gendarmerie and has been employed here at the Component for 2 years. "The IMP Shift Commander is an essential liaison person. He is the point of contact, and I really like it because it is always a challenge to try to make the right decisions with the best solutions." Driving along the base perimeter heading for the dog training area, Ganga tells me about the routine duties. "We regularly check inbound vehicles for explosives,

completed, they play around and reveal a close friendship too.

On the way back to Building 36, Ganga continues, "When patrolling along the base perimeter we focus on observing individuals and/or vehicles standing near the perimeter fence line. We also observe plane spotters during their activities. Furthermore it's absolutely essential to check whether the fence is still in good condition and to report any discrepancies as soon as possible, so that repair work can start immediately."

My last stop is a visit to the IMP and CG Branch Chief, Capt. Olaf Wolf, to get some concluding comments and some keywords about security. "Security is best when you do not see it. I do not think many people noticed that we had more than 400 policemen here for the 25th Anniversary celebration, including a military police company from Bonn, Cologne and a military police platoon from Hilden. We also liaise closely with the police in the local area on a daily basis. The key term is information exchange. We constantly update our security measurements to perform in the best possible way for the Component and its members." Wolf continues with his perspective on the future. "It is important to constantly monitor and review our security so that we are prepared for the unexpected. If a temporary threat occurs at a NATO installation, we cannot expect the terrorists to inform us before they plan an attack here. It is crucial for us to have a holistic assessment of the threat level."



Guard dog during an intensive training session.

Photo Heidi Soerensen

Inbound truck being checked for explosives by explosive detection dog handler Mr. Frank Smeets with his dog Enny.

Photo Andrea Hohenforst

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Friday, 16 November, 1930
Matt Damon, Joan Allen

Underdog (PG)

Saturday, 17 November, 1600
Alex Neuberger, Peter Dinklage

The Brothers Solomon (R)

Saturday, 17 November, 1900
Will Forte, Will Arnett

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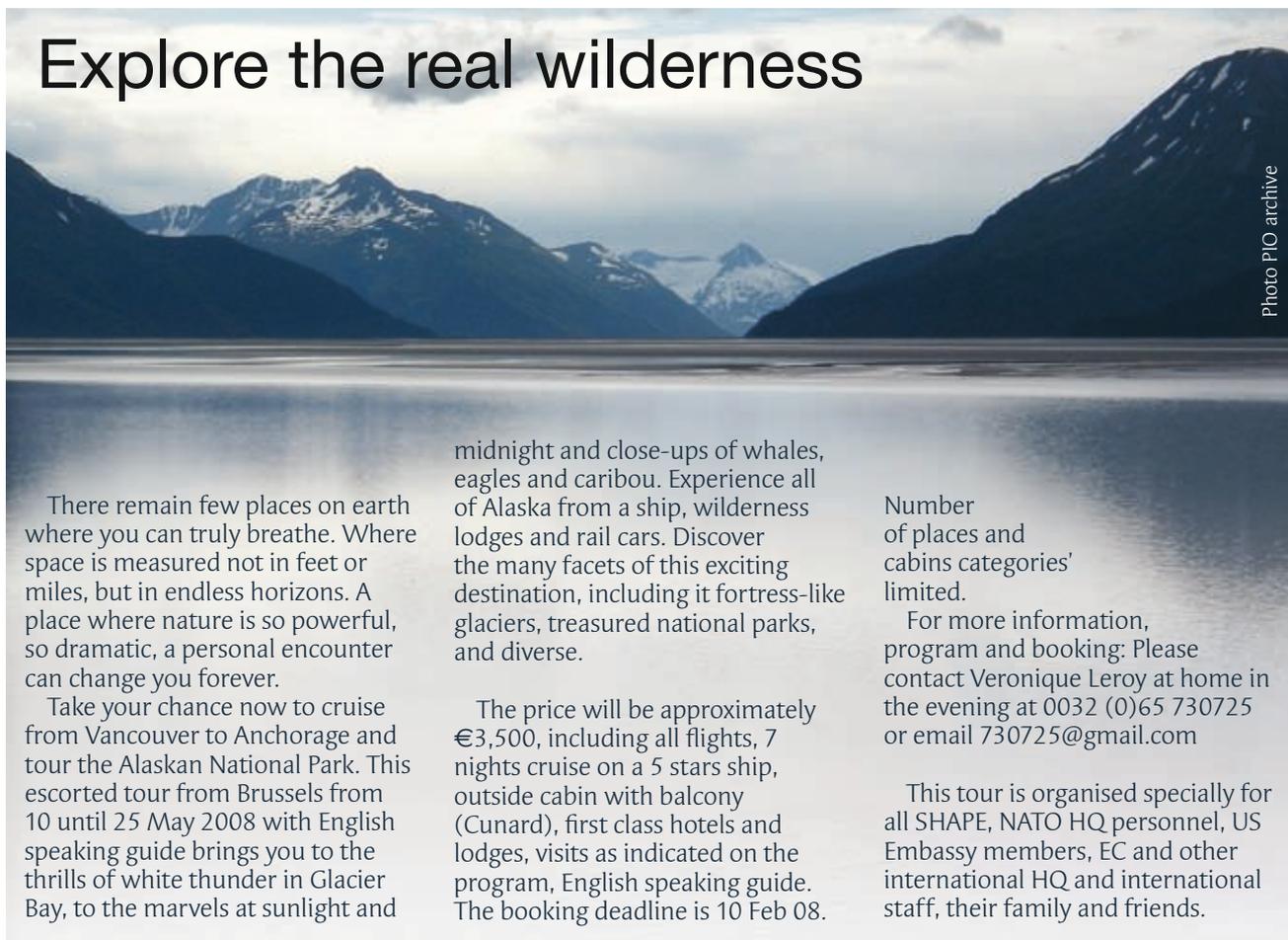


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The price will be approximately €3,500, including all flights, 7 nights cruise on a 5 stars ship, outside cabin with balcony (Cunard), first class hotels and lodges, visits as indicated on the program, English speaking guide. The booking deadline is 10 Feb 08.

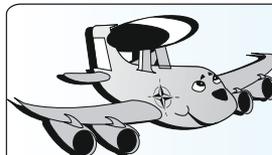
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Thanksgiving meal

The International Dining Hall holds its annual Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration on 21 Nov 07 from 1630-2100. The dinner is open to all Component ID card holders and two guests. Ticket sales (in advance) until 16 Nov at the IDH from 1100-1300. Adults: €9, children 3 to 12: €6, children under 2: Free. White/Red Wine: €3 for large/ €1.50 for small. There will be five eating times: 1630-1715, 1715-1800, 1800-1845, 1845-1930, 1930-2015. For additional information, please contact the Food Services Branch at ext. 4935/30.



PLANE SPOTTER

From 12 until 26 October a Romanian Antonov An-30 used NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen for its Open Skies data-gathering flights.

The Antonov An-30 is a development of the An-24T fitted with a new forward fuselage with a glazed nose and a raised flight deck. It first flew in 1974, with 123 built. As well as its principal use as a survey aircraft, it has also been used to carry out surveillance under the Open Skies Treaty.

Base Elementary School tours the NATO AWACS



Mrs. Vasko-Kingma's 6th grade class before they go inside the AWACS

Photo MSgt. Gary Webster

By MSgt. Cris Weisbecker

Recently, things were a little quiet on the NATO Air Base runway, which was closed for repairs. That was until the entire base's Elementary School was able to come out to tour one of the AWACS planes.

Over 180 children from Kindergarten to 6th grade visited the plane in small groups, which allowed for a very personalized and intimate tour of the aircraft.

Normally it is not allowed to take groups of children onto an active

flightline due to safety and logistic concerns. But by taking advantage of the runway closure, many students were able to see exactly where their Mom or Dad worked and they were finally able to discover exactly what the AWACS aircraft do and the purpose of the big frisbee on the top.

Many members of the NATO Logistics Wing were on hand to answer questions and to ensure the safety of the young visitors. At the end of the day the teachers from the school finally had their turn. Their tour started with a short briefing on the NATO mission and then they too had a chance to have a good look around and ask questions.

This was really a once in a lifetime event and a great big thank you goes out to everyone involved in making this tour successful. Special thanks to Col. Eugene Mittuch, Maj. Joseph Terrones, Capt. David Reilly and MSgt. Cris Weisbecker who all played key roles in organizing the field trip.



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