

The Citizen

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www.stuttgart.army.mil

DOD surveys spouses

Results will help DOD make decisions on policies and programs aimed at families.

Art has never tasted so good

Chocolate artists will create masterpieces during Tübingen's chocolate festival Dec. 4-9.

3
10

USPS lift of lithium battery ban does not apply to Germany

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

If you are confused about whether you can or cannot receive a lithium battery-powered electronic device through the mail, join the crowd.

The U.S. Postal System announced Nov. 15 that it would once

again accept packages of electronic devices with lithium batteries bound for international destinations.

But as of Nov. 26, Germany had not agreed to lift the ban, according to military postal officials.

While you may not be able to receive an item containing a lithium battery, you can mail such items to

the States via military mail.

The May 16 ban, issued by the International Civil Aviation Authority, applies to commercial aircraft.

Commercial aircraft are used to move U.S. mail bound for Army Post Offices in Germany. However, mail headed to the U.S. from Germany is transported in military aircraft.

When mailing electronic devices to the U.S., postal customers are reminded that a CMR address cannot be used as a return address. They must use a valid stateside address instead, different from the address of the recipient.

For further instructions, visit your Army Post Office.

Military-to-civilian skills credentialing pilot underway

By Claudette Roulo

American Forces Press Service

After completing an analysis of industry and employment trends, the Defense Department has embarked on a pilot program to help service members obtain civilian professional credentials.

Frank C. DiGiovanni, the department's director of training readiness and strategy, said five occupational areas were selected for the pilot program: aircraft mechanic, automotive mechanic, health care, supply and logistics and truck driver. A total of 17 military specialties are covered under these five areas, which align with Department of Labor's standard occupational classifications.

To select the occupations, DiGiovanni said the department looked at the private sector for areas where there would be average or better growth coinciding with high numbers of projected job openings.

"What we've asked the services to do ... is to look at those five areas, look at their specific military occupational codes, marry them up and get some people into the pilot program," he said.

The program began in October and as it progresses, officials will examine whether existing military training is sufficient to qualify service members for civilian credentials. Where the current training is found to be insufficient, DiGiovanni added, the department will determine if the program can be adjusted or if training from external sources is necessary.

Training is just part of career development, however. "Some of these licenses and credentials require a certain level of experience to qualify," he said. So, the program will eventually assess service members at various stages in their military careers.

Military officials will also assess the program's success from the perspective of the three key participant groups. "The first is the individual," he said. "Did they feel they got what they needed to go out and compete?"

See Credentialing on page 4



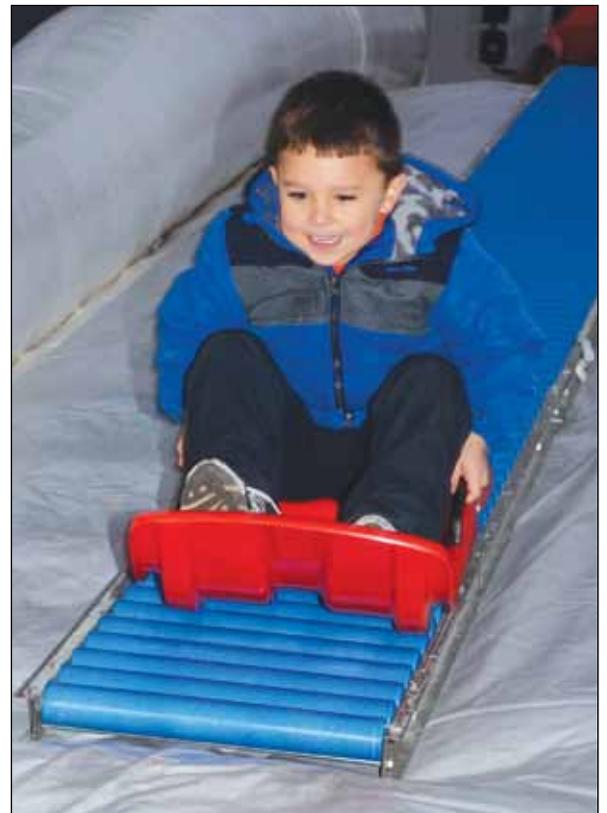
Aaron Horlbeck, 4, concentrates on keeping his balance while riding a mechanical snowboard under the watchful eye of Ken Ackermann-Jones during Winterfest.

A vendor puts the final touches on a plaque during the holiday market held Nov. 16-19 in the Patch Fitness Center.



Festive fun at Winterfest

While Santa holds her son Aaron, 2 months, Janie Bowerbank eases Aaron's brother, Logan, 2, closer for a holiday photo at the Patch Arts and Crafts Center Nov. 16. Winterfest also included carriage and train rides, food and crafts.



Photos by Susan Huseman

Gregory Miller, 5, takes a spin on an inflatable toboggan run during U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Family and MWR's Winterfest held Nov. 16 on Patch Barracks.



Commander's Column

Stuttgart military community second to none

Commentary by Col. John P. Stack
USAG Stuttgart commander

As we head into the holiday season, Stuttgart military community members sure have a lot to be thankful for. I would like to take a moment to reflect on why I'm glad I live here.



Col. Stack

The centerpiece of our community is made up of units and organizations that perform vital Defense Department missions covering one-third of the globe. These missions provide protection, resources and security training to regions critical to global stability. At a time when much of the international environment is full of so much change, uncertainty and risk, our DOD efforts based right here in Stuttgart are more important than ever before.

In addition to these units, the

Stuttgart military community is made up of organizations that are focused exclusively on taking care of service members and their families through a multitude of important programs and services commonly referred to as quality of life programs.

Organizations such as U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart's Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Army Community Service (available to all services), the United Service Organizations, the Religious Support Office and the American Red Cross lead the way in providing vital family-based programs, but they are certainly not alone in this regard.

We can count on another 60 to 70 volunteer-run, non-profit organizations in the Stuttgart military community that operate in coordination with the garrison with the unifying purpose of helping to enhance the quality of life for community members.

The Stuttgart military community is second to none in terms of volunteer spirit and mobilization.

Last year, Stuttgart volunteers logged in more than 213,000 hours

to help service members and their families. This scale of caring for others leads to a community that sticks together — whether it's raising money for the less fortunate, coming together to search for a missing special needs girl just a few months ago, or setting up clothing drives to aid victims of Hurricane Sandy.

In many important ways, this community has the feel of a small town in the States where everyone pulls together in times of need.

It's definitely a community where people go above and beyond to help make this a better place for the benefit of others.

To top it all off, let's talk about location.

There is no doubt that we live in a great European city full of history and culture, with endless possibilities for off-duty activities.

Stuttgart is one of the safest cities in Germany, has a very reliable and comprehensive mass transportation system, and is almost directly situated in the center of Europe, which provides us great opportunities to travel

I'm grateful to each of you for giving of yourself — your service, time, commitment and passion — to better our community.

and explore the continent.

Whether its world class ballet, museums, fine dining, a state of the art auto industry, or great outdoor opportunities — Stuttgart has it all.

This also includes very supportive, friendly and cheerful host-nation neighbors.

I'm grateful to each of you for giving of yourself — your service, time, commitment and passion — to better our community.

Let's all give thanks for those who make the Stuttgart military community such a special place.

THE CITIZEN

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Thorns and Roses

Roses to:

The staff at the Stuttgart Regional Post Office — They help to make this holiday season the most joyous time of the year by making sure everyone gets their packages on time.



Thorns and Roses is about recognizing those who do a good job or make life a little easier. It's also about people who need to be a little more considerate of others.

This column is not about institutions, units or agencies. It's not about situations that could result in legal action under military or German law. Nor is it a place to air management-

employee problems or slander anyone. While we are happy to identify stellar service providers, we can't and won't identify under-performers by name. Submissions must be brief and emailed to stuttgartmedia@eur.army.mil with the subject line: Thorns and Roses.

The author's name and valid telephone number must be included for verification. No anonymous submissions will be accepted. We reserve the right to select submissions and edit for publication. Reader feedback in Army newspapers is authorized by Army Regulation 360-1.

Have the Courage to Help a Buddy

One Suicide is one too many.

For assistance:

➤ Talk to your Battle Buddy and chain of command

➤ Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press "1" for Military Crisis Line



Karl Weisel

Spouses of Soldiers assigned to V Corps Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, participate in a spouses' Combat Day on USAG Wiesbaden's Clay Kaserne Oct. 25. The Defense Department is soliciting feedback from active duty military spouses through a survey that was launched Nov. 19. The results will be used to make decisions on policies and programs aimed at military families.

Military spouse feedback critical to DOD's family support programming

By Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

Defense Department officials are sending a new spouse survey to select active-duty families to assist in determining programs that best suit their needs.

During an interview with the Pentagon Channel, Cathy Flynn, a program analyst with the Pentagon's military community and family policy office, discussed how these surveys affect future programs serving military families.

"The Active Duty Spouse Survey is a survey that's sent out to a representative sample of active-duty spouses every two years," she said. "It's really a chance for spouses to give their feedback, their input and their experiences ... back to us here in the Department of Defense."

The department's first spouse survey was in 2006, and the first active-duty spouse survey was in 2008. The department now surveys active-duty spouses in even-numbered years and reserve-component spouses in odd-numbered years.

The new active-duty spouse survey that launched Nov. 19 will be in the field for about three months — "as long as we get enough response," Flynn said.

"The questions cover all areas of military life — things that we hope are important to the spouses," Flynn said. "Things like [permanent change-of-station] moves, your experiences with deployment, your experiences with your children, your experiences with military programs."

Flynn said these results are analyzed and used to make decisions on policies and programs to continue to better serve military families.

"In 2010, we learned that 85 percent of spouses want or need to work," she said. "Of our population of spouses, 57 percent are in the labor force; however, 26 percent of those spouses were unemployed. So using that data really helped us to boost employment and education support programs for spouses. It was really critical to have that feedback to have the facts

to use with our leaders."

Flynn said the survey will help to guide decisions about family programs in an era of budget challenges.

"The government is trying to make decisions about what programs to keep," she said. "It's really important that we have the facts about what [their] experiences are like, what spouses lives are like, and what programs they're using and what programs they're benefitting from."

DOD leaders want to make "really good choices" about what programs to keep and which programs to beef up to continue supporting military families, Flynn added, and responses to the survey will inform those decisions.

Each demographic is surveyed for all service branches, Flynn said, to provide officials with an understanding of spouses' experiences in all services.

"In this survey, it's all brought together so we can understand across the board what's happening — where services might look different and where they look the same," Flynn said.

Flynn emphasized the importance of spouses participating in these surveys to improve or sustain support programs.

"It's a random sample, ... and about one in 10 — 65,000 spouses — will be invited to take this survey," she said. "What's really important about that is if you're selected to participate in this survey, you're representing, essentially, 10 spouses who have similar backgrounds as you do."

Flynn explained selected families will be invited by mail to take the survey or can participate online. The survey takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete, she added.

"It takes a little bit of time, because there are a lot of areas to cover," she explained. "We're trying to cover the entire breadth of experiences of military life."

"It is really important that people take this survey seriously, and give us their feedback," she continued. "The Active Duty Spouse Survey is really your opportunity to get your feedback all the way up to the leaders in the Department of Defense."

News & Notes

Holiday mailing deadlines

For overseas personnel mailing packages to friends and loved ones in the States or other duty locations, the holiday mailing deadlines are closing in.

To ensure cards and packages reach their destinations in time, the Military Postal Service Agency recommends that customers mail packages on or before the following mail category deadlines:

- Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL) — Dec. 3;
- Priority Mail — Dec. 10;
- First-class cards and letters — Dec. 10;
- Express Mail — Dec. 17.

Army offers civilian employees IDP training

Army civilian employees can now receive quick training on the Army Career Tracker.

The Army Career Tracker support team has launched a series of online training sessions that will assist an Army civilian employee in creating an Individual Development Plan and a means to track career progression.

The sessions are offered on Wednesday at noon Eastern Standard Time; 6 p.m. for those in Europe.

Topics will be offered in a weekly format and repeated every four weeks.

The full schedule can be viewed at <https://ako.us.army.mil/suite/doc/38279451>.

German kantine news

The contractor operating the Black Stallion Inn German Kantine on Patch Barracks served the facility's final customers Nov. 22. Low sales forced the contractor to shut down just months after opening.

Potential contractors for the facility are now being interviewed, and garrison officials hope to have a replacement in the facility by the end of January, according to Kathleen Cole, deputy to the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart commander.

In other news, the kantine on Kelley Barracks will temporarily close during the Christmas holidays due to the retirement of the current contractor.

A new contract has been awarded, and the kantine will reopen after the Christmas break. The exact dates have not yet been determined.

TSP contribution limit increases for 2013

Federal employees can contribute a maximum of \$17,500 annually to their Thrift Savings Plans in 2013. The catch-up contribution limit for employees 50 and over will remain \$5,500.

The first 2013 contribution will be on the first pay date of the year, Jan. 10. Those wishing to spread their contributions over the full 26 pay periods should make elections during the pay period that begins on Dec. 2.

Charts to assist with planning the amount of TSP contributions to reach the maximum for 2013 will be available on the Army Benefits Center-Civilian website, <https://www.abc.army.mil>, beginning Dec. 2.

Ask a JAG

Editor's Note: Do you have a legal question you would like to see answered in a future edition of The Citizen? If so, contact "Ask a JAG" at andrew.j.rouchka.mil@mail.mil.

Stuttgart Law Center

Q: The holiday season is approaching and now is traditionally the time when we plan events allowing for us to enjoy the season with our family, friends and co-workers. Most popular is the office holiday party or a unit's holiday ball. Are there any limitations?

A: Yes. Such events are, indeed, important to the morale of the office. However, they are not official events. The Defense Department defines an official event as one conducted in support of an assigned mission. Accordingly, taxpayer dollars cannot be used to plan or execute such events. Here are a few common areas of concern with holiday celebrations:

Use of government time. The general rule is that your time during the duty day is an official resource that must be used to complete official business. There are limited authorized exceptions to the general rule, such as an office potluck lunch which extends an hour or two beyond the normal lunch hour. However, the safest approach to planning and conducting a holiday celebration is to do so after the duty day is complete, or during lunchtime.

Contractor employees. Contracted employees are certainly members of the team, but are subject to different rules. For instance, the issues of whether to grant time off and classification of the time spent away from the office to attend such gatherings (i.e. leave, personal day, administrative absence), are to be settled between the contractor and its employees. Thus, is the responsibility of the contractor to decide if, and according to which conditions, its employees may be absent from the workplace.

Use of government resources. The general rule is government resources are to be used only for official business. There are limited exceptions whereby a supervisor may authorize limited use for non-official purposes. For example, the holiday celebration can be held in a government conference room using available furniture. Using a government vehicle for facilitating travel to the event, however, violates the general rule and is considered misuse of government resources. Another common misuse is the use of government printers to print holiday greeting cards or invitations.

Holiday celebrations are an important part of military culture. Plan early, combine common sense with good judgment, and host a modest celebration to ensure your organization acts in accordance with legal guidelines. If you have any questions, contact your local legal office.

This column is not intended as individual or specific legal advice. If you have specific issues or concerns, you should consult a judge advocate at 421-4152/civ. 0711-729-4152.



A taste of home

Cpl. Ernest Joint (left) and Sgt. John Dale, cooks assigned to the 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Dining Facility on Panzer Kaserne, top off a dish of sweet potatoes with marshmallows during the DFAC's Fall Harvest Celebration meal Nov. 21.



Photos by Mark J. Howell

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Commander Col. John Stack serves a plate of turkey to a Soldier during the 1-10th SFG(A), Dining Facility's Fall Harvest Celebration meal service Nov. 21.

Credentialing

Continued from page 1

The second group, technical schools and supervisors, will be surveyed to determine whether meeting the requirements of a civilian certification program helped them or if it created additional challenges, DiGiovanni said.

As the service members involved in the pilot program transition from military service, a third group, employers, will be surveyed.

"We'd have to go to some of the industry folks and say, 'The fact that [service members] were able to get some of these licenses or credentials while on military service, did that help in your decision to hire an individual? What kind of employee are they?'"

"For us, the objective really is honoring the service of our service members and helping them ... while they're in the service to professionalize and expand their knowledge in these occupational areas," DiGiovanni said.

The program's second aim is to determine whether conducting this type of training through the services is cost-effective. Other options could include vocational training through the Department

of Labor or Veterans Affairs.

The pilot is one of several DOD Credentialing and Licensing Task Force initiatives, said Eileen Lainez, a spokesperson for the Defense Department.

"We're looking at how we can better document and translate military training and experience so that civilian credentialing agencies and states can better understand the nature of military training and award appropriate credit," she said.

"However, civilian employers also report that translating military skills to civilian job experience is one of the biggest challenges of hiring employees with military experience," Lainez said. "Civilian credentials provide a means of doing this translation."

"Industry has told us ... that military members bring several advantages to the table," DiGiovanni said, adding that employers consider service members and veterans to be diligent, efficient and reliable.

On the flip side, service members and veterans report that their military experience provided them with leadership and problem-solving skills, adaptability and the ability to work in teams, he added. "In many industries ... the training and experience they have in the military gives them a jump start."

Bad weather?

Know the road conditions before you start your trip to work, and give yourself plenty of time to get there.

- For road conditions and school closure information, call 431-3744/civ. 07031-15-3744;

- Community members can also visit www.stuttgart.army.mil and click on the "Weather" link or follow USAG Stuttgart on Facebook at www.facebook.com/USAGarrison-Stuttgart;

- Listen to AFN (102.3 FM or 1143 AM).

RB Town Hall set for Dec. 11

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart will host a Town Hall meeting focused on the Robinson Barracks community Dec. 11 at 5 p.m. in the RB Chapel.

Learn to be a dental assistant

The American Red Cross will launch a dental assistant training program in conjunction with the Europe Regional Dental Command that will provide comprehensive dental assistant training free of tuition charges. The program involves a combination of classroom training and clinical chair-side experience. The program is open to spouses of active duty service members. The application deadline is Dec. 5.

For more information, call 431-2812/civ. 07031-15-2812 or stop by the Stuttgart Red Cross, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne.

Learn cat, dog first aid Dec. 8

The American Red Cross Stuttgart will offer a cat and dog first aid class Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. that will include everything owners need to know to keep their pets healthy and safe.

The class will be held in Room 327, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne.

For more information, call 431-2812/civ. 07031-15-2812 or email susan.tipton@redcross.org or Stuttgart@redcross.org.

HIRED! to give teens work experience

The HIRED! Apprenticeship Program is seeking apprentices for its winter term that begins Jan. 3.

The program is open to teens from 15 to 18 years of age. The HIRED! Program offers apprenticeship positions in various Family and MWR organizations. Apprentices can gain real-life work experience and training, and will receive a cash award upon satisfactory program completion.

For more information, contact

the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Child, Youth and School Services Workforce Preparation Specialist at 430-6289/7204 or civ. 0711-680-6289/7204, or via email at stuttgart-cys@googlemail.com.

Exchange holiday hours are online

Exchange customers can view upcoming holiday hours for all facilities in the U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart community at www.shop-myexchange.com/ExchangeStores.

Select Europe, then a USAG Stuttgart installation. Click on the "See Details" link following "Stuttgart Facilities Holiday Hours."

Study in Italy, France

There is still time to register for two University of Maryland University College field study courses that will take place Jan. 5-12. Students can explore renaissance art in Florence, Italy, or walk through history guided by famous literature in Paris, France.

The registration deadline for both courses is Dec. 23. To register, go to www.ed.umuc.edu/fieldstudy.

For more information, call the local UMUC Europe field representative at 431-2303/civ. 07031-15-2303 or visit www.ed.umuc.edu.

Due to PCS soon?

If you are relocating within the next three or four months, it's time to begin preparing for the move. A permanent change of station/pre-separation briefing will be held Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. in Building 2913,

Panzer Kaserne. Army personnel will also receive a briefing on finance issues.

All separating Army personnel must attend this briefing to receive pre-separation information. Advance registration is required.

To register, call 431-2599/civ. 07031-15-2599.

IACS, Vehicle Reg., Inspection closures

The U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart Vehicle Registration and Installation Access Control System offices will close at 11 a.m. Dec. 14 for an organization holiday celebration. The Vehicle Registration office will also be closed Dec. 24-26.

For more information, call 431-2833/07031-15-2833 or visit www.stuttgart.army.mil and click on "Directorates" then "Emergency Services."

The Privately Owned Vehicle Inspection station on Panzer Kaserne and its customer service team on Kelley Barracks will close at noon Dec. 14 for a holiday party.

Family ice skating

The Stuttgart Military Community Eishockey Club and the Stuttgart Community Spouses Club will sponsor a family ice skating night Dec. 8 from 5:15-6:45 p.m. at Eisstadion Wernau, Stadionweg 12, 73249 Wernau.

Admission is free, and skates can be rented for a moderate fee.

For more information, call civ. 0711-680-8159 or send an email to smchockey@ymail.com.

USO events

Dec. 11, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Time 4 Tots and Photos with Santa: Children and adults can get their photos taken with Santa, read along during story time at 11 a.m., then enjoy a snack during craft time in the USO kitchen.

Dec. 14, 6 p.m., Single Service Member Christmas Dinner: All single and unaccompanied military personnel are invited to join the USO for a home-cooked holiday meal and gifts for all.

Dec. 25, noon, Christmas meal: The USO will serve a home-cooked Christmas feast at 2 p.m.

For more information, visit <http://uso.org/stuttgart>.

Send your announcements to stuttgartmedia@eur.army.mil.

Tips for driving in fog

- As you enter fog, check your mirrors and slow down. If visibility is 50 meters and below, speed must be reduced to 50 km per hour or slower, depending on the density of the fog. This also applies on the Autobahn.

- Use your windscreen wipers and de-misters.

- Use your foot brake lightly so that brake lights will warn drivers behind you.

- Drive with low beams and fog lights if visibility is reduced, so you can be seen. High beams will reflect off the fog and actually impair visibility even more. Remember, it's an offense to use high-intensity rear fog lights if visibility is greater than 50 meters.

- Don't follow tail lights. Use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide, and enlarge the safety distance to the vehicle ahead. Quick braking and accelerating should be avoided.

- Listen for traffic that you cannot see. Turn off the radio and open the window a little.

- If you park your car on a road, try to get your vehicle completely off the road, and move away from the vehicle to avoid injury. You could be rear-ended.

USAG Stuttgart

Army Post Office Holiday Hours
(through Dec. 22)



<p>Patch Barracks Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday*: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.</p>	<p>Panzer Kaserne Monday through Friday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday*: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.</p>
<p>Kelley Barracks Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.</p>	<p>Robinson Barracks Wednesday: 1-4 p.m.</p>

*Open Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 22

Don't want to stand in line? Make an appointment

Customers may make appointments to mail holiday parcels at the post offices on Patch and Kelley Barracks, and Panzer Kaserne by calling the servicing post office (Kelley, 421-2542; Panzer, 431-2563; Patch, 430-7226).

Appointments will be made for the one hour period before the APO opens for business.

All APOs will be closed Christmas and New Year's Day.



Holiday travelers urged to be sensitive to environment

By Shay Edwards

USAG Stuttgart Antiterrorism Office

On the afternoon of Jan. 24, 2011, 35 people were killed and 150 injured when two suicide bombers detonated themselves at a crowded arrival gate in a Moscow airport. On March 1, 2011, a man shot and killed two Air Force personnel outside of a Frankfurt Airport terminal. And in April 2011, an attempt was made to hijack Alitalia Flight 329 from Paris to Rome and divert it to Libya.

Although no one likes to think about it when they travel, airports and planes are frequently targeted by terrorists, and they will continue to attack them because of the media attention they receive.

For this reason, know what to do to protect yourself when traveling — especially during the holidays — when airports and aircraft are operating at full capacity. Consider these measures during your next trip:

Upon arriving at the airport, proceed through security checkpoints as soon as possible. The further you are embedded in the security system, the less likely you are to be attacked.

Look for nervous passengers who maintain eye contact with others from a distance. Observe what people are carrying. Note any behavior not consistent with that of others in the area.

You wouldn't leave your carry-on items unattended, so what reason would anyone have to do the

same? With this in mind, stay alert for bags, backpacks, paper or plastic bags, briefcases and packages that seem out of place. If you see one, tell an airport employee, and don't get any closer than you would want to be if the device exploded.

Stay away from crowds. Observe the baggage claim area from a distance, and retrieve your bags after the crowd clears. When passing through customs, stay at the edge of the crowd. Those in the middle are more likely to be targeted.

If you are carrying an official passport, military ID, travel orders, or other military related documents onto a plane, where you would hide them to avoid being singled out if the plane was hijacked? Good locations are under the seat cushion, between seats or in a magazine.

If your plane is hijacked, remain calm, and evaluate the situation. There may be more hijackers than you see. Your response to the situation should depend on your judgment of whether or not the airplane is being skyjacked for purposes of holding hostages or creating a weapon of mass destruction.

Surrender your tourist passport if asked for identification. Do not offer any information, but confirm your military status if directly confronted with the fact. Explain that you always travel on your personal passport and that no deceit was intended.

In a rescue attempt, lie on the floor until told to rise. Jumping in the air or overpowering terrorists may get you accidentally shot.



www.photos.com

When in airports, stay away from crowds. Observe the baggage claim area from a distance, and retrieve your bags after the crowd clears. When passing through customs, stay at the edge of the crowd.

Good locks, good neighbors are major deterrents to burglars

By Robert Szostek

U.S. Army Europe Office of the Provost Marshal Public Affairs Office

This is the time of year when burglars become more active. As the days get shorter, the number of break-ins goes up.

And it can happen fast.

"Many thieves will spend no longer than 60 seconds trying to break into a home," said Lt. Col. Raymond Stuhn, the U.S. Army Europe's deputy provost marshal. "Good locks and good neighbors who watch out for each other can be big deterrents to burglars," he added.

In almost half of all completed residential burglaries, thieves simply breeze in through unlocked doors or crawl through unlocked windows, Stuhn added. He recommended people lock their doors any time they leave their houses, apartments or barracks rooms, even if it is only for a short time.

A lock on a flimsy door is as effective as locking a car door but leaving the window down, provost marshal officials said. Stuhn recommends that people inspect their doors and locks,



Thieves will spend no longer than 60 seconds trying to break into a home. Good locks and good neighbors who watch out for each other can be big deterrents to burglars, according to U.S. Army Europe law enforcement officials.

www.photos.com

and ask their landlords or housing office officials for assistance if they need upgrades or improvements.

Some tips for good security include:

- If doors don't fit tightly in their frames, install weather stripping.
- Every external door should have a sturdy, well-installed dead bolt lock.
- Instead of hiding extra keys outside a house or apartment, give a key to a trusted neighbor.
- Install outside lights connected to

a motion sensor.

- If the front door has a peephole, always use it before opening the door.
- Make a list of valuables, such as electronic components, cameras, computers and jewelry. Take photos of the items and note their serial numbers and descriptions. Check with local military police about engraving valuables through Operation Identification.
- Ask local MPs for a free home security survey.

Stuhn also had several suggestions for keeping home secure when the occupants are away:

- Create the illusion that someone is home using trusted neighbors or timers to turn lights on and off in different areas of the house throughout the evening. Lights burning 24 hours a day signal an empty house.
- Leave shades, blinds and curtains in normal positions.
- Have a neighbor pick up mail.
- Don't advertise that an empty home or barracks room. Tell only people who need to know, such as a landlord or trusted neighbor.
- Never leave a message on an answering machine indicating that no one is home. Better to simply say, "I'm not available right now."
- Soldiers living in the barracks should secure their personal belongings in a wall locker.

More tips on home and neighborhood safety are available from the National Crime Prevention Council at www.nnpc.org.

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Photos with Santa

Children will be able to visit with Santa Claus and have their photos taken Dec. 15-23 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Panzer Exchange.

Panzer Optometry Care, Optical Centers celebrate

The Optometry Care Center and the Optical Center in the Panzer Mall will hold open houses Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. to celebrate the shops' second anniversary of servicing the Stuttgart community.

Customers will be able to tour the facilities, meet the staff, win prizes and have cake. The Optometry Care Center will offer free, walk-in glaucoma screenings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Optical Center will also clean and adjust glasses from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Stuttgart Red Cross needs volunteers

The American Red Cross Stuttgart station has several volunteer opportunities available, including publicity chairman, medical co-chairman, Facebook webmaster assistant and special event volunteers.

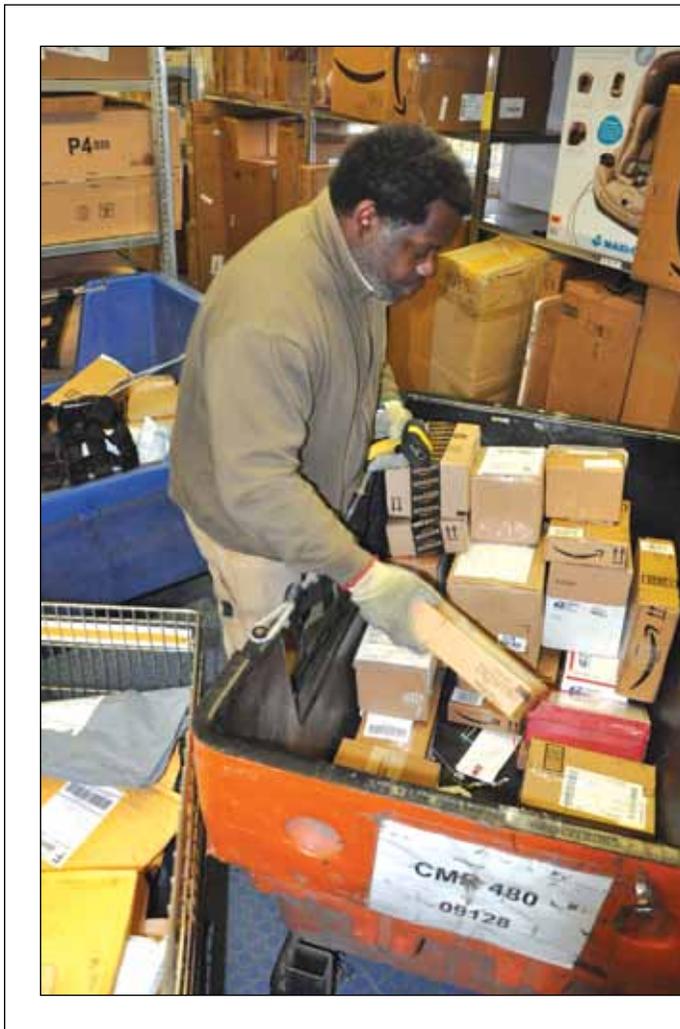
Volunteers can manage their involvement and build their Red Cross record with Volunteer Connection, a new volunteer management system, at <https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org>.

For more information, contact Liz Thayer at 431-2812/civ. 07031-15-2812 or liz.thayer@us.army.mil, or stop by Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne.

Register with EFMP to see 'Cinderella'

The Stuttgart Theatre Center will host a free performance of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" Dec. 8 at 3 p.m. for the Exceptional Family Member Program. Attendance is by invitation only.

To register, contact Army Community Service at 431-3362/3326, or civ. 07031-15-3362/3326, or



Mail rooms in middle of holiday rush

Lynn James, a mail clerk at the Patch Barracks Community Mail Room, processes incoming packages at the facility Nov. 20. During the holiday season, the Patch Barracks CMR can receive more than 6,000 pieces of mail per day, which limits storage space in the facility. Customers are being asked to pick up their mail on a daily basis, especially if they are expecting bulky items such as tires. To facilitate package pick-up, the customer service windows at all Stuttgart CMRs will be open on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Dec. 22. Volunteers are needed at all Stuttgart Community Mail Rooms. To register as a volunteer, contact the Army Community Service Volunteer Coordinator at 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

Mark J. Howell

email danielle.denis.civ@mail.mil, and provide your name, contact information (email and phone) and number of attendees.

Praxis Series testing

The next Praxis Series test will be administered Jan. 24 at the Education Center, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne. Interested testing candidates must submit their applications by Dec. 10.

Only paper-based exams can be ordered. Testing fees are payable the day of testing.

For more information, contact Kimberly Gonzales at 431-2417/civ. 07031-15-2417.

Put a gift under the ACS Angel Tree

The Army Community Service annual Angel Tree gift program will

run through Dec. 14.

This program benefits military and civilian families who are experiencing hardships during the holidays.

Donate a gift to a child by selecting an angel ornament from Christmas trees located in the Patch, Kelley and Robinson Barracks commissaries, the Panzer Exchange and the ACS lobby (Building 2915 on Panzer Kaserne).

For more information, call Army Community Service at 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

Fuel cards expire

Esso fuel cards, like any other debit or credit card, have expiration dates.

To avoid interruption of service, check the expiration date on the lower right hand corner of the card.

If your card has expired, return to a fuel card issuing location to replace your card.

Fuel cards are valid for three years, and the expiration dates are not related to the vehicle registration date.

AAFES does not send out reminders to customers in advance of fuel card expiration dates.

To avoid card-use denials and the substantial costs of having to pay economy fuel purchase price, fuel card customers should ensure all cards for registered vehicles are renewed before their expiration dates.

For more information contact your local Exchange customer service desk.

Send community-wide announcements to stuttgartmedia@eur.army.mil.

What can you to do help reduce air pollution?



Going Green

USAG Stuttgart
Directorate of Public Works
Environmental Division

Thousands of sources release air contaminants every day. Emission sources range from your vehicle and household furnace, to small businesses and large-scale industrial operations.

What you can do?

- Be energy efficient. Most traditional sources of energy burn fossil fuels, causing air pollution. Keep your home well-maintained with weather-stripping, storm windows and insulation.

Lowering your thermostat can also help. For every two degrees Fahrenheit you lower it in the winter or raise it in the summer, you'll also save about two percent on your heating bill.

- Conduct regular maintenance on air conditioning and heating systems.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Limit use of gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf and snow blowers. Electric mowers or manual push mowers pollute less while saving money on gas.

- Buy Energy Star products.
- Avoid using chemical pesticides or fertilizers. Many fertilizers are a source of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming.
- Replace ozone depleters (refrigerators/freezers/fire extinguishers).
- When possible, use public transportation or ride a bicycle.
- Be an advocate for emission reductions from power plants and more stringent vehicle emission standards.

Get smart about antibiotics

By Lisa Young

U.S. Army Public Health Command

Antibiotic resistance is a worldwide public health problem. Resistance occurs when bacteria can no longer be killed by a previously effective antibiotic and the bacteria continue to grow.

According to the Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics, if resistance to treatment continues to spread, our globally connected world may find itself back in the dark ages of medicine — before today's miracle drugs existed.

This misuse and overuse of antibiotics is believed to be the cause of antibiotic resistance among bacteria.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that more than 50 percent of antibiotics are unnecessarily prescribed for upper respiratory infections like cough and cold illness, most of which are caused by viruses. This is one of the most common causes of improper use and misuse of antibiotic prescriptions.

In addition, many people don't complete the full dosage of the antibiotic because they feel better or want to save some for the next time they are ill. This practice leaves some bacteria alive and contributes to the bacteria's future resistance to antibiotic treatment.

Limited access to medical care and effective treatments may also lead to self-medica-

tion misuse such as sharing or using leftover antibiotics.

According to the American College of Physicians, both physicians and patients have a role to play in decreasing the misuse of antibiotics.

Physicians should only prescribe antibiotics when tests indicate that a bacterial infection is present.

As a patient you can prevent antibiotic resistance by doing the following:

- Do not request antibiotics from your doctor or taking antibiotics for a viral infection like a cold or the flu.
- Do not share prescriptions or use a prescription that was not written for you.
- Take all prescribed doses of the antibiotic.
- Take the antibiotics exactly as the doctor directs. Don't skip any doses.
- Return for care if symptoms persist.

Be smart when using antibiotics and keep in mind that antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. Antibiotics will not keep other people from catching the infection.

Taking antibiotics for a viral infection not only wastes time and money, but contributes to increased antibiotic resistance.

For the health of future generations, do your part to improve appropriate antibiotic use.

For more information, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.



Kelley Clinic annex news

Tricare benefits counseling and host nation appointment assistance is now available Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. at the U.S. Army Health Clinic Stuttgart Kelley annex.

The Kelley annex will be closed Dec. 19 to Jan. 2 due to the holiday schedule.

Optometry services

The Stuttgart Optometry Clinic provides eye care services for active duty service members and their family members (5 years and older), retirees and their family members, and civilians with third-party insurance plans.

Patients are requested to come at least 15 minutes early to appointments to allow for paperwork and technician screenings. First-time patients need to stop by the patient administration desk in the main clinic to register their insurance information.

The clinic does not provide initial contact lens exams, but will renew existing prescriptions if patients bring in a pair of their lenses and the lens information, such as contact lens prescription or lens boxes.

Located on Patch Barracks in temporary Building 2300 (next to the health clinic), the optometry clinic is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m., and from 7:30 a.m. to noon on Friday.

To make an appointment for a routine exam, call 371-2622/civ. 06221-17-2622.

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Ski, snowboard opportunities abound in Germany

By Susan Huseman

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

There are some great skiing and snowboarding areas in Germany — many just a short drive or bus ride from Stuttgart.

Whether it's Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the country's best known ski resort, or Obertsdorf, featuring Germany's longest downhill slope, or the Black Forest's Feldberg area, Germany's biggest ski resort outside of the Alps, Stuttgart military community members who want to participate in winter sports have plenty of options.

Even better, those options extend to the convenience of pre-arranged ski and snowboard trips through several on-base organizations.



A skier pauses on the Diedamskopf mountaintop in Austria earlier this year. Outdoor Recreation, and the Patch and Sitzmarkers ski clubs can put winter sports enthusiasts on the slopes with organized skiing and snowboarding trips planned throughout the ski season.

Carola Meusel

Outdoor Recreation

Family and MWR's Outdoor Recreation, located on Panzer Kaserne, will offer day and weekend trips to ski areas in Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

With 13 scheduled trips to 12 different locations, winter sports enthusiasts can experience a variety of locations, runs, trails and apres-ski activities, according to Jennifer Young, the Outdoor Recreation program manager.

"We've chosen locations that offer skiing and boarding for all ability levels, and that also offer a variety of

activities for people who don't ski, such as sledding, ice skating, hiking and spas," Young said.

Outdoor Recreation also offers day, weekend and weekly ski and snowboard rentals (with discounted prices for those on its trips), as well as ski and board tune-ups and repairs, and snowboard lessons on select trips.

For Outdoor Recreation's trip schedule and details, visit the USAG Stuttgart Family and MWR website at www.stuttgartmwr.com.

Patch Ski Club

The Patch Ski Club is a private, non-profit organization open to all U.S. ID cardholders regardless of ability level.

This year, the club has 21 trips planned. Most of the trips involve snow-related activities, but not all do.

For example, the club will sponsor a trip to a wine fair in Strasbourg, France, and several bike tours are planned for the summer.

The club also hosts two social events a month and welcomes new members,

said Kevin Charlton, PSC president.

"You can experience some of the most beautiful places in Europe and do so with your friends, neighbors and colleagues," said Charlton. "New friends, new places, new experiences are what the Patch Ski Club is all about."

For more information about the club and upcoming trips, visit www.patchskiclub.com.

Skiing for teens

The Sitzmarkers Ski and Board Club is the only ski and snowboard club for teens found within a U.S. military community in Europe, according to Karen Taylor, the club secretary.

"We provide an opportunity for kids in grades seven through 12 to have ski and snowboard experiences that they might not have, especially if their parents aren't skiers," she said.

The club will head to the Italian Dolomites in January and to Davos, Switzerland, in February.

While the Dolomite trip is full, teens can register for the Davos trip at the next Sitzmarkers meeting on Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m. in the Religious Education Center, Building 2332, Patch Barracks.

For more information about Sitzmarkers, visit www.sitzmarkers.org.

Editor's Note: Chris Winne also contributed to this story.

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Fest highlights chocolatiers, their tasty medium

Story by Carola Meusel

USAG Stuttgart Public Affairs Office

Chocololics or people simply looking for special holiday gift ideas may want to head to Tübingen for the International Chocolate Festival, or “chocolART,” the largest chocolate festival in Germany.

The festival, which runs Dec. 4-9 throughout downtown Tübingen, features more than 100 skilled chocolatiers from Europe, South America and Africa who offer a variety of fine chocolates.

“Most people think of chocolate in a positive way. Nine out of 10 people say like they chocolate, and number 10 is lying,” said Corinna Grassler, event coordinator of this year’s festival.

During the festival, visitors will find chocolate creations that differ from products typically offered in a supermarket, according to Grassler.

“Visitors can experience chocolate in many ways throughout the festival, since the chocolatiers play with exotic ingredients that make for a different taste,” Grassler said.

The chocolate festival also features chocolate massages, hands-on classes on making pralines and truffles, chocolate art, chocolate menus in restaurants, chocolate tastings, chocolate exhibitions, a seminar on chocolate and wine, and a class on painting with cocoa.

A highlight is the “chocolate-ROOM” at Tübingen’s market square.

Chocolatiers will create chocolate art in two transparent tents. While watching the “Maitre Chocolatiers” work on their pieces of chocolate art, visitors can breathe in the sweet smell of cocoa. Better still, all of the chocolates can be



Alexander Gonschior

A “Maitre Chocolatier” works on edible chocolate creations at the “chocolateROOM” during last year’s International Chocolate Festival. This year’s festival will run Dec. 4-9 throughout Tübingen’s downtown area.

sampled on the spot.

According to Grassler, the festival also aims to promote fair trade, and for the first time ever, patrons will find fair trade chocolates and cocoa products at “Faire Gasse” at Marktgasse.

Children can also create their own chocolate at the Ritter Sport “KinderS-chokoWerkstatt” located at Holzmarkt.

In addition to the festival, Tübingen has another historical connection to the world of chocolate.

According to Tübingen’s city archives, the famous Schwarzwälderkirchtorte, or Black Forest cake, was invented in 1930 in Tübingen by the confectioner Erwin Hildenbrand.

This year, a treat was created especially for the chocolate festival: a Black Forest cake made out of high-quality ingredients served in a small glass. A chocolate praline with a creamy Black Forest cake filling will also be available.

The festival will be open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

A long shopping night will be offered Dec. 8. All stores will be open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

For more information, visit www.chocolart.de.

Christmas markets

Most Christmas markets will be located in the heart of the hosting city or town, next to the market square.

Böblingen: Nov. 28 to Dec. 2, from noon to 9 p.m., next to the lake.

Möhringen: Dec. 1, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., on Maierstrasse, next to the Martin’s Church.

Vaihingen: Dec. 1 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Esslingen Medieval Christmas Market: Open daily through Dec. 21, from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Ludwigsburg: Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Dec. 23.

Stuttgart: Open daily through Dec. 23, Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Bad Cannstatt: Open Monday through Saturday Dec. 1-31, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Dec. 24 and 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Fellbach: Dec. 6-22, opens weekdays at noon, and 11 a.m. on weekends.

Herrenberg: Dec. 7-9, open Friday from 2-8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Sindelfingen: Dec. 7-9, open Friday from 6-10 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Leinfelden: Dec. 8-9; open Saturday from 3-9 p.m., Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tübingen: Dec. 14-16, open Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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Have a comment on garrison services?



Visit the USAG Stuttgart website at www.stuttgart.army.mil and click on “Feedback.”

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What's happening in FMWR

Beat holiday stress

Learn how to eliminate stress during Army Community Services' Holiday Stress Buster seminar Dec. 4 and 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ACS, Building 2915, Panzer Kaserne.

Register in advance by calling 431-3362/civ. 07031-15-3362.

Coaches clinic

Those wishing to coach youth sports must attend the Child, Youth and School Services' coaches clinic. The clinic will be held Dec. 4, 11 and 18 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the CYS Services Sports and Fitness Office, Building 3162, Panzer Family Housing.

For more information, call 431-2616/civ. 07031-15-2616.

'Cinderella' opens at Kelley Theatre

The Stuttgart Theatre Center presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella." Performances at the Kelley Theatre are set for Dec. 7-8 and 14-15 at 7:30 p.m. Matinee performances will be held Dec. 9, 15 and 16 at 3 p.m.

To reserve your tickets, call the Theatre Office at 421-3055/civ. 0711-729-3055 or visit www.stuttgartmwr.com.

Pro shop sale

Save from 10 to 75 percent on many items at the annual Stuttgart Golf Course Pro Shop sale Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, call the pro shop at civ. 07141-879-150.

Holiday celebrations

Head to Brewed Awakenings on Robinson Barracks Dec. 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a Hometown Holiday celebration.

The event will feature a Jingle Bell Jog 5K fun run at 10 a.m., photos with Santa, crafts, a holiday movie and more.

The Galaxy Bowling Center will host a holiday celebration on Panzer Kaserne Dec. 12 from 5-8 p.m. The event includes photos with Santa, a holiday concert at 5 p.m., followed by free cosmic bowling and shoes until 8 p.m.

For more activities, visit www.stuttgartmwr.com.



Coming to Patch Theater

Nov. 30 — Rise Of The Guardians (PG-13) 6 p.m., Red Dawn (PG-13) 9 p.m.

Dec. 1 — Rise Of The Guardians (PG-13) 4 p.m., Red Dawn (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 2 — Rise Of The Guardians (PG-13) 3 p.m., Life Of Pi (PG) 7 p.m.

Dec. 3 — Rise Of The Guardians (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 4 — closed

Dec. 5 — Alex Cross (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 6 — Taken 2 (PG-13) 6 p.m.

Dec. 7 — Killing Them Softly (R) 6 p.m., Alex Cross (PG-13) 9 p.m.

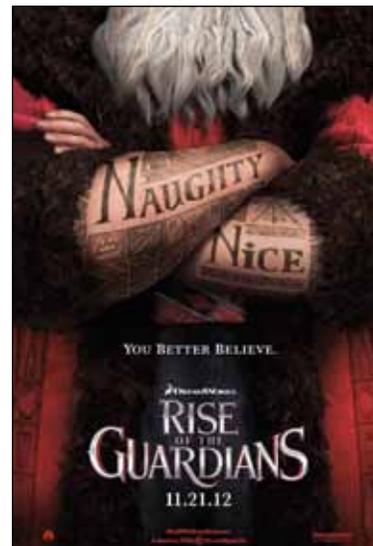
Dec. 8 — Frankenweenie (PG) 4 p.m., Killing Them Softly (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 9 — Here Comes The Boom (PG) 3 p.m., Killing Them Softly (R) 6 p.m.

Dec. 10 — Killing Them Softly (R) 6 p.m.

Dec. 11 — closed

Dec. 12 — Alex Cross (PG-13) 6 p.m.



DreamWorks

"The Rise of the Guardians" details the adventures of immortal guardians — such as Santa Claus, Jack Frost and the Easter Bunny — who are sworn to protect children from the forces of evil.

Dec. 13 — Here Comes the Boom (PG) 6 p.m.

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