



A critical moment in NW Baghdad

Battle exposed complicity in the ranks of Iraqi forces

By Mark Heeter

Note: Second in a three-part series based on an intelligence and operations brief at the Dagger Brigade Combat team headquarters Dec. 4.

Its golden minarets towering on the corners above the city below, Kadhamiya Mosque is recognized as one of the most significant religious symbols in all of Iraq, according to Lt. Col. Steve Miska, deputy commander of the Dagger Brigade Combat Team.

The area around the mosque became something else, though, for the Dagger Brigade Combat Team April 29, 2007.

“We knew there were different militia in the area,” said Miska, who led the first Joint Security Station (JSS), which was located in this northwest Baghdad neighborhood.

“I was out there talking to people, eating ice cream, keeping my finger on the pulse of what was going on with the local population,” he said.

Coalition and Iraqi forces had intelligence indicating a large presence of leadership from the extremist group Jaish al Mahdi in Kadhamiya in and around the mosque April 29.

Miska dispatched a patrol down to establish a loose perimeter around the area while Iraqi military and police forces were expected to round up their targets.

“They started calling for some Iraqi backup, and they sat there for 45 minutes and no backup arrived. (Iraqi forces) would not respond because of their fear for the Jaish al Mahdi (JAM),” Miska said. A firefight erupted and the greatly outnumbered Dagger Soldiers held their ground while more American troops were sent in as reinforcement.

“It goes on for about two-and-a-half hours of sustained, knock-down dragged out fighting about 400 meters east of the shrine,” Miska said.

“Tactically, the outcome of this little firefight is, you know, zero U.S. wounded. JAM, we knew we killed about eight of



Kadhamiya Mosque is recognized as one of the most significant religious symbols in all of Iraq. (Photo courtesy <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>)

them, and we had no idea how many of them were wounded, so you’d say that’s a good contest,” Miska said.

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Schweinfurt vet gives tips on traveling with pets

Story and photos by Sandra Wilson

Have you been dreading traveling by plane with your pet, wondering if poor Fido or Socks will make it to your destination without emotional damage?



In truth, traveling “tends to be much more stressful for owners than for pets,” said Dr. (Maj.) Michelle Goodnight, veterinarian at the Schweinfurt Vet Clinic on Conn Barracks.

“Animals tend to be really adaptable, and they are really resilient,” she said, in order to quell some of the fears of first-time pet-owning travelers.

But to make the trip as comfortable as possible with the least amount of complications, there are detailed steps

the owner must take well in advance of the departure.

The first step consists of making sure vaccinations are up-to-

date. The rabies vaccine is the most important and must be more than 30 days old, but it also cannot be expired. There are one-year and three-year rabies vaccines, and it’s a good idea to find out when your pet’s vaccination expires. If traveling to Hawaii, Japan, or England, there are additional vaccination requirements which a call to the vet clinic can clarify. Having your pet’s vaccinations up-to-date will avoid the possibility of the animal being quarantined at your destination.

Additionally, a health certificate must be issued within ten days of your departure. Goodnight recommends calling the clinic to schedule an appointment once the date of flight is known. This certificate validates that your pet is healthy enough to fly.

German veterinary clinics can also do the check-up, but they often don’t have the correct form needed for travel outside of the European Union. Goodnight suggests touching base with the military vet clinic to make sure all required forms are completed.

Having multiple copies of the health certificate and rabies vaccination to fasten to the carrier and to carry with you during

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News Briefs

Closed tomorrow

TOMORROW: The Schweinfurt CPAC will be closed all day for their annual outing. The motor Pool, central issue facility, and all Directorate of Logistics offices will close at 11:30 a.m.; call 0170-190-7382 for emergencies. The consolidated mail rooms (CMRs), in-and-out processing, and all Directorates of Human Resources offices will close at noon.

Special shows at Christmas market

Come to the city Christmas market Saturday to see a fire show by a juggler trio on stage from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Advent music will be played by the music association of Grafenrheinfeld from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, the "Fire of Peace from Bethlehem" arrives at the marktplatz and is turned over to the city of Schweinfurt at 5:30 p.m. followed by a march to the historic Holy Ghost Church.

Leighton Lingerers dine out

Join the Leighton Lingerers, formerly the spouses club, Dec. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Waldhaus for a dining out. Exchange gifts (\$10/10 euro limit), and enjoy good food. Call June at 0931/299/5648 or email her at jimjunej@t-online.de to reserve a spot for the last dining out of 2007.

Annual tree lighting

Come to the Christmas tree lighting in Andrus Garden on Ledward Barracks Sunday at 4 p.m. Enjoy free refreshments, sing some carols, and bring the kids to get a picture with a special guest.

Ethnic food at the library

Join Ledward library for a time of food and gathering recipes tomorrow for an Islamic lunch or Dec. 20 for a Kwanzaa lunch, both from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Meet in the Ledward library kitchen. For more information, call 354-1740 or 09721-96-1740.

Children's Christmas performance

Come to the Ledward chapel Sunday at 9 a.m. to see children perform "Sing Noel". The storyline follows children as they do the final rehearsal for a Christmas play. Some are excited about the day of performance and others, pushed by their parents to participate, take some time to warm up to the idea. The community is invited to attend.

Free arts and crafts class

Join Schweinfurt's Army Community Service for a free arts and crafts class the Ledward's Crafts Studio Tuesday starting at 1 p.m. All materials and instruction are free of charge.

Story time while parents shop

Send your kids to Ledward library for a 30-minute story time while you shop for their Christmas gift at the PX on Saturday from 10 to 10:30 a.m. For more information, call 354-1740 or 0931-889-1740.

Play women's volleyball on Monday

Sign up for the three-on-three women's volleyball tournament held at Finney Fitness Center Monday. Participation is free and is open to all I.D. card holders 18 years and older. Registration is 5-5:30 p.m. the day of the tournament. All participants receive a free T-shirt. For more information, call 353-8234 or 09721-96-8234.

Giving parents a break

Child and Youth Services is giving you time off. Drop of your children ages six weeks to fifth-grade for Super Saturday Respite Care on Jan. 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sign-ups are now open. Children will be cared for at no cost to Families. Program includes one meal. Enrollment is limited. Children must be registered with CYS and reservations must be made in advance by phone or in person. Give yourself a break and go shopping or just relax at home. Call 354-6517 or 09721-96-6414 in Schweinfurt or 350-7762 or 0931-889-7762 in Wuerzburg.

Schweinfurt Dispatch



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This newsletter is a command information product that places emphasis on events and activities occurring throughout the Schweinfurt and Lower Franconia areas.

Information and photos included in this

newsletter are acquired from sources that highlight events, programs and activities in Schweinfurt and Lower Franconia.

Dates, times, locations, and the events themselves might change or be cancelled without prior notice.

To be added to the Schweinfurt Dispatch distribution list, please email: mail.sft.pao@eur.army.mil.

This address can also be used to submit community slides or information on upcoming events, or you can reach the USAG Schweinfurt public affairs office by calling 354-1600/6381 or (09721) 961600/966381.



- 14 DEC --Sign up deadline for unit level basketball tournament at Leighton. Call 354-8234 or 350-6115.
--Daddy Basic Training, Ledward ACS, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Call 354-6933 for more info.
- 14-16 DEC --Zugspitze Ski trip to Garmisch with Outdoor Rec. Call 353-8080.
- 15 DEC --MWR Family Friendly Trip to Erfurt Christmas Market, free trans. Call 350-6305.
--Basketball tournament, DJK Schweinfurt/DJK Eggolsheim at the Georg-Wichtermann-Halle (Gym), Paul-Gerhard-Strasse in Schweinfurt, 8 p.m.
- 16 DEC --Ice hockey game, Schweinfurt Mighty Dogs vs. Memmingen, 6 p.m., Schweinfurt icedome.
- 17 DEC --Free ACS computer class: Advanced MS Word, Finney Gym, 8 a.m.-12:50 p.m. Call 354-6933.
--One-day Christmas Market in Hassfurt marktplatz, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- 18 DEC --Nikolaus hands out candy at Schweinfurt Christmas Market, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
--Free ACS computer class: Advanced MS Excel, Finney Gym, 8 a.m.-12:50 p.m. Call 354-6933.
- 19 DEC --Free ACS computer class: Advanced MS Power Point, Finney Gym, 8 am-12:50 pm. 354-6933.
- 20 DEC --Express mail deadline for Christmas delivery to the United States.
--Nikolaus hands out candy at Schweinfurt Christmas Market, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
--Free ACS computer class: Advanced MS Access, Finney Gym, 8 a.m.-12:50 p.m. Call 354-6933.
- 21 DEC --Ice hockey game, Schweinfurt Mighty Dogs vs. Waldkraib, 6 p.m., Schweinfurt icedome.
--Sign-ups begin for Dec. 28 Parent's Night Out in Schweinfurt and Wuerzburg. Call CYS Central Registration at 354-6517 or 350-7762 to sign up.
- 22 DEC --Last day of the Schweinfurt Christmas Market.
- 23 DEC --Traditional Protestant Service begins again at Conn Chapel, 11 a.m.
- 24 DEC --Christmas Eve service, Ledward Chapel, 7 p.m. Sponsored by the Protestant service.
- 25 DEC --Christmas Day, all MWR, AAFES, & Commissary facilities closed except 24 hour Shoppette.
--Carl Busch Circus opens on the Volksfestplatz, across from Askren Manor.
- 26 DEC --2nd Christmas Holiday, German Holiday.
- 27 DEC --National Make Cut-Out Snowflakes Day, Leighton Library, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 350-1740.
- 28 DEC --Ice hockey game, Schweinfurt Mighty Dogs vs. Erding, 6 p.m., Schweinfurt icedome.
--Polar Express Night, Ledward Library, 6 p.m. to midnight. Call 354-1740.
- 31 DEC --New Year's Eve party at the Leighton CAC, starts at 6 p.m.
- 9-10 JAN --Community theatre casting call for "Bus Stop" at Abrams Center, 6 p.m. Call 0162-296-2776.
- 10 JAN --Dagger Brigade Volunteer Recognition Awards, Conn Club, beginning at 10 a.m.
- 23 JAN --Dagger Memorial Dedication, Dagger Rose Garden, Conn Barracks, beginning at 10:30 a.m.
- 25 JAN --MWR Winter Fest/Welcome Home, Finney Fitness Center, beginning at 11 a.m.
- 27 JAN --Musical "Fame" performed in English, Schweinfurt City Theater, 7:30 p.m. Call 09721-51475 or 09721-510 for tickets.

Community 6 week outlook calendar



German physicians help Americans get needed care

By Kimberly Gearhart

Living in a foreign country can be rewarding, but it does have its challenges as well. Although you can stop by the PX and pick up American diapers for your newborn, for example, actually giving birth to that bundle of joy will require the help of a German doctor.

Medical facilities in the USAG Schweinfurt include primary care, laboratory testing, occupational therapy, and even a pediatric specialist, but for obstetric services, the clinic depends on the help of local doctors like Dr. Sabine Vogel.



Dr. Sabine Vogel, center, and her staff are some of the many German practitioners offering care to American patients. (Photo by Anne Torphy, Bavarian MEDDAC PAO)

“Our patients speak very highly of Dr. Vogel,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Duecker, Schweinfurt clinic commander, noting that American patients are often nervous and uncomfortable visiting German doctors.

“They need not be afraid,” Vogel said. “They can ask me

anything, and my staff and I, we all speak English.”

Part of the fear patients have results from cultural differences in treatment standards, something Vogel understands and tries to minimize through compromise and education. Americans’ modesty, for an example, is something Vogel has had to account for in her practice.

“We’ve bought towels for our American patients to use” as drapes during exams, Vogel said, pointing out that Germans do not use the gowns and robes common to American examination rooms.

On the other hand, some cultural differences are more comforting

than frightening. German doctors use exam chairs that resemble those used in a dentist’s office, rather than the hard, flat table and stirrups that equip American gynecologists’ offices.

Vogel, who has been working with American patients since she was a resident at Leopoldina, has been operating her own practice since 2000. Her office is near St. Josef’s hospital, where most deliveries are performed. This proximity allows Vogel to handle regular patients as well as quickly respond to mothers delivering at the hospital.

High-risk babies are cared for in Leopoldina hospital. Often, this can mean that the baby and its mother are separated, as the mother would stay for her care in St. Josef’s.

“Mothers and babies should stay together,” Vogel said. She makes the conscious choice to send high-risk births, such as pre-terms, to Leopoldina for delivery, so that mother and baby are not separated for their individual care.

Vogel also handles gynecological issues other than those related to pregnancy and childbirth and is just one of the many German physicians that supplement the care options available through the Schweinfurt Health Clinic.

Patients referred for care outside of the clinic should visit the referral desk on the first floor of the clinic to arrange an appointment, rather than directly contacting a physician. For more information, stop by the clinic or call 354-6835 or 09721-96-6835.

Local OB/GYNs

Dr. Sabine Vogel
Am Zeughaus 9-13
Schweinfurt
Tel: 09721-53-37-33

Dr. Walter Stolz
Frederich-Stein-Str. 9
Schweinfurt
Tel: 09721-18-67-77

Dr. Jochen Stadlbauer
Hadergasse 40
Schweinfurt
Tel: 09721-1-63-93

Dr. Stefan Schwind
Zehntstrasse 4
Schweinfurt
Tel: 09721-2-29-80

Prof. Dr. Michael Weigl
Leopoldina Krankenhaus
Gustav-Adolf-Str. 6-8
Schweinfurt
Tel: 09721-72-02-132

Dr. Hartmuth Heigoldt
St. Elisabeth Krankenhaus
Kissingener Str. 150
Bad Kissingen
Tel: 0971-80-53-48



Middle school students perform winter concert

On Dec. 4, the community packed the Schweinfurt Middle School gym to watch the students’ winter concert. The advanced band, 39 students, played first with a combination of their favorite tunes as well as some holiday sounds. The beginning band, 66 students, followed, showing off musical skills learned just within the last few months.

They hope to hold another concert for the community before spring break. (Photo by Sandra Wilson)



Elementary school mascot returns from Iraq

Story and photo by Sandra Wilson

The adventures of Flat Wilbur have come to an end. Schweinfurt Elementary School (SES) students gathered in the multi-purpose room Tuesday morning for the much anticipated arrival of their mascot, Flat Wilbur, returning from his 15-month deployment to Iraq.



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery enter the Schweinfurt Elementary School multi-purpose room for a celebration of the return of Flat Wilbur, the school's mascot which deployed with them to Iraq in 2006.

Flat Wilbur traveled with 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery (1-7 FA) when they deployed in 2006. He's flat because the real, full-sized mascot wouldn't fit in a traveling bag for the flight, said Wilma Holt, SES principal.

"This is his second deployment," said Beverly Erdmann,

assistant principal, noting that Wilbur earned his 1st Infantry Division combat patch in 2004-5.

While downrange, Flat Wilbur followed the Soldiers of "First Lightning" everywhere. He helped Iraqi doctors give medical treatment to some ill children. He made sure canals were clean so farmers could have water for fields. He met with local Iraqi leaders to talk about ways to help the community. And at the end of his stint, Flat Wilbur helped pack equipment into big metal shipping containers.

But possibly the most memorable part of Flat Wilbur's trip was his presence at the local Iraqi schools. That is where SES students had a long-distance connection to the children of Iraq. Soldiers of "First Lightning" completely overhauled two schools so that they would be suitable learning environments for the Iraqi children—and Flat Wilbur witnessed it all.

While Flat Wilbur was really only a piece of wood carved out as the mascot pig and painted, to SES kids he represented something much bigger—their heroes who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Soldiers of 1-7 FA entered the multi-purpose room Tuesday to thunderous applause from the students. Their mission: to return Flat Wilbur to his home in the Schweinfurt Elementary School. Lt. Col. Michael Griffith, commander of 1-7 FA, reminisced and spoke on behalf of the citizens and children in Iraq who wanted to give a big thank you for their support.

And now, Schweinella, Flat Wilbur's female counterpart, has deployed to Afghanistan with 1st Squadron, 91st Airborne Cavalry.

"We have promoted her to a general," said Holt. And the adventures will begin anew when the flat female mascot sends reports of her efforts supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

BAGHDAD

"Strategically, though, it was a major setback for us," he said.

Months of trust-building had been disrupted in a single afternoon's fighting and led to calls for a perimeter around the mosque that would have become a "militia sanctuary," according to Miska.

Miska and Col. J.B. Burton, Dagger Brigade Combat Team commander, see the battle in Kadhamiya as a pivotal moment in the larger battle for northwest Baghdad, which included several major operations.

"I will tell you that the goodness that came out of the 29th of April is that we were able to call a spade a spade. We were able to say that this is what happened," Burton said.

"We knew that Iraqi Soldiers were providing their weapons inside of this running gun battle to Shia militiamen who

were shooting at our Soldiers. We knew that our most trusted Iraqi Security Force leader in the Kadhamiya district was being halted by a very senior political leader," he said.

As the fight raged on, Burton personally took a call from a senior Iraqi official, who asked him to pull back his troops.

"I said I'm not going to do it. I'm being shot on. I'm going to finish this fight," Burton said. And finish it they did. After the smoke cleared, though, the re-building process had to begin.

"We were able to move beyond that, and re-establish trust with the population over a course of months, but it took until about August where we were able to regain the trust of the population. It gives you some insight into the complexity of this struggle," Miska said.

"The good news is that the effects of 29 April removed this veneer of top cover. It

removed this idea that you can't be touched. Because we started touching them," Burton said.

"It allowed us to move from rumor innuendo... to operating on a basis of fact, which allowed us to target some very high-ranking political maneuverings," he said.

Part of the recovery following the April 29 battle near the mosque included Operation Switchblade, an effort to recruit and employ volunteers as members of the military and security forces to combat extremists. The effort to wrest control of neighborhoods from insurgents became a matter of choices for the local population.

"Counterinsurgency is ultimately a political struggle, a contest that centers around who can deliver the best alternative for the population," Miska said.

Next week: Piecing together the puzzle of northwest Baghdad.



Tree shines on Leighton one last time

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. John Queen
69th ADA Public Affairs Office



With the flick of a switch Lt. Col Anthony Haager, along with some little helpers, brings the Leighton Barracks Christmas tree to glowing life.

Jack Frost put an icy bite in the air on Leighton Barracks Dec. 7, as a small crowd of Soldiers and Family members turned out at Victory Garden Park to witness the post's final holiday tree-lighting ceremony.

This annual event marks the official start of the Wuerzburg military community's yuletide season.

On hand to officiate the ceremony was Lt. Col Anthony Haager, the United States Army Garrison Schweinfurt commander. During a brief speech Haager said the honor of lighting this year's tree was bitter sweet because it not only marks the beginning of the holiday season, it brings the end to a tradition in the community.

Along with the tree-lighting came a visit from the man in the big red suit. Santa arrived via fire truck and listened to the wishes of nearly two-dozen children. Many asked for puppies and kittens while others requested the latest video games. Santa even took time to listen to Wuerzburg High School student Cassandra Gonzales, who asked for money for college and maybe a new camera.

An ensemble from the V Corps band was also present to add an extra festive accent to the event by playing the joyous sounds of the season.

Although the turnout for this year's lighting was far smaller than previous years due to the post closing, all of the participants were filled with the holiday spirit and anxious to see what the new year will bring.

TRAVEL

your travels is vital.

The second step involves contacting the specific airline on which you will be traveling.

The airline should be able to tell you if your pet carrier can be considered a carry-on to be stowed under the seat or if the animal must be checked in as excess baggage. Other requirements should also be explained, like the need for absorbent bedding and when to feed and water the pet before departure.

"Not everyone who answers the phone has the correct information," Goodnight said, adding that she had to call an airline several times before she got the information she needed.

The third step includes a variety of ways to make your pet comfortable during their travels.

Goodnight suggests putting a favorite toy as well as an unwashed

shirt with the owner's scent on it into the traveling container to give the animal a sense of security. She also recommends using the traveling container on a regular basis at home.

"Don't only bring the kennel out when something stressful is going to happen,"

she said, explaining how the animals need to think of it as a non-threatening place to go.

Bringing food as a carry-on is encouraged. It's also important to make sure that the food your pet eats is available for sale at your destination. You don't

want to have to change their diet abruptly, because it will disturb their digestive tract.

If your animal is on any medication, be sure to have at least a month's supply so that you can have time to settle into your new location before having to find a clinic to refill it.

If all three steps are covered, pet and owner can rest assured that their travels will go smoothly and should any other questions remain, "the vet is your biggest resource. We help people PCS (everyday). If we don't have the answer, we have the resources to find the answer," Goodnight said.



Dr. (Maj.) Michelle Goodnight (right), veterinarian at the clinic on Conn Barracks, listens to Gin's heartbeat. Owner, Ines Woodbeny, holds and calms the dog during the physical check-up.