

THE GAZETTE

Published for members of the SHAPE/Chièvres, Brussels and Schinnen communities

Benelux news briefs

Gas-card window now open weekdays

The petrol-card sales window in Building 102 on SHAPE has new operating hours, which began Nov. 18.

Business hours are now Mondays from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1:30 to 3 p.m., and Tuesday through Friday from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

SHAPE Library reopens

The SHAPE International Library reopens Dec. 1 after having been closed for three weeks for the installation of new carpeting.

Until that time, patrons may return items in the outside drop box and renew online. The Chièvres Library also can help you with your library needs during this time. For example, books and media checked out at SHAPE International Library can always be turned back in at Chièvres Library.

CDC has new number

The CYSS Child Development Center on SHAPE now has a new phone number: DSN 366-6721 or civilian 065-326721.

6

Table of Contents

News.....	1-6
Sports.....	7
Holiday News Briefs.....	8-9
Community Briefs.....	10
Events&Happenings...11-13	
Community Roundup.....	14



Keith Hourin

'Seussical' takes local community by storm

Horton the elephant (in gray), played by Jacob Alsup, hears the people of Whoville, who live on a speck of dust that landed on a clover, in "Seussical the Musical." The book "Horton Hears a Who!" inspired one of the plot lines in the production, currently playing at the SHAPE Performing Arts Centre. The play is based on the works of children's author Dr. Seuss and runs through the weekend: Nov. 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee performance Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. Admission: adult €16, student €9, child €7. Call DSN 423-3312 or civilian 065-443312 today from 1 to 6 p.m.

USAG Benelux recognizes 26 years of military service



U.S. Army Garrison Benelux community members honored Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mitchem during a retirement ceremony in Chièvres Nov. 21, 2014.

Mitchem joined the U.S. Army in 1989, and, after graduating basic training, he attended advanced individual training to become a chaplain assistant. As a chaplain assistant, Mitchem served at various locations in the United States as well as in Afghanistan, Korea, Germany and Belgium. Upon his 26 years of military service, Mitchem will be retiring in Savannah, Georgia, with his wife, Candace Marie, who watched his retirement ceremony in the United States through Defense Connect Online (DCO),

(Clockwise from top) Col. Marty Vannatter; Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mitchem; his daughter, Kharrington; Marla Vaneer; and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Carter pay their respects during the playing of the national anthems. • Pvt. Krystal Simmons salutes after presenting the American flag. • Col. Marty Vannatter presents Kharrington Mitchem with the Army Brat certificate as a token of appreciation for the sacrifices made during her dad's service. (U.S.Army photos by Cis Spook)



THE GAZETTE

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AFAP delegates get down to business

by **Trudy Wheatley**

Employment Readiness program manager, Schinnen Army Community Service

The annual USAG Benelux Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Conference was held Nov. 20 at SHAPE with 16 delegates and six conference staff participating, representing all three Benelux communities. The purpose of the AFAP conference is to review quality of life issues submitted throughout the year, prioritize the top ones, and then report to the command for further review and action.

Now in its 31st year, AFAP brings together members of military communities for annual conferences worldwide. Recent AFAP conferences have produced tangible improvements in local services and communication while others have gone on to change laws or policies that affect all branches of service.

The volunteer delegates represented three branches of the military (Army, Air Force and Coast Guard) and included service members, civilian employees, retirees and family members.

After a warm welcome by the director of

Army Community Service, Yvette Castro, the delegates were given an overview of AFAP and then trained on their roles in the process before beginning their discussion of the 18 issues submitted. Issues had been collected from all three communities and their topics ranged from healthcare and civilian temporary duty, or TDY, to hiring policies and the business hours of the commissary and Army & Air Force Exchange Service, or AAFES, facilities. Subject-matter experts were called in to shed light on any issues that needed further clarification, and, after careful deliberation, three issues were selected as their top priorities.

Throughout the afternoon, conference delegates worked diligently to write the issues using the correct format so they included a title, scope and recommendation. The results were then briefed at the close of the conference to leadership and will be reported to the Benelux garrison commander Dec. 10. After the

briefing, the results will be released to the community.

"The 2014 USAG Benelux AFAP conference was a great example of how our community members from all three sites came together as one community. The delegates from Brussels, Schinnen and SHAPE/Chièvres joined forces to examine issue submissions from across the footprint," Castro said at the close of the conference.

The conference delegates identified and prioritized issues. They also provided creative solutions that are low-cost and high-payoff, she said.

The next step in the process will be to appoint an AFAP steering committee, whose members will review all issues and address those that can have a simple solution on the local level, and forward others to the Installation Management Command, or IMCOM, level.

For more information about AFAP, contact your local Army Community Service.



Delegates review community issues at the annual USAG Benelux Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Conference on SHAPE Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014. (U.S. Army photo by Kathleen Garrity-Cantwell)

Soldier inducted into Sgt. Morales Club

Schinnen NCO cautions against being mediocre

by **Andrea Wales**

USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office

Just two days after the induction of a USAG Benelux-Schinnen Soldier into the Sgt. Morales Club Nov. 18, two other Benelux Soldiers received word that they had been accepted for induction.

Staff Sgt. Johnathon Balcom was inducted into the Sgt. Morales Club at Schinnen. Sgt. Bryan Teneyck and Sgt. 1st Class Brian Letterle, both of USAG Benelux, were approved for the Sgt. Morales Club last week and will be inducted sometime in the future at U.S. Army Europe.

Balcom is a military-police desk sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, USAG Benelux-Schinnen.

"This wasn't the first time that I tried this. I made it all the way up to the regional level last year," Balcom said. "It wasn't a unanimous vote at the time, but they recommended me to come back." Command Sgt. Maj. Romeo Montez, who is now the IMCOM-E top enlisted adviser and was the predecessor of USAG Benelux Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Carter

at the time, was president of Balcom's regional-level board.

Membership in the club is a U.S. Army Europe recognition program designed to help noncommissioned officers strive to emulate the all-around great NCO, Sgt. Morales, who, although fictitious, represents all the qualities of an exemplary NCO.

"Who wouldn't want to have a leader like Sgt. Morales or have him as a part of your squad? Sgt. Morales is a leader who can not only stand up and say the NCO Creed, but who lives that creed by example," Carter said at the induction ceremony.

The Sgt. Morales Club promotes the standards of honest living and sacrifice by partnering with local organizations and serving the community, Carter said.

"You have gone through a lengthy four-phase process that requires determination, a rigid work ethic and ethical bearing that is above reproach to become a member of this club," he said.

Balcom said he strives to cultivate the ability to lead, train and mentor the future leaders of the Army.

"I'm that kind of leader who tries to listen. I don't tell you that this is the only way to do something because there's always a better way to do something," he said. "You want to be close enough to them that they can approach you about any issue."

Balcom said that there are "takeaways" from every leader.

"There have been good leaders and bad leaders in my life, but all of them have taught me something that I could use throughout my career," he said.

Balcom includes his wife, Sgt. 1st Class Barbara Balcom, among the most influential leaders in his life. When he first arrived in Europe and was newly married, Balcom was an E-5 promotable, but he didn't know what I wanted to do with his life.

"She said that I had the qualities to be an excellent leader, but it was a question of knowing how to implement them. She's been in the Army longer (15 years as opposed to his 10). She's always been one of the NCOs I look up to," Balcom said. "Without her, none of it would have been possible."

Balcom competes in a lot of the NCO of the Month and NCO of the Year boards, not only to increase his knowledge, but to show Soldiers that just because you've made it to a certain level doesn't mean you stop.

"You're going to learn something new, either about yourself or military life," he said.

Balcom said he doesn't want his Soldiers to be satisfied with merely meeting the standard. He doesn't want them to be "60 percent Soldiers" just doing the minimum to get by; he wants them to be more like him.

"I honestly want to be the best," Balcom said. "It sounds kind of cocky, but I want to be challenged."

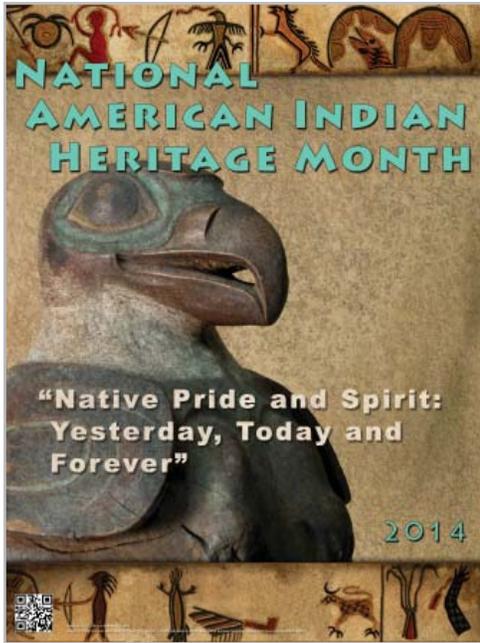
Read more about USAREUR's Sgt. Morales Club at <https://aepubs.army.mil/pdfpubs/AER600-2.pdf>.



Staff Sgt. Johnathon Balcom receives the Army Commendation Medal, whose certificate is signed by USAG Benelux commander Col. Marvin Vannatter, from 1st Sgt. Alejandro Romar of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, USAG Benelux during Balcom's induction into the Sgt. Morales Club Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2014. USAG Benelux Command Sgt. Maj. Robert D. Carter is at left. (U.S. Army photo by Nino Antonacci)

American Indian culture shared at USAG Benelux's annual observance

(Clockwise from right) Celebrating "Native Pride and Spirit: Yesterday, Today and Forever" at an observance of National American Indian Heritage Month at the SHAPE Auditorium Friday, Nov. 21, 2014, Staff Sgt. Josie Rising Son talks to the audience about her Native American background and about the strong heritage Native Americans have in the military. Rising Son is an information-technology specialist at 39th Signal Battalion on Caserne Daumerie in Chièvres, Belgium. • Nakai Weeks poses in one of his dance moves at the Native American Indian Heritage Month celebration at the SHAPE auditorium in Building 100 Friday, Nov. 21, 2014. • Monica Weeks sings a traditional Navaho song at the Native American Indian Heritage Month celebration at the SHAPE Building 100 auditorium Friday, Nov. 21, 2014. Weeks is a member of Sister Nations Color Guard and is a Department of the Army civilian who works as an IT specialist with the 839th Transportation Battalion at Leghorn Army Depot in Livorno, Italy. • The poster created by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute is also part of the poster for the Benelux event Friday, Nov. 21, 2014. (U.S. Army photos by Keith Houin.)



Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 30 to Dec. 6)

World War I

1914

Dec. 4 - The Portuguese Expeditionary Force leaves Lisbon for Angola.

1915

Dec. 5 - Turkish and German forces launch an attack on the British-occupied town of Kut al-Amara on the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq.

1916

Dec. 6 - Bucharest, capital of Romania, falls to the Austro-Germans. This effectively ends Romanian resistance to the Austro-German invasion and places the country's entire agricultural and industrial resources, including the Ploesti oil fields, in German hands.

Dec. 3 - As part of a general upheaval within the French government and military due in part to demoralizing losses at Verdun and the Somme, Gen. Joseph-Jacques Césaire Joffre is dismissed as commander in chief of the French forces in favor of Gen. Robert Nivelle. French authorities blame Joffre, the stalwart champion of France's Plan XVII military strategy since 1911, for recent defeats on the Western Front as well as for the situation in the eastern Mediterranean, where some 500,000 Allied troops based out of the Greek port city of Salonika were mired in what they feared might be a losing struggle with Bulgarian forces. For his part, Nivelle believed an aggressive offensive was the key to a breakthrough on the Western Front.

1917

Nov. 30 - Foreign Minister Richard Von Kuhlmann stands before the German Reichstag government to deliver a speech applauding the recent rise to power in Russia of Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, who adopted the surname Lenin during underground party work, and his radical socialist Bolshevik Party.

Dec. 2 - A day after Bolsheviks seize control of Russian military headquarters at Mogilev, a formal cease-fire is proclaimed throughout the battle zone between Russia and the Central Powers.

Dec. 6 - At 9:05 a.m., in the harbor of Halifax in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, the most devastating man-made explosion in the pre-atomic age occurs when the Mont Blanc, a French munitions ship, explodes 20 minutes after colliding with another vessel.

1918

Dec. 1 - Three weeks after the armistice, and on the same day that Allied troops cross into Germany for the first time, a new state is proclaimed in Belgrade, Serbia.

As the great Austrian and German empires were brought low in defeat, the new "Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" springs to life, bolstered by the League of Nations promised support for Europe's minority populations. Included in the new state are 500,000 Hungarians and an equal number of Germans as well as tens of thousands of Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians and Italians.

Dec. 4 - Demobilization of the British Army begins.

World War II

1939

Nov. 30 - The Red Army crosses the Soviet-Finnish border with 465,000 men and 1,000 aircraft. Helsinki is bombed, and 61 Finns are killed in an air raid that steels the Finns for resistance, not capitulation.

1940

Dec. 6 - British and Indian troops of the Western Desert Force launch Operation Compass, an offensive against Italian forces in Egypt.

1941

Dec. 6 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt — convinced on the basis of intelligence reports that the Japanese fleet is headed for Thailand, not the United States — telegrams Emperor Hirohito with the request that "for the sake of humanity," the emperor intervene "to prevent further death and destruction in the world."

Dec. 5 - The Lexington, one of the two largest aircraft carriers employed by the United States during World War II, makes its way across the Pacific in order to carry a squadron of dive bombers to defend Midway Island from an anticipated Japanese attack.

Negotiations between the United States and Japan had been ongoing for months. Japan wanted an end to U.S. economic sanctions. The Americans wanted Japan out of China and Southeast Asia and wanted Japan to repudiate the Tripartite "Axis" Pact with Germany and Italy before those sanctions could be lifted.

1942

Dec. 2 - Enrico Fermi, the Italian-born Nobel Prize-winning physicist, directs and controls the first nuclear chain reaction in his laboratory beneath the bleachers of Stagg Field at the University of Chicago, ushering in the nuclear age. Upon successful completion of the experiment, a coded message was transmitted to President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The Italian navigator has landed in the new world."

Dec. 4 - In Warsaw, a group of Polish Christians put their own lives at risk when they set up the Council for the Assistance of the Jews. The group was led by two women, Zofia Kossak and Wanda Filipowicz.

Since the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the Jewish population had been either thrust into ghettos, transported to concentration and labor camps, or murdered.

1943

Dec. 2 - The Germans conduct a highly successful air raid on Bari, Italy. One of the German bombs hits an Allied cargo ship carrying mustard gas, releasing the chemical, which kills 83 allied soldiers. More than 1,000 other soldiers died in the raid.

1944

Dec. 3 - A civil war breaks out in Athens as communist guerillas battle democratic forces for control of a liberated Greece.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Team USA wins Superstars, SACEUR Cup

Story and photos by Tim Clark

USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office volunteer

They ran, swam and tugged; endured fitness and endurance tests and tire flipped their way to victory. Team USA won the SACEUR sports Superstar event Nov. 20. Going into the event, Team USA was tied with Germany for the SACEUR cup. Winning Superstars gave Team USA the SACEUR Cup victory.

"Winning superstars was a truly profound and proud moment for each of us," said Quest Eperjesi, captain of Team USA. "Going into the event, we all knew that there was so much at risk and that the entire year's accomplishments led to this one event. We just needed to win this one event to finally break our losing streak and take it all."

The hardest event in Superstars was the swim competition consisting of two 50-meter relays. Spencer Johnson swam

50 meters with his combat uniform weighing him down and Timothy Scott was required to swim carrying a 5-kilogram weight, both of which were extremely taxing swims, Quest said.

"After the swim, everyone was exhausted, but we had to run the 400-meter relay within 20 minutes," she said. "Somehow, we regained our energy and overcame all the teams to win the relay."

Superstars was the final event of the SACEUR Cup, a yearlong international athletic competition among the following teams:

- BENELUX (FRA) – Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, France;
- DEU – Germany;
- GBR – United Kingdom;
- NATO NORTH – Denmark, Canada, Norway, Poland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithu-

ania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Estonia;

- NATO SOUTH – Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Croatia and Albania;

- USA – United States.

The journey for the SACEUR Cup trophy began in January with volleyball. It was followed by competitions in swimming, biathlon, racket sports, track, soccer, bowling, orienteering and dodge ball. An event was held every month except July.

"Hopefully next year we can keep up the momentum. There are so many talented American athletes assigned to SHAPE and Chièvres. I'm thankful to be a part of this program and that the USNMR allows me the time to manage the events," Quest said. "I look forward to next year and building another amazing team."

(Clockwise from top left) USA team members Gabriel Sarmiento, Erik Poveda and Quest Eperjesi cheer on Spencer Johnson as he completes the combat swim leg of the 50-meter relay for Team USA in the Superstar event. The event was part of the SACEUR Cup sports competition. Team USA which won the superstar event also won the SACEUR cup. • Erik Poveda competes in the breaststroke leg of the 50-meter relay for Team USA in the SACEUR Sports Superstar event Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014. Team USA won the Superstar competition that boosted them to victory in the SACEUR Cup. • Team USA members Esai Valenzuela, Quest Eperjesi, Gabriel Sarmiento, Timothy Scott, Erik Poveda and Spencer Johnson flip a tire down the course at the Superstar event held Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014, at SHAPE. • Gabriel Sarmiento takes the baton for the third leg of the 6 x 400-meter relay in the Superstar competition. Team USA won the race and the Superstar event.



holiday news briefs - holiday news briefs - holiday news

Visit AFNORTH Christmas Market

AFNORTH International School is putting on a Christmas Market Nov. 29 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Open to all NATO card holders. Experience the many international vendors. Enjoy the music of the school choir and band. Savor the festive food. Tell Father Christmas your Christmas wishes. Admission: Adults €2.

Christmas markets to be held at SHAPE this weekend

A Christindmarkt will be held at the SHAPE School Cafeteria Nov. 29 from noon to 5 p.m. Browse through crafted gifts and Christmas decorations. You will be free to choose among homemade German cakes, cookies and stollen (a sweet yeast bread with fruit and nuts) as well as bratwurst and more. Santa Claus will also visit.

The British community is putting on a Christmas market in Building 309 Nov. 30 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The building is located between the main gym and the library, and is near a traditional, red, English mailbox.

SHAPE Arts & Crafts welcomes you

SHAPE Arts & Crafts will hold an open house in the lobby of Building 307 (same building as library) Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Here's your chance to see what's possible at SHAPE Arts & Crafts.

Instructors who give various classes at SHAPE Arts & Crafts will set up booths and will have their holiday-themed wares available for purchase. Consider selecting holiday gifts from among ceramics, frames, jewelry, quilts, watercolor art, photography, cakes and floral arrangements.

Join the A&C staff for free food and beverages. Free admission.

Don't miss Christmas concert at SHAPE Cinema

SHAPE International Band will put on a Christmas concert at the Alliance Auditorium (SHAPE Cinema) Dec. 2 at 6:30 p.m. Free admission. Tickets aren't needed.

To obtain more information, visit <http://www.shapeband.be/en/home.html> or call DSN 423-3322 or civilian 065-443322.

Help create Christmas-tree forest

Wanted: Christmas trees. Members of the SHAPE/Chièvres community — including USAG Benelux units, organizations and departments — are invited to bring, set up and decorate their own holiday trees at the Chièvres Community Activity Center. The result will be a "forest" of Christmas trees through which children and parents can walk during Santa's Workshop Dec. 5 from 6 to 9 p.m.

There will be a prize for the best-decorated tree.

If you'd like to set up a tree, visit the Chièvres Community Activity Center Dec. 3 or 4, and pick your spot.

For more information, call DSN 361-5589 or civilian 068-275589.

Holiday books featured at Story Time

Staff members of the Brussels Library invite all preschoolers and their parents to join them for stories and crafts Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The featured holiday books will be: Dec. 3 — "Christmas Magic;" Dec. 10 — "Dewey's Christmas at the Library;" and Dec. 17 — "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." [Wear your pajamas Dec. 17, and bring along your favorite stuffed animal. This last story (from the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" by Clement C. Moore) is all about what happens when little ones are supposed to be "nestled all snug in their beds."] There won't be any Story Time Dec. 24,

For more information, call the library at DSN 368-9791 or civilian 02-7179791.

Schinnen tree-lighting ceremony

Schinnen will host a tree-lighting ceremony Dec. 3 at the Community Activity Center, starting at 5:30 p.m. Activities include lighting of the tree by the mayor of Schinnen, the Youth of the Year and the deputy garrison manager.

The Fire Department of the Schinnen Municipality is transporting Santa and Mrs. Claus in a fire truck. After Santa arrives, the activities continue inside in a market-style environment with performances from the AFNORTH band and choir and school choir.

For information, contact Installation Wide Events at DSN 360-7370 or civilian +31 (0) 46-4437370.

Brussels puts on Winterfest

The USAG Benelux-Brussels community presents Winterfest Dec. 4. It all begins at 4:30 p.m. with Santa's Workshop at the 3 Star Lounge, where there will be pictures with Santa as well as arts and crafts. The fun moves outside at 6 p.m. for the Christmas tree-lighting ceremony and Christmas carols at the flagpole by the gazebo.

While you're at the 3 Star Lounge for Santa's Workshop, enjoy a variety of soups and a sandwich bar at Family Dinner. Make your (required) reservation at reservations3star@yahoo.com. Cost: Adults \$8, children 12 and under, \$4. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. Family Dinner ends at 7:30 p.m.

SHAPE ACS holds open house

SHAPE Army Community Service welcomes the SHAPE/Chièvres community to its open house in Building 318 (building that also houses AFN and the Northern Law Center) Dec. 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SHAPE ACS offers an opportunity for you to familiarize yourself with ACS programs. In addition, USAG Benelux community agencies will be on site with information about programs and services offered to service members, families, civilians, retirees and surviving families.

New-Parent Support Program activities and Playroom will be open. You can enjoy the festive atmosphere, which includes photos with Santa, food, music, attendance prizes and a door-decorating contest for the agencies in Building 318. Visitors are welcome to walk around the building and cast their votes for the doors they like best.

For information, call DSN 366-6824 or civilian 065-326824.

holiday news briefs - holiday news briefs - holiday news

Santa's Workshop set up at Chièvres

Get a jump start on the holidays by visiting Santa's Workshop at the Chièvres Community Activity Center Dec. 5 from 6 to 9 p.m. The fun is in Building 20004, where the fitness center and library are located.

Santa will make a special appearance so that everyone can take photos with him, and children can make holiday cards at craft tables. Local Girl Scouts will sing Christmas carols.

Prizes to the winners of the 2014 Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, or MWR, Holiday Art Contest will be awarded. All submitted artwork will be on display for everyone to admire. To find out more, call DSN 361-5589 or civilian 068-275589.

SHAPE holds tree-lighting ceremony

The SHAPE community invites you to share the familial warmth of the holiday season during a tree-lighting ceremony in front of the SHAPE main building Dec. 9 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The SHAPE International Band will play holiday melodies, and the Canadian School Choir will sing.

The Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, will address the crowd, and the mayor of Malmedy, Jean-Paul Bastin, will say a few words and present a gift to the SACEUR. Breedlove and the mayor will share tree-lighting honors.

At 5 p.m., a reception will be held in the headquarters cafeteria.

GK puts on tree-lighting ceremony

Geilenkirchen Air Base, Germany, will host a tree-lighting ceremony and so much more at the Geilenkirchen Air Base Multipurpose Room Dec. 18 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Visit Santa's Village and the Christmas market, and enjoy live music as well as food and drink.

For details, call Geilenkirchen Air Base, Germany, Airman & Family Readiness Center, or A&FRC, at DSN 458-6015 or civilian 024-51633791.

Holiday postal news

In order to help customers with their holiday mailing, SHAPE and Chièvres post offices will have extended hours through Dec. 19 —

- Parcel Pickup: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (an additional hour per day)
- Postal Finance (items to mail): 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (an additional hour per day)
- Mail by appointment (SHAPE only): 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Mailing deadlines

Overseas postal officials recommend the following dates for mail to the United States to arrive by Dec. 25 —

- Parcel Airlift (PAL): Dec. 3
- Priority parcels, First Class letters and cards: Dec. 10
- Priority Express Mail: Dec. 17.

Be sure to check your mail regularly to free up space for holiday cards, letters and yellow slips that announce that you have a package.

Make orphans' dreams come true

To make Santa's job easier, the children of "La Fermette," the local orphanage in Ath, have submitted their wish list for Christmas. USAG Benelux's goal is to provide each of the children with one of their wishes at a party the afternoon of Dec. 17. Details are still being worked out, but Santa has already saved the date.

Those who are interested can support the program in two ways: Request a copy of the wish list, sign up and purchase the gift for a particular child, or donate funds to be used to purchase gifts that haven't been spoken for by other donors.

Contact the USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office at DSN 361-5694 or civilian 068-275694.

Tickets on sale now for Christmas brunch at SHAPE

Enjoy a leisurely Christmas brunch at the SHAPE Club Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. The buffet will be stocked with continental-breakfast items, and there will be a cold starter buffet, main-course buffet and sweets. Cost includes a welcome drink and a free beverage station.

Children can enjoy Kids Corner with Magic Morgan.

Cost: Adults €28, children under 12, €14. Ticket sales end Dec. 11.

Contact the SHAPE Club by calling DSN 423-4133 or civilian 065-44 4133, or sending an email message to info@shapeclub.be.

Exchange's extended holiday return policy gives shoppers peace of mind

To make gift giving easier, the Army & Air Force Exchange service is extending its return policy for items purchased from Nov. 1 to Dec. 24, according to a news release from its corporate headquarters in Dallas.

The Exchange's standard policy allows returns anywhere from up to 15 to 90 days of purchase with a sales receipt. The holiday return/exchange policy extends these terms through Jan. 31, 2015.

"The Exchange knows that sometimes a gift can be the wrong color, size or brand," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Sean Applegate, the Exchange's senior enlisted adviser. "The Exchange's extended return policy goes the extra mile to make sure everyone gets the perfect gift this year."

Refunds with sales receipts are processed as forms of payment (cash for cash, credit for credit card). Refunds without sales receipts are processed as Exchange gift cards.

Shoppers can also return items purchased through <https://shopmyexchange.com> at their closest brick-and-mortar Exchange.

For more information about the extended refund policy, shoppers can visit customer service at their nearest Exchange.

New Year's Eve: Get tickets now

The SHAPE Club's Ballroom will be the site for a New Year's Eve Party, "The Galactic Wars," from Dec. 31 at 7 p.m to Jan. 1, 2015, at 4 a.m. To learn more about this special evening, call DSN 423-4133 or civilian 065-444133.

community briefs - community briefs - community briefs

Job opening at AFCU

Officials at Andrews Federal Credit Union would like to hire a new part-time teller at the Brussels branch. Both jobs are listed on the AFCU website at <http://www.andrewsfcu.org>. Once on the website, just click on the "Career Opportunities" link at the top left of the screen. After you are taken to the Career Opportunities Center page, click on "Employment Listings."

Brussels Library invites you to join book club

The book club meets at Brussels Library on the first floor of Building 4 Dec. 15 from noon to 2 p.m.

The featured book is "The Christmas Train" by New York Times bestselling author David Baldacci.

To register and for more information on this free book club, call DSN 368-9791 or civilian +32 (0) 2-7179791.

Power up with education:

In celebration of National Education Week, UMUC Europe is waiving all \$50 application fees (for new students) through the end of November

With UMUC Europe, military students throughout Europe and the Middle East can reap the benefits of having a regionally accredited public university on base where they need it. Over 35 bachelor's and master's degree programs are offered on site in Europe and online.

For more information and to apply for admission, visit <http://www.europe.umuc.edu>.

Winter tires in Germany

Until Apr. 15, all vehicles on German roads must have approved tires for winter driving. Acceptable tires are approved winter tires or all season tires with the M+S symbol or the snowflake with the three pinnacles. They must have a minimum tread depth of 1.6 mm.

Winter tires aren't mandatory in Belgium, but they are strongly recommended, according to Rudy Magain, the USAG Benelux safety manager.

Alterations now open on Chièvres

A new alterations contractor recently opened up shop on Chièvres Air Base. Stripes, located in the PXtra, is trying out a test schedule: Mondays from 2 to 5 p.m., Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturdays from 12:30 to 6 p.m.

Open season for FEHB going on now

Federal Employees Health Benefit, or FEHB, Open Season runs through Dec. 8.

A link to FEHB 2014 Open Season information is posted on the Army Benefits Center-Civilian website at <http://www.abc.army.mil>, under the "Announcements" section.

SHAPE clinic offers flu shots

The SHAPE Immunization Clinic is now offering flu vaccines Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1 to 4 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

Parents Night Out offers mini getaway

Enjoy a night out while CYSS takes care of your children at CYSS Parents Night Out Nov. 29 and Dec. 13 from 6:30 to 11:30 p.m. A light dinner will be served to the children. Care is \$20 per child with each additional sibling at \$18. Army Family Covenant, or AFC, benefits can be used. Care is located at JFC Brunssum. Open to CYSS-registered children, infant to fifth grade. Fees are nonrefundable. To sign up, contact Parents Central Services at least two days prior at 31 (0) 45-5263121 or stop by to make your reservation.

Soccer coaches needed

Soccer coaches are needed for age groups: 4 to 5, 6 to 7, 8 to 9, 10 to 12, 13 to 15. No experience required, and NYSKA certification/training provided by CYSS.

Contact the Youth Sports Office for more information at DSN 423-4448 or civilian 065-444448.

Register for Schinnen B-ball, cheer

CYS Services Sports & Fitness is getting ready for winter sports. The season runs from Jan. 17 to Feb. 21, 2015. Open to all U.S./NATO ID card holders. Volunteer coaches are needed. Must be registered with CYS Services (it's free) and have a valid health assessment at the time of enrollment. You may enroll in basketball or cheerleading and register for CYSS by stopping by the CYSS Parent Central Services Office at JFC Brunssum's Building H602. Contact the Child, Youth and School Services Sports & Fitness Office for details at DSN 364-4195 or civilian +31 (0) 45-5264195.

- Open enrollment for the Junior Girls Basketball season runs through Nov. 28 for ages 13 to 15. Practice at JFC Brunssum gym begins on or about Jan. 6, 2015. Cost: \$40.

- Open enrollment for cheerleading ages 6 to 15 will be held through Nov. 28. Practice begins on or about Jan. 6, 2015, at the CYS gym or AFNORTH. Cost: \$40.

Sign up for SHAPE B-ball

CYS basketball season is coming up on SHAPE so sign up for it now. (Must be qualifying age by March 15, 2015.) CYSS free annual registration is required prior to enrollment in basketball. Sign up at Parent Central Services in SHAPE's Building 503 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Last walk-in taken at 4:50 p.m.) Payments are accepted in both dollars and euros. Euros are based on a set monthly exchange rate.

Call Parent Central Services at DSN 423-5612 or civilian 065-445612, or call the SKIESUnlimited instructional-programs specialist at DSN 423-5611 or civilian 065445611. Visit the website at <http://benelux.armymwr.com/europe/benelux>.

- Enrollment for SHAPE Skills Developmental Basketball for boys and girls 4 to 5 will be open through Nov. 29. Basketball runs January to February 2015. Cost: \$20.

- Open enrollment for the SHAPE basketball season is being held through Nov. 28. The season runs December 2014 to March 2015.

Peewee League: co-ed ages 6 to 7; Minor League: co-ed ages 8 to 9; Bantam League: co-ed ages 10 to 12; Junior Girls: ages 13 to 15; Junior Boys: ages 13 to 15. Cost: \$40.



Read about events near Chièvres, SHAPE and Brussels.

Through Nov. 28

- **Exhibition at the SHAPE Club** - Oil painting and engraving by Michel De Clercq. Open Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, call DSN 423-4133 or civilian 065-444133.

Nov. 28 to 29

- **Annual sales and wine tasting in Soignies** at La Perle Bleue on Chaussée du Roeulx 405 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free.

Nov. 29

- **Commercial and crafts fair in Chièvres** in the town hall and on the Grand' Place from noon to midnight with entertainments all day.
- **Volksmarch in Somberfeffe** for 6, 12, 20 km. Departs from the Sports Center on Allée du Château-Chinon 6 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Nov. 29 to 30

- **Animal fair in Mons** at the Lotto Mons Expo on Avenue Thomas Edison 2 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Discover animals while enjoying entertainment and shows. Get more information at www.animo-expo.be. Admission: €7 adults and €4 children under 10.
- **Christmas and crafts market** in Tournai on Rue Duquesnoy 55. Open Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Autumn flea market (indoor) in Tournai** at Halle aux Draps (115 booths). Open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Flea market in Leuze-En-Hainaut** on Rue Erna 4 (100 booths). Open from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Flea market (indoor) in Jemappes** on Avenue Maréchal Foch 873 from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Nov. 30

- **Volksmarch in Froidmont** for 6, 12, 20 km. Departs from Rue du Pont Vert 14 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Volksmarch in Mainvault** for 5, 10, 15, 20 km. Departs from Rue du Mont 2 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Volksmarch in Baugnies** for 5, 10, 20 km. Departs from Rue de Mortagne from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Read about events near Brunssum and Schinnen (in the Netherlands unless otherwise indicated).

Through Nov. 30

- **Altstädter Nikolaus Market in Bergneustadt, Germany**, is a traditional Saint Nicolas Market located in the Heimatmuseum among the timber-framed houses in the historic town center. Open Nov. 28 from 6 to 10 p.m., Nov. 29 from 3 to 10 p.m. and Nov. 30 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Car Fair in Rotterdam** at the Ahoy multifunctional events venue on Ahoy-weg 10 caters to people with a passion for cars. Besides the newest models (many top car dealers will be on hand), many stands will also offer all kinds of accessories. Open: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Christmas Market in Hötter, Germany**, is held in and around the romantic Castle Corvey. Open Nov. 28 from 2 to 6 p.m., and Nov. 29 and 30 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: €6; children €3.
- **Country and Christmas Fair near Haarzuilens** at Castle De Haar, Kasteellaan 1, is held in the beautiful setting of the castle. The fair has more than 200 booths featuring exclusive articles, attractive accessories and festive novelties. Admission: €17; children (12 to 16), €10.
- **Magical Winter Moments in Bruges (Brugge), Belgium**, at "Oud Sint-Janshospitaal" (now a museum) in the city center offers a variety of gifts, Christmas decorations and workshops. Open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: €12; children 13 and under, free admission.
- **"Meesterlijk" in Amsterdam** is a design-and-crafts fair held in Westergasfabriek on Polonceaukade 2. Open from noon to 6 p.m. Admission: €10.
- **Nikolaus Market in Geilenkirchen, Germany**, brings life to the city center. Open Nov. 28 from 5 to 11 p.m., Nov. 29 from noon to 11 p.m., and Nov. 30 from 6 to 11 p.m.
- **PAN Amsterdam in Amsterdam** is a large international Art and Antique Fair held at the RAI. Every year more than a hundred art and antique dealers participate with paintings, jewelry, design, silverwork, glass, statues, Asian art and more. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission: €15; children (12 to 18) €7.50; 11 and under - free admission. Catalogue is €12.50.
- **Winter Fair in Hardenberg** is held at Evenementenhal on Energieweg 2, where you can find lots of things to make your home cozy and warm. Open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: €9; children €5.
- **Winter Fair in Mechelen, Belgium**, is held in Nekkerhal on Plattebeekstraat. This indoor fair gives visitors a taste of the coming festive season. Open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission: €11.



Dec. 4

- **Brussels Museums late opening** - Explore at least five museums every Thursday (through Dec. 19) from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. accompanied by a program of special activities, including guided tours. Get details at <http://www.brusselsmuseumsnocturnes.be/>.

Through Jan. 4, 2015

- **Brussels Christmas Market "Winter Wonders"** - Market with some 230 booths, fairground, ice-skating rink and sound-and-light show take place on the Grand'Place, around the Bourse, Place de la Monnaie, Place Sainte-Catherine and Marché aux Poissons weekdays from noon to 10 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. "Guest of honor" this year is the city of Quebec.

Nov. 29 through Dec. 30

- **Christmas village in Liège** - In the heart of the city, 160 decorated wooden cottages form a magical Christmas Village throughout the month of December. Read more at <http://www.villagedenoel.be/en>.



Trenches to Foxholes

Through Dec. 24

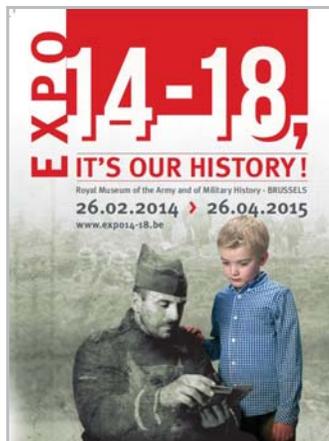
- **Exhibition "Regards croisés sur la Guerre 14-18" (crossed perspectives on World War I) in Ath** on Rue de Pintamont 18 Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 2 to 6 p.m.

Through Jan. 5, 2015

- **Exhibition "Tournai, August 1914. A city plunged into the war" in Tournai** at the Military History Museum on rue Roc Sainte Nicaise 59-61. Open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 to 5 p.m., and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m.

Through April 26, 2015

- **Expo 14-18: It's our history in Brussels** - At the Royal Army Museum on Parc du Cinquantenaire 3, daily from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4:45 p.m., except Mondays. Admission fee is €12 and €8 for children 6 to 18 years old. Family package is €32 (two adults and two children). You can look into day-trip specials on Belgian rail at <http://www.belgianrail.be>.



Through Dec. 1

- **Art and Antiques Fair in Antwerp, Belgium**, is held at Congresscenter "het Elzenveld" on Lange Gasthuisstraat 45. Open Nov. 28 from 2 to 8 p.m. and Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 from 2 to 6 p.m.

Nov. 29 to 30

- **Zeeland China Fair in Koudekerke** is held at Het Blauwe Hof, Breeweg 11. Besides china from Wedgwood, Villeroy and Boch, and many others, it has glass, crystal, silver, cutlery and table decorations. Admission is free. Open Nov. 29 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Nov. 30 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- **Ceramic Market in Langerwehe, Germany**, is held at the Ceramic Museum. Open both days from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free.

Nov. 29 to 30 and Dec. 6 to 7, 13 to 14

- **Christmas Market in Mesch** near Eijsden is held at De Laathof Farm on Langstraat. Admission is free. Open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dec. 3 to 7

- **Winter Fair in Rotterdam** is held at Ahoy 1. This indoor fair offers everything you need for the coming holiday season. Open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission: €13.50. Read more about it at <http://www.winter-fair.nl>.

Dec. 4 to 7, 11 to 14 and 18 to 21

- **"Romantic Christmas Market" in Langerwehe-Merode, Germany**, is one of only two occasions each year when the Castle Merode is open to the public. The Prince and Princess von Merode open the Flemish Renaissance castle for a traditional Christmas market. Open Wednesday and Thursday from 2 to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 2 to 10 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 8 p.m. Admission Wednesday to Friday is €6.50 and on the weekend €7; children (6 to 16) €2.

Ongoing

Through Dec. 23

- **Christmas Market in Oberhausen, Germany**, is held in and around Europe's largest mall.

Through Dec. 24

- **Christmas Show (Kerstshow) in Schimmert** is held at Lupa Outdoors Vijvercentrum Limburg on Op de Bies 70. Visit <http://www.vijvercentrumlimburg.nl>.

Through Jan. 5, 2015

- **Valkenburg: Christmas Town in Valkenburg** offers an unmatched festive experience. Learn more at <http://www.kerststadvalkenburg.nl/en>.

Nov. 29 to Dec. 30

- **Magical Maastricht in Maastricht** celebrates the season with several Christmas markets centered around the theme. Sparkling with lights, the historical city center offers many attractions. Read more about it at <http://www.vvmaastricht.nl/download/magisch-m-folder2014.pdf>.

SHAPE Trips & Tours

Serving Brussels, Chièvres and SHAPE

For information on the trip below,

call DSN 423-3884 or civilian 065-443884.

London overnight, Dec. 6 to 7 - The day is yours to see London in lights, and find that special Christmas gift or treat yourself to one of the famous West End shows. One night's lodging with breakfast included. Departs from Brussels at 3:30 a.m. and from SHAPE at 4:30 a.m. Arrives at SHAPE Monday, Dec. 8, at 1:30 a.m. and at Brussels at 2:30 a.m. Cost: single occupancy per person €267; double/twin or triple occupancy per person €198; youths (3 to 12) €155 per person; Child (newborn to 2) €115 per person when sharing a room with two fully paid guests.

Schinnen Trips and Tours

For information on the trip below,

call DSN 360-7561 or civilian

0031-(0)46-4437561.

Cologne Christmas Markets, Dec. 6 - Coach departs from Schinnen at 9:30 a.m. Arrives in Cologne, Germany, at 11 a.m. Departs from Cologne at 6:30 p.m. Arrives back in Schinnen at 8 a.m. Cost: \$35 per person. Included in tour price: round-trip coach transportation. Register with full payment at the Trips & Tours office in Schinnen.

SHAPE Travel Group

For information on the trip below,

call civilian 0486-565371.

Leeds Castle and Dickens Christmas Festival, Dec. 6 - Come join SHAPE Travel Group for an exceptional day in England. First, the group will take a private tour of Leeds Castle and, afterward, enjoy the Christmas market held on the castle grounds.

Leeds Castle was originally the site of a manor of the Saxon Royal Family. It was a Norman stronghold, later becoming a Royal palace, and was for 300 years the home of kings and queens of England. Set on two islands in the river Len and encircled by a wide moat, it was famously described by Lord Conway as "the loveliest castle in the world."

Afterward, the group will drive to Rochester for the famous Dickens Christmas Market and festival at Rochester Castle. Come along and enjoy the festive atmosphere packed with shopping stalls and many other Victorian delights. There are lamp-lit parades, carols to be sung, Father Christmas to be met and even a guaranteed snowfall, framed by Rochester's fairytale cathedral and castle. You'll also see some familiar, fabled characters from Charles Dickens' much-loved stories like Ebenezer Scrooge from "A Christmas Carol." Dickens lived in this area for five years as a child and at the end of his life, which greatly influenced his writing and his characters. Highlights include the Seven Poor Travellers Procession, the Grand Parade, a candlelit procession, the open-air carol concert and roaming street performers.

Cost: adult €70; child €60.

Upcoming trips

SHAPE Trips & Tours

- **Christmas Market Overnight- Nürnberg, Rothenburg and Cologne, Dec. 13 to 14**
- **Aachen and Monschau Christmas Markets, Dec. 20**
- **Paris in Winter: Paris Day Trip, Dec. 27**
- **New Year's Medieval Dinner in Brugge (Bruges), Dec. 31**
- **Amsterdam with optional tour of Anne Frank House, Jan. 24, 2015**
- **Day trip to Centro Shopping Center in Oberhausen, Germany, Jan. 31, 2015**
- **Croatia with Venice and Slovenia, April 6 to 15, 2015 (10 days round-trip)**

Schinnen Trips & Tours

- **Express Shopping Trip to London, Dec. 13**

SHAPE Travel Group

- **Paris Lights and Moulin Rouge, Dec. 9**
- **Strasbourg Christmas Market (Christkindelmärk), Dec. 16**



- **Maasmechelen Outlet Shops & Alden Biesen Castle, Jan. 15, 2015**
- **Luxembourg City and Bernard-Massard Winery, Jan. 22, 2015**
- **Soufflenheim Pottery, France, Feb. 5, 2015**
- **London with Wicked (optional), Feb. 11, 2015**
- **Spa, Belgium, Feb. 25, 2015**
- **Netherlands: Volendam/Edam/Marken, March 5, 2015**
- **Reims, France, and Champagne Tasting, March 19, 2015**
- **Trier with Winery Tour, April 15, 2015**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BRUSSELS COMMUNITY

Register now

- **“Nuts!” Night** - On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, the American Club of Brussels invites you to “Nuts!” Night at the Brussels Marriott Hotel Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. to remember the courage and indomitable spirit of those who sacrificed so much during the Battle of the Bulge. Cost: €80. Reservations should be made by Monday, Dec. 1, by email to info@americanclubbrussels.org, online at <http://www.americanclubbrussels.org> or by telephone to the ACB office manager at civilian 0476-996870.

Dec. 4

- **Winterfest** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

SCHINNEN/BRUNSSUM COMMUNITY

Nov. 29

- **AFNORTH Christmas Market** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

Dec. 2

- **Sibling Class** - Children ages 3 to 6 who are expecting a sibling can benefit from a class offered through the New Parent Support Program in the USAG Benelux-Schinnen Family Advocacy Program Lounge from 1 to 2 p.m. To register or to have your questions answered, call DSN 360-7335/7500 or civilian +31 (0) 46-4437335/7500.
- **TSP: Ready for Retirement** - Attend this Financial Readiness Program class on the Thrift Savings Plan from 11 a.m. to noon at the Army Community Service Conference Room in Building 39. Most people want to achieve financial security, and saving and investing are key to building wealth and achieving financial success. To find out more and to register, contact DSN 360-7450/7500 or civilian +31 (0) 46-4437450/7500.

Dec. 3

- **Schinnen tree-lighting ceremony** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

Dec. 3, 10 and 17

- **Scream-Free Marriage** - Army Community Service's Family Advocacy Program offers this three-part relationship-techniques class from 1 to 3 p.m. in the ACS Conference Room on Schinnen. Call DSN 360-7367/7453 or civilian +31 (0) 46-4437367/7453.

SHAPE/CHIEVRES COMMUNITY

Happening now

- **Tickets on sale for Seussical, The Musical** - Watch the Performing Arts School in a musical based on the works of Dr. Seuss at the SHAPE Performing Arts Centre Nov. 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee performance Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. Admission: adult €16, student €9, child €7. Call DSN 423-3312 or civilian 065-443312.
- **Registration open for Winter Theater Camp** - Children in grades 3 through 9 can bring the musical "Shrek" to the SHAPE Performing Arts Centre. Session begins Jan. 12, 2015. Call DSN 423-3312 or civilian 065-443312.

Nov. 29

- **German Christmas Market** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

Nov. 30

- **British Christmas Market** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

Dec. 2

- **Christmas concert on SHAPE** - For details on holiday events, see pages 8 and 9.

Movies at SHAPE Cinema

Rates — 2D movies: adults €7 and children 11 and under €4. 3D movies: adults €9 and children 11 and under €6. Check <http://www.shape2day.com/cinema.aspx> for the movie schedule.

Theaters near SHAPE/Chièvres that play movies in English:

Only the British or American movies listed as VO (Version Originale or Originele Versie) will be in English.

Plaza Art - Rue de Nimy 12, 7000 Mons (next to the main square). Visit <http://plaza-art.be/index.cgi?p=Grille>.

ImagiBraine - Boulevard de France, 1420 Braine l'Alleud. Check the schedule and purchase your tickets at: <http://kinopolis.be/nl/bioscopen/kinopolis-imagibraine>.

Kinopolis - Boulevard du Centenaire 20, 1020 Bruxelles. Take a look at movie listings at <http://kinopolis.be/fr/cinemas/kinopolis-bruxelles>.

Movie at JFC HQ Alliance Theater

Adult admission is €5 (ages 12 and older) - Child admission is €3 (ages 11 and under). Check the new web page at <http://www.shopmyexchange.com/reel-time-theatres/Schinnen-1366146> for the movie schedule.