

BENELUX

FALL 2009  
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4



SUPPORTING NATO ◀ SHARPEN THE SWORD



# The Vision for **TRAINING**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PERMREP

*40 years*  
SCHINNEN  
CELEBRATES

Family  
Support

EXTENDED TO NATO

THE BENELUX ROLE

in **AFGHANISTAN**

USAGBENELUX.EUR.ARMY.MIL



Christie Vanover



Rachel Parks



Tom Budzyna

## Commander's Corner

The USAG Benelux exists to support NATO and the Servicemembers who stand with the Alliance. Our garrisons support U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines, but we also extend our mission to the NATO nations serving in and around our communities.

In the late 1960s, after France withdrew its personnel from the military structure of NATO, the Army stood up support activities in Belgium and The Netherlands. USAG Brussels supports the NATO Headquarters; Chièvres Garrison supports the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and USAG Schinnen supports Joint Force Command Brunssum. Additionally, all three garrisons extend their reach to outlying military communities in the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, France and Luxembourg, making the USAG Benelux's area of responsibility one of the largest in the Army.

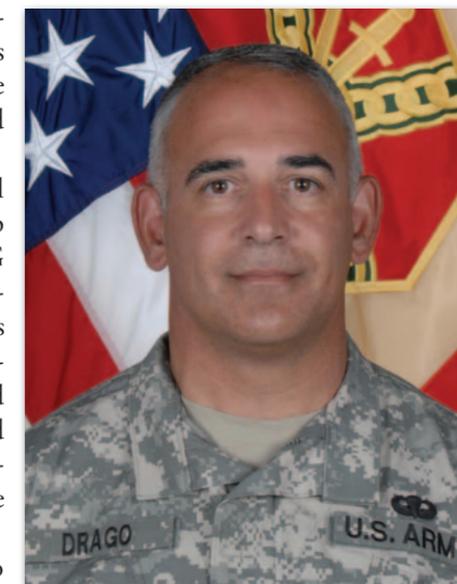
Over the past 40-plus years, our Alliance has continued to strengthen. We've added new member nations and lengthened our arm of support. Similarly, NATO has pledged its support to America. Never in NATO's history was Article 5 enacted until the people of America fell under attack in 2001. The member nations stood up alongside the Alliance to fight terrorism, and they remain by our sides in Afghanistan today.

Therefore, as a garrison operation, one of our missions is to provide the finest, most modern training facilities for personnel assigned here. We continue to expand our facilities to meet those needs, and units have joined our NATO partners in our training areas in preparation for their deployments.

When Servicemembers deploy or go on extended temporary duty, it's also our responsibility to care for the families left behind. The U.S. Army does a superb job with this mission through the Army Family Covenant, and as a joint military support agency, we are sharing those same values with our international partners. We have opened up family support programs to other nations to help them through deployments, financial hardships and even just the basics of military life.

Our military, civilian and host nation workforce is devoted to mission readiness, but we are also committed to building strong relationships with our host nation communities. Our partnerships were born on the battlefields of past wars, but they are enriched by the resiliency of friendships and cultural exchanges that are shared daily.

This year, we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the liberation of our host nations, the 60th anniversary of NATO and the 40th anniversary of USAG Schinnen. Our Alliance is steadfast and strong – partners on the battlefield; partners on the home front. Sharpen the sword!



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Children and spectators learn how to extinguish a grease fire with the help of the town of Schinnen Fire Department. The department joined USAG Schinnen's 40th anniversary celebration with a display Sept. 19. See story on page 32.



Tom Budzyna

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COL JAMES DRAGO  
 USAG BENELUX COMMANDER



## A Letter to the Benelux Community from Ambassador Ivo Daalder

*Editor's Note: We are pleased this issue of the Benelux EDGE has a lead contribution from the Honorable Ivo H. Daalder, who, since May 15, has been the United States Permanent Representative (PermRep) on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In addition to serving in Belgium as the U.S. PermRep, Ambassador Daalder has roots in our Benelux region. Born in The Hague, Netherlands, in 1960, he was appointed United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, by President Barack Obama in May 2009. Ambassador Daalder was educated at Oxford and Georgetown Universities and received his Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has had a distinguished career in government and academia. He is married to Elisa D. Harris, and they have two sons, Marc and Michael.*

I wish to extend my warm greetings to the entire American military community living and working in the Benelux region. As someone with Dutch roots, I feel a special connection to the Benelux region and am proud to serve my adopted country, the United States of America, and all of you here as Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (USNATO).

Since its beginning in 1949, North Atlantic countries have united in NATO with the common mission of ensuring peace and protection for all. Faced with new challenges and opportunities in relation to areas such as Afghanistan and the Balkans, I remain confident that the U.S., one of the founding members of NATO, will continue to work with our partners in the world's most powerful political-military Alliance to ensure the organization's continued success.

Afghanistan remains the Alliance's – and President Obama's – number one mission. The next 12-18 months will be critical for the job at hand. Working under the guidance of the Commander in Chief, our goal is to achieve visible progress in Afghanistan – progress that will demonstrate to our publics back home that defeating the insurgency and securing Afghanistan for Afghans remains a worthwhile, and successful, endeavor.

Already we have seen positive signs of progress. The Afghanistan Police Program has successfully trained over 70,000 Afghan national police officers and will continue to add to their ranks. Educational opportunities have been extended to women and girls, populations previously denied formal teaching. Healthcare has become far more accessible. In the first Afghan-led, democratic election in thirty years, Afghans recently went to the polls to elect a new president in a momentous and remarkably safe exercise in democracy.

On the military side, General McChrystal's tactical directive instructing ISAF forces to focus on securing the people of Afghanistan has already led to a reduction in civilian casualties. NATO forces are to be commended for their hard work and dedicated sacrifice that helped the Afghan people hold elections in the midst of war. Of course, the desired outcome still remains the complete transfer of security, governance and economic control to the Afghans. As General McChrystal has said, "ISAF's mission is to help the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan defeat the insurgency threatening their country. Protecting the Afghan people is the mission."

While there is still much work to be done to disrupt, defeat and dismantle the insurgency in Afghanistan, the mission of the 28 Allies and our 14 partners in Afghanistan is truly an example of the strength of what the international community can do when we unite behind a common cause to defeat a common enemy.

Moving beyond Afghanistan, Russia's relationship with NATO is another area that deserves, and will continue to receive, our full attention. The 28 NATO Allies have reached consensus on how to manage our relations with Russia, and we stand to benefit from the progress that can be made towards constructive NATO-Russia relations as we speak with one, strong, unified voice. We will work together in areas where we can agree, even while we acknowledge there are areas in which we disagree. Allies can stay committed to our principles on key issues of disagreement with Russia while also working together to achieving the results that NATO Allies and Russia can agree on. These results should benefit us all.

Of course, Kosovo will remain on USNATO's radar. What began in June 1999 as a NATO-led effort to protect the people of Kosovo and create peace and stability and then evolved into the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) to maintain safety and security for all citizens, is now moving to a deterrence presence as political and security conditions in the country continue to improve. By the end of this year, KFOR will be down from a high of 50,000 troops to 10,000 troops, recognition of the international community's work with Kosovo institutions to bring lasting security and growing prosperity to the region.

The shift over the last ten years from operations in Europe, like Kosovo, to operations thousands of miles from home in Afghanistan, the Gulf of Aden and elsewhere, signals an increasingly pressing need for a new Strategic Concept to define NATO's role in global security. I don't need to tell you that the world has changed greatly since NATO's founding in 1949. The end of the Cold War and the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, created a new global landscape that is forcing international institutions, including NATO, to rethink the way they approach a variety of major issues.

The last time NATO drafted its Strategic Concept – a document adopted by all Allies that outlines NATO's enduring purpose and primary security tasks – was in 1999 during the war in Kosovo. Since then, 12 countries have joined NATO. The United States and other NATO member countries such as Spain and the U.K. have suffered terrorist attacks, and NATO forces have been assigned to security missions 3,500 miles from our headquarters in Brussels. We face new challenges like cyber security, energy security and environmental security. A new Strategic Concept for this new global environment should become the commonly held vision of the future of our Heads of State and Government at the next NATO Summit in Lisbon in Fall 2010. It will help guide us all – whether we are working in Brussels or Mons or Brunssum, or other facilities to support the NATO effort.

I want to thank all of you – the hardworking men and women in the U.S. military, your loving families, and the dedicated staffs in the Benelux region, composed of U.S., Belgian and Dutch citizens- that support all of us. Your contributions to the American and NATO missions are courageous and indispensable!

Ivo H. Daalder  
Ambassador to the U.S. Mission  
to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization



USAG Schinnen Commander Lt. Col. Fern O. Sumpter talks with the Municipality of Schinnen's Mayor Barry Link during one of her many visits to the Town Hall.

## USAG Schinnen: At Home in the Netherlands

"Community Partners Since 1969" – the theme which marks the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Army base in the Municipality of Schinnen. From 1969 to the present day, U.S. Army and Dutch Ministry of Defense personnel assigned to the U.S. Army base in Schinnen have supported NATO forces and performed missions vital to our collective security throughout the region. In addition to the 40th Anniversary of U.S. Forces' presence in Schinnen, September also marked Limburg's 450th Anniversary of the Roermond Bishopric and the rededication of the municipality's Peace Chapel built 70 years ago.

This year is also the 65th Anniversary of the operations led by the U.S. Army 30th Infantry Division, nicknamed "Old Hickory," which helped forever change the European landscape. In September 1944, Old Hickory liberated the Municipality of Schinnen and helped lay the foundation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which grew from 12 founding nations in 1949 to 28 member countries today.

U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen's lineage began in Fontainebleau, France, where the U.S. Army stationed the Allied Forces Central Support Element to augment NATO forces. This unit moved to Heerlen, Landgraaf and Brunssum in 1967. In 1969, the U.S. Army formally established a military community in Schinnen on the grounds of a former coal mine. Additional reorganizations occurred in 1991, 1993 and 1996, leading to the formal designation of U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen in 2005.

The success of the garrison's mission owes much to the Municipality of Schinnen and the Dutch Ministry of Defense. Throughout the U.S. Army, installation community garrisons are the Army's home and USAG Schinnen truly feels at home in the Netherlands.

LTC FERN O. SUMPTER  
USAG SCHINNEN COMMANDER

# The Benelux Role in Afghanistan

By Rachel Parks  
 ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs



Chief Warrant Officer Ron Chubb  
 Canadian Forces

International military police from Alliance countries pose for a group photo on the Kandahar Air Base flight line. The Servicemembers work in a unique joint environment, partnering with different military branches and nations. Several military police from SHAPE have deployed as part of the continuing NATO mission in Afghanistan.



**OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS, NATO HAS SERVED AS A JOINT, ALLIED COMMAND FOR THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, AND MEMBERS OF THE BENELUX COMMUNITY HAVE PLAYED A PRIME ROLE IN THAT MISSION.**

Currently, several members of the Benelux community are deployed in support of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Servicemembers from the SHAPE International Military Police, NATO Communications and Information Systems Services Agency, 650th Military Intelligence Group/Allied Command Counterintelligence, Armed Forces Network Benelux and USAG Schinnen Directorate of Public Works are among some partnering with a variety of nations in Afghanistan on a rotational basis.

Each member of the Benelux community who deploys with NATO fills a vital role within their respective national service, as well as one within a larger international picture.

Members of NATO's Communications and Information Systems Service Agency, who deploy from SHAPE, facilitate communications between NCSA headquarters and members of the ISAF staff. One such member of NCSA, based at SHAPE and currently deployed to Afghanistan, is Maj. Pedro Espinoza.

Espinoza said the deployment within the international community in Afghanistan can be very similar to living and working in the international community at SHAPE.

"Every weekend there seems to be an international event. You get to see different cultures and leadership on both a personal and professional level, and you get to expand your horizons, as well," he said.

"Everyone supports the goals and directions of ISAF and the Commander of ISAF. Everyone also takes a lot of pride in their nation, but we're all on the same team and working to the same end," added Espinoza.

The exchange of information on a NATO deployment does not just pertain to one set job. Because 28 nations are members of NATO and 14 additional non-NATO countries contribute in some way, the deployed Servicemembers learn about international procedures and policies across a wide cross-section from the different militaries of the world.

"It's really an exciting environment to be in. You might think you have an answer, and then a co-worker from another country shares something. Now you have something else to put in your kit bag to overcome a future challenge," said Espinoza, as he recalled some of the most positive aspects of serving in a joint environment.

Espinoza added that the ability to train with members of other militaries serves NATO deployed Servicemembers well. While most nations go through some sort of training with their own element before they deploy, once they reach their destination in Afghanistan, they often take part in joint training with their international counterparts.

"We do international training that deals with the mission. We do joint training because we have a joint team. You could have a Canadian, a German, a Belgian, an American, all on the same team," said Espinoza. "You feel confident and prepared on the national level, as well as the international level."

**"No matter what nationality you are, people have the same professional goals and they have the same hopes and dreams. We're all proud of what we're doing and honored and humbled to be part of the NATO mission," Espinoza continued.**

One of Espinoza's coworkers is Hauptmann Werner Mueller-Goldau, a member of the German Army. Mueller-Goldau said the opportunity to serve in a deployed capacity with NATO was a very exciting event, one that challenges and enriches the lives of those who are able to take part in such a mission.

"You will see if you're serving in an international environment that all nations have their own culture. You will see that each nation has a different approach in their military culture. You are also out of your normal chain of command," said Mueller-Goldau. Being outside of one's own national element is part of the learning environment he added.

"Sometimes at the beginning, it can be a surprise, but you learn a lot in a matter of days or weeks," added Mueller-Goldau.

The group of international military police who deployed echoed the same ideas. While the deployment to Afghanistan is relatively short, they spend their time working with other military representatives from around the world in law enforcement related tasks.

The group of military police represented the NATO international and inter-service community by sending an American Soldier, an American Airman and a British Soldier on the deployment. The group said they find that working in an international environment is

British Cpl. James O'Brien, a member of the SHAPE International Military Police who is currently deployed with NATO, takes part in a variety of law enforcement activities in Afghanistan. The military police from SHAPE partner with Servicemembers from numerous nations in their support of ISAF.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Parks, Jr.

always unique but that Servicemembers from around the world are always able to find common ground and work toward a standard goal, and in the meantime, learn new techniques or procedures that they can then incorporate into their own careers.

And due to the relatively short rotations from SHAPE, there is not only a limited amount of time to learn new lessons but a limited amount of time to complete the job deployed Servicemembers are filling.

Cpl. James O'Brien, the British SHAPE MP in Afghanistan said that working in the deployed environment with NATO has been a unique and sometimes challenging experience.

"You're working closely with various nationalities over a short period of time, and you really start to understand how people work," said O'Brien. He added that due to the nature of military police work, if there is an incident of some sort, even if it's something as minor as a traffic violation, there can be several different nationalities and cultures involved.

"In a situation like that, a lack of understanding and tolerance could create serious issues," O'Brien added, as he noted that working within the NATO environment at SHAPE, as well as in Afghanistan, has allowed him to build on his experiences with people from a variety of cultures.

Senior Airman DeJuan McWilliams, another SHAPE MP, is taking part in his first deployment with NATO. He spoke about the learning process he has gone through in the months he has been deployed.

**"I've learned a lot from the Servicemembers from the many countries that I work with. Hopefully, when I deploy again I'll be able to use the things I learned here to help build on the experience I have already," he said.**

McWilliams added that he and other native English speakers have taken on the unique role of unofficial tutor during the deployment.

"I'm able to contribute when it comes to helping my coworkers with the English language. Since there are only a handful of us working together, we form a pretty strong bond in a short period of time," he said.

And while there are some similarities between a NATO post in Europe and a NATO post in Afghanistan, there are also differences. Mueller-Goldau said the main difference he has noticed between his job

in Afghanistan and his job in Europe is the speed of events. "The main difference is the tempo. It's very quick here, and there are many new tasks in a short time. If you're serving here you have to rely on people and you build very strong relationships with your team. The camaraderie here is very strong," he added with pride.

In addition, while deployed Servicemembers from around the world build professional and personal partnerships with their international counterparts, Espinoza said that people might be surprised to learn that there is also a partnership of sorts with local members of the Afghan community.

**"Every so often, the Afghan personnel here have a market type event where people can go out shopping. They can send something home to their family and it helps the economy here. So it's not just the NATO countries that partner, but there is truly a partnership with the Afghan locals," he said as he described another unique aspect of the deployment.**

Espinoza and Mueller-Goldau stressed that the experience of deploying in support of NATO and ISAF has allowed them to expand their horizons and increase their skill sets through personal and professional experiences they might not have in a one-nation setting.

They both said the support they receive from their respective chains of command makes the entire deployment run smoothly. And they added that the families of those who deploy within NATO are a large part of the success of the overall mission.

"Many of us volunteered to come down here and be part of the team that supports NATO and the mission. For all of us down here this is only possible with support from entities that we regularly interface with, as well as family and friends. Their families support them and are proud of the mission and it's a lot easier to focus on our job because of that multi-faceted support," said Espinoza.

As operations continue in Afghanistan, the partnerships forged from NATO and the experiences gained in a joint environment can only help to strengthen the country and the ties between militaries and Servicemembers from around the globe.

NATO assumed command and control of the ISAF operation in Afghanistan on Aug. 11, 2003.



Source: NATO

### BRUSSELS

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen chairs the North Atlantic Council, the Alliance's principal political decision-making body. He took office as NATO's 12th Secretary General on Aug. 1, 2009, and visited Afghanistan a few days later.

### SHAPE

As the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Adm. James Stavridis, leads all NATO military operations and has overall command of the ISAF operation. He recently said the situation in Afghanistan is serious, but far from hopeless. "We will be able to depart successfully. We will win."

### JFC BRUNSSUM

Under the command of German Army Gen. Egon Ramms, Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum runs the ISAF operation, including the planning and command of the force. Through continuous support, it assures that ISAF can sustain its operations uninterrupted for several years, if necessary.

## International Security Assistance Force Total Contributing Nation Strength

Nation	% of Population Deployed	Estimate Deployed
United Kingdom	.0146	9,000
Denmark	.0127	700
Estonia	.0112	150
Netherlands	.0107	1,770
Norway	.0100	485
United States	.0097	29,950
Canada	.0083	2,800
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*	.0081	165
Latvia	.0073	165
Croatia	.0067	295
Bulgaria	.0062	470
Lithuania	.0060	200
Poland	.0052	2,000
Australia	.0050	1,090
Germany	.0049	4,050
France	.0049	3,160
Romania	.0048	1,025
Belgium	.0047	510
Italy	.0047	2,795
Sweden	.0046	430
Albania	.0044	140
Slovakia	.0042	230
Slovenia	.0039	80
New Zealand	.0037	160
Czech Republic	.0032	340
Hungary	.0031	310
Iceland	.0025	8
Finland	.0021	110
Luxemburg	.0018	9
Spain	.0017	780
Greece	.0013	145
Azerbaijan	.0010	90
Turkey	.0010	730
Portugal	.0008	90
United Arab Emirates	.0005	25
Singapore	.0002	8
Ireland	.0002	7
Jordan	.0001	7
Bosnia & Herzegovina	.00005	2
Austria	.00004	3
Georgia	.00002	1
Ukraine	.00002	10
<b>Approximate Total</b>		<b>64,500</b>

Source: NATO ISAF and national population reports  
As of July 23, 2009, the ISAF mission consisted of the following 42 nations (the troop numbers are based on broad contribution and do not reflect the exact numbers on the ground at any one time).

\*Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

# Training Area Expands

## Preparing The Joint, NATO Force

By **Christie Vanover** ◀ *USAG Benelux Public Affairs*

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Military missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are at a shifting point. The number of boots on the ground in Iraq is decreasing, while the needed force strength in Afghanistan is under review. As the operations evolve, so do the methods of training troops.

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Tucked away in the valleys of Belgium, a country the size of Maryland, a handful of NATO support forces deploy on a rotational basis to Afghanistan to support the International Security Assistance Force.

Those at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe who work with NATO's Allied Command Operations don't have easy access to multi-million dollar training facilities, but their jobs and their lives require them to be as efficient with their Mission Essential Task List as any other Servicemember who goes downrange. The command team within the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux has made it a priority to provide the training platforms needed in this unique environment.

Just over a year ago, a field on Chièvres Air Base sat empty, until a kick-start of \$150,000 from the 650th Military Intelligence Group/Allied Command Counterintelligence had a trickle effect on what is now a fully-functional training area used by U.S. Army NATO Soldiers, counterintelligence agents, special operations forces, military police and other units in the region.

"My intent was to generate a scenario that was true to life," Col. Scott St. Cyr said a year ago when the training area was undergoing its first stage of construction.

"I wanted to bring the streets of Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo to Belgium, so that

my Soldiers and future Soldiers who use this site are as prepared as possible to face the unknown," added the commander of the 650th MI Group/ACCI.

At first, the area consisted of one dead-end road, a tree line and a field. The 650th MI group/ACCI has an ongoing mission to deploy counterintelligence agents to Afghanistan, and they worked with the USAG Benelux and Joint Multi-National Training Command to construct rows of small wooden buildings used for counterintelligence interface exercises.

One year and more than one million dollars later, the site has expanded dramatically. It now has two additional roads that make convoy training more realistic and two two-story buildings with multi-level walls for single-man, team and vehicle entry.

"The MOUT is used almost every day during training exercises," said St. Cyr. "MPs used it this week for hostage recovery. We use it as an ISAF Headquarters. It's multi-purpose and extremely effective." The NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC) also uses it for an information gathering exercise – the Technical Exploitation Operations Course.

Luis Velez, a training support specialist with the JMTC, added that the training area's location on Chièvres Air Base (35 miles southwest of Brussels) is a geographic advantage. ▶▶▶



Christie Vanover

Sgt. Michael Lynch, from the USAG Benelux Military Police, calls out to his unit as they conduct a dismounted search. Their convoy was hit by an mock IED as part of a training exercise at the Alliance Home Station Training Area on Chièvres Air Base.

“We’re in a central location. Before the closest place for people in the UK and the Netherlands was Baumholder [Germany],” he said.

“Even though we don’t have a brigade combat team, we have a lot in the community who deploy. Those skills have to be maintained. We have a little bit of everything here,” he said, commenting on the structures and the added bonus of an airfield.

The expansion of the Alliance Home Station Training Area isn’t complete, and neither is the goal of opening it up as a true NATO training facility.

“We’re looking to the future to expand it and to make it a better training area, so we can practice even more scenarios,” said Sean Lehane, the deputy garrison manager for Chièvres Garrison.

Because the site is located on a U.S. Air Base, it is open to U.S. ID cardholders. So far, international Soldiers in units like the NSCC have been able to use the training area with their U.S. counterparts, but the garrison is working to streamline the international partnership even further.

“We’re trying to discern how we can allow NATO members and countries easier access to be able to use that facility,” said Lehane. “That’s being done in coordination with the Provost Marshal Office for access control and JMTC because they manage the facility.”

Lt. Col. Michele Prihoda, the commander of the SHAPE Battalion, U.S. Army NATO Brigade, said most of her Soldiers serve in NATO positions and rotate through Afghanistan in support of ISAF.

“If the training area is opened up to the international community, we will endeavor to partner with them during training exercises so that our Soldiers can train with the Soldiers they will fight with,” she said.

In addition to greater accessibility, Ben Rogers, the range technician with JMTC, said the next priority is an improvised explosive device lane.

“That project can go up to a million and a half dollars to set in place a top-of-the-line lane that other units are using,” he said.

The model he has in mind includes a control post that manages when and where each IED goes off. He said it is hooked to a computer and has an incorporated video system that units can use for after action reviews.

“Since IEDs are a major concern in the ISAF area of operation, the addition of an IED lane would allow us to better prepare Soldiers to detect and react to IEDs, thus hopefully increasing survivability,” said Prihoda.

“The more realistic training they have here the better their reaction time is going to be,” added Rogers.

Concepts like the IED lane come from recommendations from local commanders. “We’re open to any command suggestions. We know we exist for them, and we’re capable of doing so much,” said Rogers.

“The more we can get input from commanders who have Soldiers just coming back, the better. Their intel is the most valuable because over the years there have been significant changes,” said Rogers who previously served in Iraq.

While the JMTC manages the training area, the majority of the funding comes from IMCOM, and Lehane said the Benelux is looking into the IED addition.

“It’s a requirement that tenant units have asked about to

meet training and to add realism,” he said. “Now we’re doing the analysis to come up with courses of action to see how and if we can support that.”

In the meantime, the current facility is scheduled for training on a regular basis. The 650th MI Group/ACCI just completed its latest Mission Rehearsal Exercise – the exercise that launched the training area development in 2008.

St. Cyr said over the past year, units have all increased their participation in the MRX, making it a more complex exercise. “The whole backdrop allows units to meet their unit specific requirements,” he said.

“The upgrades that the USAG Benelux Training Support Center was able to make to the training area, plus the 650th MI Group’s invitation to participate during their MRX, enhances the training experience for our Soldiers by providing more realistic and challenging scenarios than we could do by ourselves,” added Prihoda.

“As we gear up for the FY10 training year, we plan to use the training area more often especially for situational training exercises that test Soldiers competence in Army Warrior Tasks and Drills. The STXs will help maintain Soldiers’ combat skills, so that they remain ready to deploy in support of NATO contingency operations,” she continued.

The increased use of the Alliance Home Station Training Area is exactly what the Benelux encourages and what leaders envisioned in 2008.

“Now, the vision, in coordination with JMTC, is to keep expanding it and make it a premier training facility not only for us but NATO and joint forces for contingency operations,” said Lehane.

“The fact that we continue to strengthen the community is rewarding,” said St. Cyr. “We are fully preparing men and women who deploy.”



Christie Vanover



Christie Vanover



Christie Vanover



**Top:** Pvt. 2 Hunter Borash, 39th Signal Battalion, keeps a close watch out for enemy forces after his unit was hit with a mock IED. **Center:** Col. Scott St. Cyr, commander, 650th Military Intelligence Group/Allied Command Counterintelligence, walks the village of the Alliance Home Station Training Area during his unit’s latest Mission Rehearsal Exercise.

**Bottom:** Two women approach a 650th Military Intelligence Group/Allied Command Counterintelligence vehicle after it stops because of a flat tire. The agents inside had to assess the situation as contractors, acting as villagers, began to swarm their vehicle.

**Left:** The new multi-purpose two-story concrete structure at the Alliance Home Station Training Area is used by a variety of units for exercises like hostage recovery, information gathering and as an ISAF Headquarters.

Christie Vanover

# Schinnen's ACS Supports NATO Partnership

By Sarah J. Schmidt ◀ USAG Schinnen Public Affairs

In the U.S. military, sending a Soldier to war without offering a support system for his family is almost as untenable as sending a Soldier to war without proper weapons. But in many NATO countries, family support programs are virtually non-existent – certainly not to the level of a typical Army Community Services or an Airmen & Family Readiness Center found on U.S. Army or Air Force installations.

One NATO unit is filling that void, however, with a program designed to help families of multi-national deployed Soldiers receive the support they need. The First German/Netherlands Corps, based in Münster, Germany, recently introduced a program called Multinational Family Days. The first one, held Aug. 29, attracted more than 150 participants from nine NATO countries. Members of USAG Schinnen's Army Community Services were on hand to help.

First Corps is a multi-national unit, tasked as one of NATO's High Readiness Forces (Land). This means the Corps must be ready to direct a military mission abroad after a preparation time of 20 to 30 days. The unit departed during the summer for its current deployment, which is expected to continue through early 2010.

Family Day brought together the families of the deployed Corps Soldiers for the first time since they departed in July. It presented a unique opportunity for Schinnen ACS representatives, Ann Daugherty and Trudy Wheatly, to show NATO families a wide range of potential services.

"I look at this as a continuation of our support to the ISAF mission," Daugherty, Schinnen's Mobilization and Readiness coordinator, said. "Many of our U.S. Soldiers are serving in ISAF, and their families are our customers already, so this is just an extension of the family support that makes a mission like ISAF possible."

Daugherty manned an information booth, passing out deployment literature, CD's and other resources to the Münster families. Although most of the materials were in English, she saw a steady stream of customers. Popular items included coloring books and pamphlets designed to help children cope with the separation of deployment.

"NATO families experience many of the same issues as U.S. military families, especially during a deployment, so of course, they need these services too," Daugherty said.

Donna McGowen, a British spouse with two children, especially liked Daugherty's idea for "deployment pillows," an ACS project that transfers family photos onto cloth pillowcases in unique, personalized designs. Family members can then easily mail the pillowcases to deployed service members, giving them a little present from home. McGowen and Daugherty discussed ways she could engage her children in the project, then McGowen hit upon an idea: she would organize a pillow party for other spouses and make lots of pillowcases.

That kind of inspiration is exactly what German Army Col. Dieter Schmaglowski, director of staff, hoped Multinational Family Day would produce. "The U.S. has a great deal of experience with family support programs, so naturally, it is good to have someone here with this expert knowledge and successful ideas to share," Schmaglowski said.

While Daugherty chatted with spouses, Schinnen's Employment Readiness Manager, Trudy Wheatley entertained children with crafts and activities. Dutch spouse, Melissa Krommedam appreciated the opportunity for the kids to interact with other military children and take home handcrafted souvenirs to remind them of their fun day.

"We have a big responsibility to be here for each other," Krommedam said, "That's the reason I came today and brought my children. We need to connect with others and see how we can support each other."

The colonel already knew how important those connections could be for family members. Just a few weeks before the Family Day event, a First Corps Soldier was wounded in Kabul during a suicide attack. Schmaglowski saw how news of the attack spread rapidly through the NATO families, even before official contacts had been made.

Fortunately, the Soldier was only slightly wounded and was already back on the job by the time Family Day rolled around, but the incident proved to Schmaglowski and other First Corps leaders just how critical it would be to maintain open communications and frequent connections with families throughout the deployment.

"A number of family members here today still had questions about that event, which I was glad to address," Schmaglowski said, "because we have seen how important it is for family members to have someone they can personally address with questions or concerns. If they only have rumors, there is a danger of misunderstandings. But if we can hear their concerns, we are able to give them facts."

Family Day marked the first of what will become monthly events for the NATO families at Münster. "The message we want our NATO families to take home today is that they can count on us and our support during this deployment," Schmaglowski said.



Sarah J. Schmidt

▲ Schinnen's Employment Readiness Manager, Trudy Wheatley entertained children with crafts and activities while spouses received briefings and learned about resources available during deployment.



Sarah J. Schmidt

◀ Schinnen's Mobilization and Readiness Coordinator Anne Daugherty talks with family members of deployed NATO family members.



# Brussels:

# A Joint, Inter-agency Community

By Thad Moyseowicz ◀ USAG Brussels Public Affairs

◀ U.S. Military Representative, Vice Adm. William Sullivan, addresses the Brussels community on July 4, 2009. To his left are U.S. NATO PermRep, Honorable Ivo Daalder; Alderman Lieve Wierinck, representing Mayor of Zaventem; Chargé d’Affaires Ad Interim Wayne Bush; U.S. Mission to the European Union Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, Susan Elbow and Lt. Col. Darin Conkright, Commander, USAG Brussels.

▼ Lt. Col. Darin Conkright provides a tour of the USAG Brussels garrison to Brussels community member and senior DoD civilian in Europe, former Secretary of Defense Representative, Europe, Bruce Weinrod [center] and his deputy, Mr. Joseph Stein.



The U.S. Army has had a formal presence in Brussels since August 1967. The predecessor activity of the U.S. Army Garrison Brussels was then called the NATO Support Activity (NSA) and was activated by the Army to carry out its mission of supporting the U.S. representation at the NATO alliance’s then-new Brussels headquarters.

The NSA was abolished in October 2005, when the existing entity assumed its new designation as the U.S. Army Garrison Brussels, a unit of the Army’s Installation Management Command-Europe.

The USAG Brussels supports some 2,700 Department of Defense, Department of State and associated U.S. government agency employees and their family members stationed in Brussels. Willie Vigil, the garrison’s Plans, Analysis and Integration Office director, explained: “The USAG Brussels is a fully-fledged U.S. Army installation, but its charter

remains to support a predominantly non-Army joint and interagency community. That’s the mission that’s been assigned us by the Army.”

The Army-minority nature of the Brussels community is not always fully recognized. “We have some 119 Soldiers stationed in Brussels and 268 members of the other U.S. Armed Forces,” he noted. “And the active duty component is outnumbered by a large civilian component – about 600 – drawn from a variety of U.S. government agencies.”

The inter-agency and joint flavors of the Brussels community start from the top. The U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, the Honorable Ivo Daalder, is the only U.S. ambassador in the world who reports to two different Cabinet secretaries, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

The U.S. Mission to NATO which he heads reflects that inter-agency composition, with more than half of its billets being funded and manned by the DoD.

Similarly, the senior U.S. military officer in Brussels and U.S. Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee is currently Navy Vice Adm. William Sullivan, who presides over a joint uniformed staff. This demography is unusual for a typical Army installation.

“We don’t think it makes us in any way special,” explained garrison commander, Lt. Col. Darin Conkright, “but it is the reality we operate in, the job the Army has given us.”

USAG Brussels, in its entirety, consists of 31 Soldiers, 57 U.S. civilians and 85 Host Nation civilians. It is the only U.S. military command in Brussels.

“We provide our community with the infrastructure and quality of support it needs in order to perform the nation’s business in Brussels. We’re proud to fly the Army’s banner in this joint, multi-agency community,” said Conkright.

Conkright sees no conflict between running an Army gar-

rrison and serving a predominantly non-Army community. “First off, we do have a substantial Army presence in Brussels. When it comes to the 119 Soldiers stationed in Brussels and their families, our goal is to make their assignment here the best one they will know, quality-of-life wise, in the Army,” he said. “But we’re not in a position to treat the rest of our community as second-class citizens. We’re pleased to extend to all Brussels community members, regardless of service or agency affiliation, the same high standard of service enjoyed by our Soldiers and their families.”

That net result is a community that receives seamless support. The garrison’s efforts in that direction were recognized by the 2008 Secretary of the Army Superior Quality of Life Award in the small installation category.

“Our overall goal is to bring our community together as one. As an Army garrison, we’re proud of our success in routinely making that happen” said Conkright.

# Benelux Civilians

## Support Joint Mission in Vital Roles

By Rachel Parks ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs

**Within the USAG Benelux there are many civilians who work tirelessly within both the U.S. and international communities to facilitate training, education and medical care among other things. Due to the close ties between SHAPE and the USAG Benelux, a number of civilians find themselves in a variety of joint roles, forging a link between military members from around the world.**

The true spirit of partnership and alliance building within the USAG Benelux community can be seen at a seemingly modest place, the SHAPE American High School. The school is a traditional American high school, complete with the usual classes and extracurricular activities, but it also hosts a large population of international students. The teachers and administrators in the American school system are a prime example of civilians who work in a joint and multi-national environment.

Walking through the hallways of the SHAPE American High School, one can hear an astounding mix of languages. The school is open to any school-age dependents of military or civilian personnel assigned to SHAPE. Within the American High School, slightly less than 50 percent of the students are non-American according to school registrar Leslie England.

Language Arts department chair, Michael Novak said that there are both challenges and rewards to working in a joint environment. "There is a challenge that comes with teaching a mix of students. I teach senior British literature to a class that has twelve different nations repre-

sented. Because of that you're missing some of that common ground that you might have in a standard American high school, but it also enhances the learning environment by bringing different viewpoints. It's amazing to see that tolerance and acceptance," he said with pride.

Novak said that the friendships formed within the classroom between teens from different nations is exciting but the links formed between civilian educators and the children of military and civilian employees from around the world is truly striking.

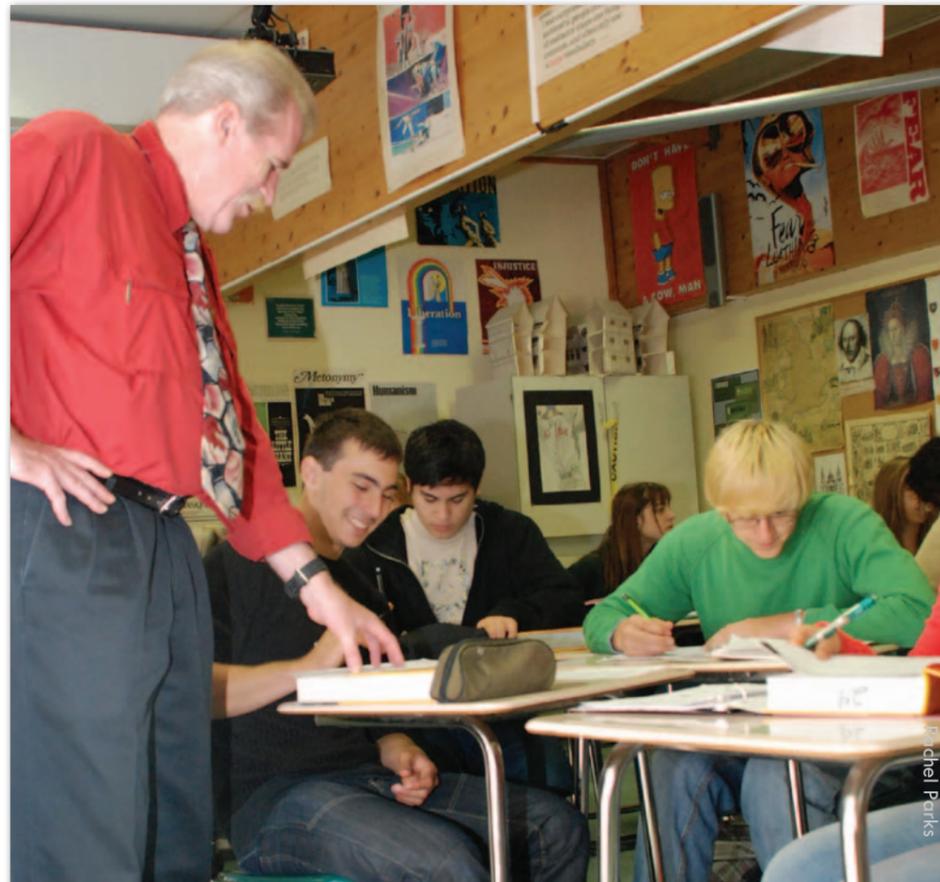
"These young men and women always come back to visit this school. We used to have two kids from Poland who would come visit their teachers after they graduated by taking an 18-hour bus ride one way. They would stay for a few days and then take the 18-hour bus ride home," explained Novak.

He also touched on the impact that civilians within the school system have on shaping the destinies of NATO countries around the world.

"These kids are essentially ambassadors. They are leaders when they go back to their home countries or their own militaries," he added.

Joanna Yamamoto, the 11th and 12th grade guidance counselor and Department of Defense Education Activity civilian said that watching the international students learn more about the cultures of their fellow students, as well as seeing them immerse themselves in the culture of an American school system is always inspiring.

Michael Novak, who has been teaching at SHAPE for 28 years, helps out Rafail Daskalakis, a student from Greece, in his senior English class. The class is made up of teens from a variety of nations including the U.S., Spain, Greece and Slovakia.



The new multi-story Military Operations in Urban Terrain building at the Alliance Home Station Training Area on Chièvres Air Base is visible on protective glasses worn by Blaine Curtis, chief, Training Support Center, USAG Benelux. TSC manages the training area that is used by numerous military and community agencies in the region.

"We all love to see the new international students start in the fall. And I love seeing them at special events that are typically American like homecoming, graduation or prom. They always say that they've seen those things on TV but now they get to live it," she said with a smile.

**England, Novak and Yamamoto all stressed that the role civilians play in shaping the educational experiences for children of Alliance members is not only rewarding for them, but is a way of building bridges with the members of the militaries from around the world.**

And the experience is often so rewarding for the teaching staff and administrators that some have been a part of the SHAPE school system for a lengthy amount of time.

The education field is not the only place within the Benelux and NATO where civilians are filling in as the liaison between different nations or a number of military services.

An equally important mission within the Benelux falls to the Training Support Center staff, who keep American Servicemembers supplied with the space and supplies for mission critical training. The staff also facilitates training between Belgian and other inter-

national entities on Chièvres Air Base.

"There's going to be a Belgian police exercise on the air base in October, this is actually the third time we've done this, I believe," explained Blaine Curtis, the chief of the TSC Benelux. "It's going to be simulated riot control for the Tournai police district. There really is a lot of partnership training that takes place here."

Within the last few months, the TSC has provided a place for American Soldiers and Airmen to train with the Belgian 1st Field Artillery Regiment, as well as members of the SHAPE International Military Police and Soldiers from USAG Brussels and USAG Schin-nen. Curtis said there are also plans in the works to create an agreement that allows members of the German military to use the training area and agreements with other NATO partnership countries may not be too far down the road.

"As a civilian, that's what my career has been, training for Soldiers," he stated firmly.

Curtis said due to the unique nature of having U.S. Servicemembers side-by-side with international Servicemem-bers gives the USAG Benelux a chance to take part in something special. ▶▶▶

# euReport

Email photos to [dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil](mailto:dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil), along with the full names, location and date the picture was taken. Select pictures will be printed in the Edge and your local garrison publications.

“You train the way you fight. With Afghanistan being the main mission of both NATO and U.S. forces, you have to be able to do combined operations. You need to be able to work with Servicemembers from the Alliance. I think, here, we see that partnership more than some other places around USAREUR,” said Curtis, as he explained why it is so vital for civilians to be able to facilitate the exchange of information and training in an international environment.

Alliance support takes place in more ways throughout the local area. A prime location of American and Belgian civilians supporting U.S. and international entities, including NATO, can be found in Hangar 6 on Chièvres Air Base, in the USAG Benelux Consolidated Maintenance Center. Chief of the maintenance division, Jeff Shriver, explained what his office does to offer behind the scenes support that may not always be glamorous but is always appreciated.

The CMC provides shop and garage services, among other things, for a large customer base within the Benelux footprint. This not only includes supporting the U.S. Army entities but the U.S. Air Force and groups within NATO.

**The CMC has taken on varied tasks over the last year, including refurbishing both Army and Air Force tactical and maintenance vehicles and providing basic support to a fleet of special cars that can be used on various NATO missions.**

“Those vehicle repairs can be difficult, not all the vehicles we see are what could be described as normal cars and that can take a lot of patience and TLC when the staff is working on those,” said Shriver, as he explained some of what his shop undertakes. The civilian employees have also partnered with some members of the Air Force stationed at Chièvres to increase their knowledge of various machinery, which Shriver said will come in handy in the coming months as civilian CMC employees expand their job duties to include standard maintenance of generators spread around throughout the various military locations in the local area.

“All the things these civilians do for the whole community, no one can do that alone. It’s a team effort and I’m really pleased with what we offer in the Benelux,” said Shriver, as he listed a laundry list of jobs civilians and contractors fill in the Benelux to support and partner with joint agencies as well as multiple nations.

Regardless of the job title that’s held, whether it is educating, training or supporting the missions of the various American and international entities in the Benelux area, civilians will continue to support the growth and progress of partnerships and alliances within the dynamic environment.



Brandon Howard (seated) and Luis Velez (left), from the Benelux Training Support Center, demonstrate of a mock improvised explosive device to a Belgian Federal Police team at the Alliance Home Station Training Area on Chièvres Air Base.



For the past three years, the USAG Benelux Consolidated Maintenance Center has received the Runner-Up IMCOM-Europe Army Award for Maintenance Excellence for a small TDA.



**Rob Mackson & Marcel Van der Zanden**  
Winners of Commander’s Fitness Initiative  
USAG Schinnen, The Netherlands  
Summer 2009



**Col. James Drago & the 5th Fusiliers Battalion**  
Memorial Day Celebration  
Bastogne, Belgium  
29 MAY 2009



**USAG Schinnen Play Group**  
Tuesday Play Morning  
USAG Schinnen, The Netherlands  
27 AUG 2009



**AAFES Concessionaries**  
Welcoming new paving stones outside their  
Tailor Shop, Barber, Gift Shop, Cars sales  
and Sixt Rental shops  
USAG Schinnen, The Netherlands  
15 July 2009

# Tri-Border

By Sarah J. Schmidt ◀ USAG Schinnen Public Affairs



# BOSS

## Wins Best Program Worldwide

For the second consecutive year, USAG Schinnen's BOSS program has received top recognition, winning the highest honor in its category this year for best installation program worldwide. The announcement came during ceremonies at the BOSS worldwide conference, held at the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Va., during the second week of August.

BOSS, which stands for Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, focuses on quality of life, recreation and leisure, and community service opportunities for single Soldiers. Three members of the Schinnen BOSS team, plus Schinnen's Command Sgt. Maj., Mary Brown, attended the conference.

"I'm seeing a high level of motivation among our single Soldiers, and we're seeing more people get involved," Brown said. "This award means that all the hard work and dedication we're putting into the BOSS program is paying off."

Last year, Schinnen's BOSS program was recognized with the best president's award. "This year's award is even more exciting," said BOSS President, Sgt. First Class Mikki King, "because it recognizes the teamwork that went into planning and executing all our events throughout the year."

Selection for the Best Installation Award was based on the three core components of BOSS: quality of life, recreation and leisure, and community service. To compete, each garrison submitted a video, a static display board and a continuity book that highlighted activities during the past year. The winner was chosen for best exemplifying the three core components of the BOSS program.

Schinnen's BOSS program is unique in that it attracts single Soldiers and Airmen from around the Tri-Border area, crossing international borders and military services. Most BOSS programs serve only one installation and rarely include both Soldiers and Airmen. King thinks the cross-border, cross-services nature of Schinnen's BOSS program adds to its strength. She should know. King is, herself, assigned to JFC Brunssum, about 20 minutes from Schinnen.



Mark Boggus, USAG Schinnen DFMWR

▲ Members of USAG Schinnen's BOSS program operate the dunk booth at this year's Tri-Border AmericaFest, one of the many activities that put BOSS out front as the best installation program worldwide.

▶ Sgt. Sasha Sween, a member of USAG Schinnen's BOSS program assigned to the Army Rapid Reaction Corps in Rheindahlen, Germany, attends to eager young customers at the egg decorating booth that BOSS operated during the Tri-Border Easter Egg Hunt in April.

"Because we have Servicemembers from JFC, Geilenkirchen and Schinnen, we're able to draw on a lot of talent," King explained. That's what enabled the BOSS program to sponsor so many popular activities this year, such as the dunk booth at AmericaFest, she pointed out. Other favorites, according to King, were trips to local sporting and sightseeing locations, such as Snowworld and Bruges, Belgium.

During the national conference, BOSS members attended nearly 50 educational seminars on marketing, budgeting and leadership. "BOSS has been around for 20 years," King said, "but to keep it fresh, we've got to look at new and innovative ideas every year and think creatively about how we serve single Soldiers. That's why a conference like this is so helpful."

King and the other BOSS team members picked up many ideas at the conference, which they hope to implement this coming year. "Our goal is to plan a year exciting enough to get ourselves back on that stage again next year, bringing home another award to share with our single Soldiers and Airmen," she said.

Other BOSS programs in Europe also picked up several awards. USAG Schweinfurt and Camp Darby, Italy, won first and second place, respectively, for the best event in the extra small installation category, and USAG Grafenwoehr won in the large installation category. Grafenwoehr also took second place for the best large installation award.



Sarah J. Schmidt

# MILITARY POLICE Joint Competition

By **Christie Vanover** ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs

Police jurisdiction at each garrison in the Benelux is much more complex than your average city in the States. At Chièvres, for example, a single incident on post could involve the Chièvres Military Police, the Belgian Federal Police and Securitas. And, at SHAPE, an incident could involve police officers from a number of NATO nations.

It's because of this complexity that the USAG Benelux hosted and organized a Top Gun Competition this summer.

"We wanted to help build camaraderie," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Lowe, the noncommissioned officer in charge of organizing the event.

"There are so many of us in a small area," added Lt. Col. Keith Forsyth, the USAG Benelux provost marshal. "We wanted to see who the other law enforcement officers are in our community and let you know we're here to support you with whatever we have."

The competition was made up of teams from SHAPE, Chièvres, Brussels, Schinnen and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe's Personal Security Detachment, which included members of the Air Force.

Each team competed in three rounds, using the U.S. Army's M9 Beretta, a 9-mm pistol. Because the weapon was new to some of the international Soldiers, Lowe said the Chièvres MPs gave them each a block of instruction before the competition began.

Cpl. Daniel Bond, from the United Kingdom, said this was the first time he shot an M9. "It was a lot better than our weapon," he said. "It's more accurate, and the trigger was easy on the finger."

That lack of familiarity didn't appear to be a hindrance though. The SHAPE team, made up of an international blend of police officers, advanced to the final round. Bond attributed their success to the training he receives from his own Army.

"We were representing the Supreme Headquarters Alliance, so we had a lot of responsibility on our shoulders," added his teammate Greek Master Sgt. Evangelos Trasanis.

Trasanis said at SHAPE, he's used to working with

Americans, but their primary mission is with NATO. "Now, we work together with Americans who work for the Army," he said referring to the MPs at Chièvres Garrison, USAG Brussels and USAG Schinnen.

The three rounds of the single elimination tournament included shooting at a regular target, shooting a paper plate and accuracy during a timed event.

During the timed event, competitors had five magazines with five rounds in each magazine. They had five seconds to shoot off five rounds and five seconds to reload. In total it was a 45-second round at 25 meters.

"That's kind of a difficult task," said Lowe. "We made it just difficult enough to have some good competition."

"There was some good shooting," he added. "There were some very good shooters today."

Spc. Michael Speagle, a Chièvres MP, was one who stood out. He won the "Smokin' Ace" and was named the top shooter.

He said he was a civilian police officer before joining the Army and was also a pistol champion back home in Hickory, N.C.

"I had a lot of training as a police officer," said Speagle, who just finished working a night shift before coming to the competition. He said that he recently went through civilian training with the Army that involved one-handed reloads, which helped him in round three. "That was still fresh with me."

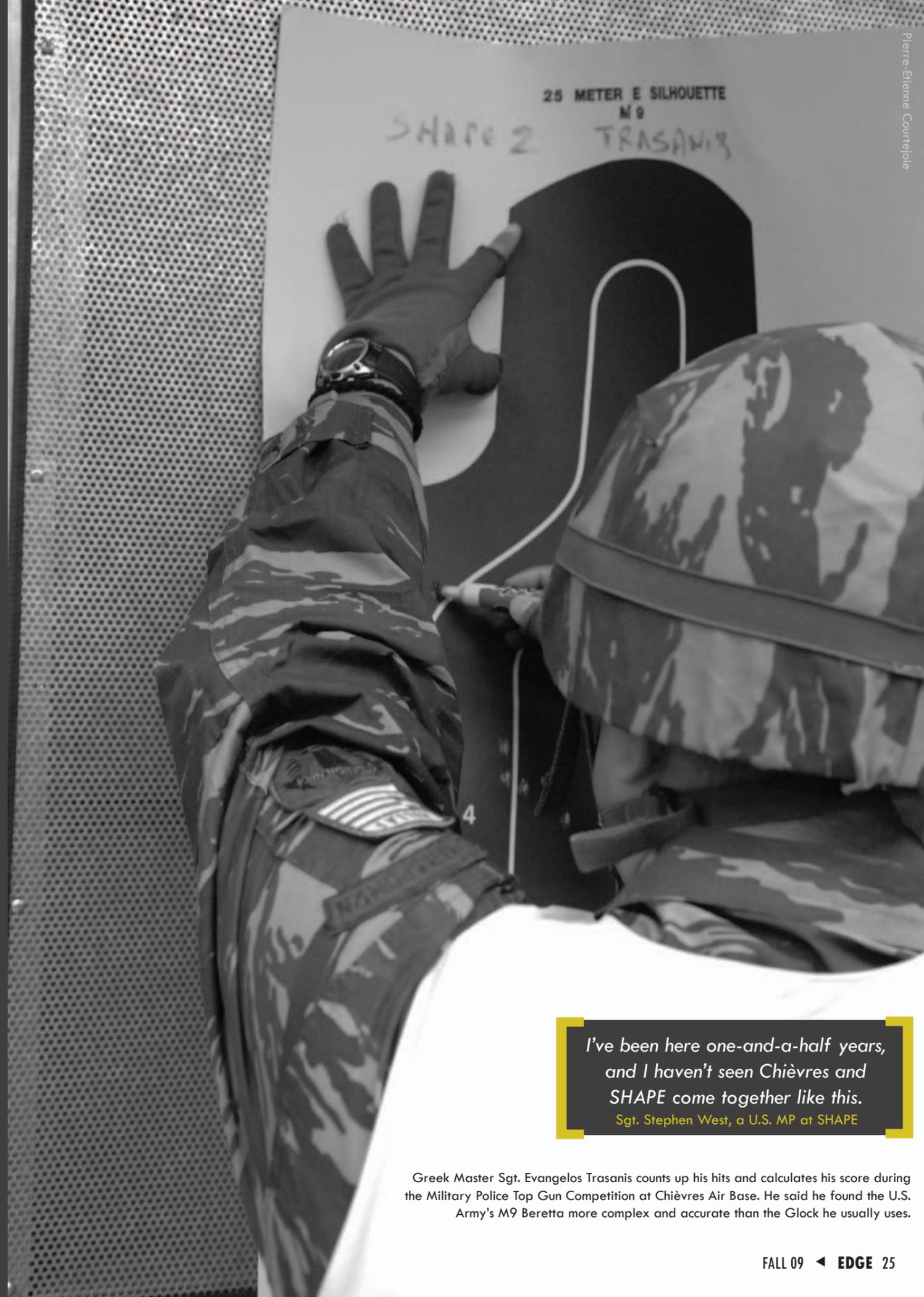
In the end, Speagle's team of Chièvres Garrison MPs took the title of Top Gun, with a score of 538. Bond's SHAPE team came in a close second with a score of 507.

Sgt. Stephen West, a U.S. MP on Bond's team enjoyed the competition.

"I've been here one-and-a-half years, and I haven't seen Chièvres and SHAPE come together like this. It's good to form a bond together," he said.

Lowe said they plan to make this an annual event.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to go through steps to get the Federal Police and Securitas involved next year," he said. "It's important to be in good spirits with our host nations."



Pierre-Etienne Courtejoie

*I've been here one-and-a-half years, and I haven't seen Chièvres and SHAPE come together like this.*

*Sgt. Stephen West, a U.S. MP at SHAPE*

Greek Master Sgt. Evangelos Trasanis counts up his hits and calculates his score during the Military Police Top Gun Competition at Chièvres Air Base. He said he found the U.S. Army's M9 Beretta more complex and accurate than the Glock he usually uses.

# Schinnen Partnership PRODUCES Environmental Benefits

By Sarah J. Schmidt ◀ USAG Schinnen Public Affairs

Partnership opportunities at military installations often run the gamut of professional connections between civilian, military and host nation partners. At USAG Schinnen in the Netherlands, a long-standing partnership with the Dutch Environmental Protection Agency (known as VROM), has enabled the garrison's Environmental Division to fulfill key regulatory mandates with a comprehensive annual report, rather than multiple inspections. A special permit VROM issued to USAG Schinnen in 2000, formalized the annual reporting requirement. This constructive cooperation has led to fewer inspections and reduced delays in construction procedures.

"It's been an extremely cooperative and productive relationship," said Hans Verwasch, Schinnen's Environmental Division Chief. So productive, in fact, that Schinnen conducted its second survey last year to identify threatened and endangered species (TES) on the garrison.

Regional authorities were pleased to learn of the study and quickly requested copies, Verwasch said. "Of course, we're happy to know they were interested in our work," Verwasch said, "because it will help Province Limburg create a more complete TES map of this whole area."

The survey found a surprising number of TES on Schinnen, with the highest concentrations at the Schinnen Pond (located on the east side of the garrison), the Duck Pond (in front of the headquarters building) and the Patrol Road (which runs along the back perimeter). For such a small installation – 12.67 hectares – the survey revealed an amazing number of flora and fauna: 387 plant species and 369 different kinds of creatures, including bats, newts and dragon flies.

Of those identified, 61 species are legally protected under Dutch environmental law because of their endangered status. An additional 63 species are "red listed" in Germany or the Netherlands, meaning they are threatened or rare.

"Many people think that only highly protected areas such as designated nature protection areas provide habitats for endangered species," Verwasch noted. "But this is not the case. Our community at USAG Schinnen also contributes to the conservation of various species by conserving these valuable habitats."

The survey, conducted by the commercial contractor AMEC, used various methods to identify flora and fauna. For example, the bat population was evaluated using a bat detector, headphones and voice recorders. The

recorded ultrasonic signals were analyzed using signal conversion software.

"That was fairly high-tech," Verwasch explained, "but other, less-technical methods were used for different species." The 11 species of dragon and damselflies, for example, were all identified after capture in a sweeping net. Amphibians were surveyed visually during the day and at night by brightly illuminating the shore areas of the ponds. Live traps were set overnight. Nothing was harmed or damaged during the identification process, according to Verwasch. "That would have defeated the purpose of the survey," he stressed.

Because Schinnen already maintains high environmental standards, the survey results did not change any current operations. Verwasch says the Environmental Division hopes to improve existing conditions that foster greater numbers and diversity of species in the future. "It's just something that a good partner would do," he said.

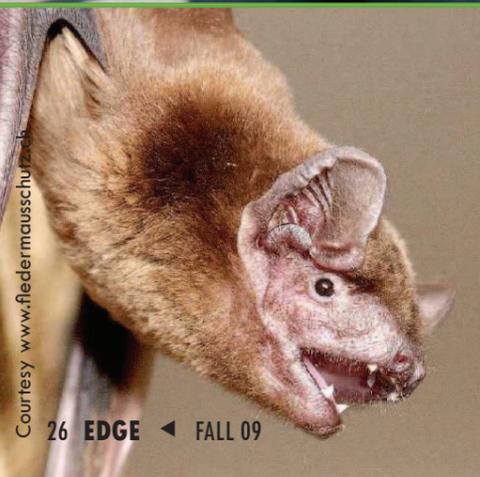
Schinnen's Environmental Division also partners with the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (known as LNV in Dutch) on a variety of environmental actions. Permits are required any time an environmental action is undertaken, such as planting or cutting trees or introducing certain fish species into the Schinnen Pond. Thanks to cooperation between the Ministry and Schinnen officials, advance consultations on all these planned actions are easily arranged, which streamlines the permit process, Verwasch said.

"Partnering with our local, regional and national host nation authorities is a way of business here at USAG Schinnen," Verwasch said. "As the only U.S. installation in the Netherlands, this just makes sense as a way to do business but also as a way to be a good neighbor, too."

[Mimamsa Dahman, USAG Schinnen Environmental Division, contributed substantial research to this story]



Sarah J. Schmidt



**Top:** Chris Binje and Hans Verwasch, of Schinnen's Environmental Division take water samples from the Schinnen Pond. The wetlands habitat is home to more than 60 endangered species.

**Left:** The Grosse Abendsegler is one of the largest bats in Europe. A number of these bats make their homes in the forested areas on USAG Schinnen. During the winter months, they hibernate in the trees in holes left by woodpeckers.

**Right:** The Smooth Newt lives in and around the Schinnen Pond. Once so prolific throughout Europe that it was also known as the Common Newt, its dwindling population now places it on Dutch and German protected species lists.



Courtesy AMEC

# Benelux Family Team Building Skills Help NATO partners

By Kevin Downey ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs

Army Community Services officials at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux are partnering with NATO allies on the home front, offering their military family team building tools to the international community on SHAPE. The volunteer-led Armed Forces Team Building program teaches leadership and developmental skills – such as communication, time management and problem solving techniques – to help strengthen family wellbeing.



Army Family Team Building Master Trainer Comel Rooms (second from left) demonstrates the program's structure using a visual aid with Danielle Greene (far left), Deanna Beckwith (second from right) and Elisa Pellegrini (far right).

To find out about training at any of the garrisons in the Benelux call DSN 423-5324 or CIV 032-65-44-5324.

“We’re opening AFTB up to our entire NATO family to build strong partnerships within our international community,” AFTB Master Trainer Comel Rooms said.

While AFTB was founded by Army spouses, the program’s applications go beyond military branch and country specific boundaries, according to Rooms.

“Military life has its own unique stressors on families, no matter what branch of service or country you’re from,” Rooms said. “Strong families are the pillar of support behind strong Servicemembers, and this is true regardless of nationality. The entire international community benefits from this program. We invite all spouses in the international NATO community and their Servicemembers and [Defense Department] civilians to take our classes.”



USAG Benelux Army Community Services officials are offering their military family team building tools to the international community on SHAPE.

Italian-born Elisa Pellegrini said she believes the AFTB classes can benefit anyone regardless of cultural background and military affiliation.

“I benefited from the program because it allowed me to reconcile some fundamental differences existing between my own and the Army and NATO cultures,” she said. “I become more successful at understanding people from different cultural backgrounds – and also from other military branches – and gained insight about how our local family support system works.”

Pellegrini, a naturalized American citizen and Air Force spouse, said she joined the program after having difficulty finding employment in a career field in which she was interested when she first moved here.

“I thought taking some AFTB classes would allow me to enhance my leadership, team-working and communication skills – all critical skills in today’s job market in any country,” she said. “After attending the AFTB [training classes], I discovered that AFTB was more than a mere series of self-contained personal development classes. It provided us, the students, with a broad range of tools that could help us understand ourselves better, become more resilient and self-reliant, and help others do the same for themselves.”

Pellegrini also said the classes are a great opportunity for people to network, meet new people and be exposed to people from different cultural backgrounds.

Rooms said the program’s international outreach effort is starting to take root, with three class participants and one volunteer instructor having no affiliation to the U.S. So far, military spouses from Great Britain, Romania and Italy are participating.

The training consists of three levels, according to Rooms. Level one focuses on the basic skills and knowledge needed to adjust to military life. Level two teaches personal skills and level three develops leadership skills within the participant.

“We all can benefit from learning these skills,” said Rooms. “We all have different areas in our lives where we are leaders – whether it’s within the family, community or at work.”

Coping with deployments, handling personal conflict, improving communication, managing stress and creative problem solving are needed skills in any community, Rooms said, especially in an international military environment.

“Military life is stressful,” Rooms added, “but our partnership to strengthen the home front is one way our NATO community is rallying together for each family’s well being.”

# Elmo Visits U.S. Base

## International military families reap benefits

By Kevin Downey ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs



**Above:** While wearing an Elmo hat, Nicholas Hare, 5, watches Elmo and friends. Hare's father, Brett Hare, is a civilian NATO employee.

**Opposite Top:** Francesca Gemmano, 6, Jackson Miller, 5, and Molly Waetzel, 6, react as Elmo comes on stage.

**Opposite Bottom:** Elmo and Grover greet young fans in the audience.

**Below:** Cookie Monster, Zoe, Elmo, Grover and Rosita entertain a huge international crowd at Chièvres Air Base. The Sesame Street® Muppets are touring Europe to help military families cope with deployments.

Elmo's dad is downrange again, a shared reality for children of both U.S. and international Servicemembers in the Benelux community as NATO allies continue engagements in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

Lovable Sesame Street® Muppets Grover, Cookie Monster, Zoe and Rosita, joined Elmo on Chièvres Air Base Sept. 13 to support U.S. and NATO military families, experiencing the effects of long or multiple deployments or combat-related stress symptoms and injuries.

The show was open to all SHAPE ID cardholders, allowing the international community a first-hand account of award-winning American educational entertainment for children geared toward common military experiences.

"It's a sunny day today, but sometimes Elmo has a not-so-sunny day, like when Daddy has to go away," the bright red, furry Muppet said while facing the mesmerized young audience.

"Do you ever feel sad when you miss your mommy or your daddy?" he asked.

It's a part of life to which many children of military families from any nation can relate, said Lynne Chwatsky, senior director of Sesame Workshop®, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street®.

"We want to support our military children all over the world," she said. "Sesame knows that it's not just the Servicemember who serves. The entire family serves,

and we want to provide support to the entire family."

The Sesame Street® USO Experience for Military Families is touring 20 U.S. military installations in the U.K., Europe, Hawaii and Alaska September through mid-December. The United Service Organization tour is part of Sesame Workshop's® "Talk, Listen, Connect" initiative, an outreach program for military families with young children between the ages of two and five.

Tuncer Tekin, a member of the Turkish Air Force equivalent in rank to a U.S. senior master sergeant, said Muppets like Elmo had helped his children stay busy during his deployments to Kosovo and Italy.

"It helps my children when I'm away," the SHAPE Club night manager said. "It takes their mind off long absences and helps them deal with the separation."

Sesame Street® organizers aim for children to relate with Elmo's emotions and cope with those feelings in a similar fashion, Chwatsky said. During the performance, three-year-old Elmo shares his personal experience with the audience.

"Elmo was very scared, worried and upset when his daddy had to go away for a long time for an important job," Chwatsky explained. "He didn't know what to say to his daddy or how to act. However, thanks to talking with his friends on Sesame Street®, and his mommy and daddy, Elmo felt a lot better and realized

that he can still stay connected to his daddy even when he's so far away.

"It is Sesame Street's® hope that children will identify with Elmo's emotions," she continued, "yet model this behavior of talking with their parents about their feelings and coming up with strategies for staying connected through challenging times including long times apart."

Slovenian Soldiers Marko Pintar and his wife Natasha brought their 2-year-old daughter Mia to see Elmo and the gang perform live, after months of watching Elmo on the video sharing Web site youtube.com. Both husband and wife are assigned to SHAPE and are equivalent to the U.S. rank of sergeant first class.

"Elmo is famous in Slovenia," said Marko, who deployed to Bosnia last year. "We normally watch him on YouTube to learn English, and her ABC's. It's good entertainment for kids, it makes them think for themselves and keeps them engaged. I am grateful for her to have this opportunity to see Elmo in person."

U.S. Army Sgt. Jeffery Gunderson took his two children – 5-year-old Kristina and 2-year-old Nathan – to the performance because of his own childhood memories of the show.

"I grew-up on Sesame Street® and I wanted the same for my children," Gunderson said. "It's quality entertainment for children, and I wanted my children to see the live performance."

Pierpaolo Corbi, an Italian military policeman on SHAPE, also wanted his 21-month-old son who shares his name to see the lively dance routines and familiar songs of the gang from 123 Sesame Street®, which he said is highly regarded in his home country.

"The show is very attractive to kids and gets them interacting with the performance," he said. "It's easy to see this program is very good to help children deal with normal military life."

He said he brought his son to the performance just to have fun with Elmo and the other military children on a U.S. installation.

"Sesame Workshop® is proud of its ongoing commitment to serving the needs of military families, and we are thrilled to partner with our good



friends at the USO to bring Elmo and all of his friends to military families overseas," said Gary E. Knell, Sesame Workshop's® president and chief executive officer. "This is our humble way of saying thank you to all the moms and dads in our armed forces for their commitment to all of us."

After a frenzy near the front row, caused by the Sesame Street® gang doling out hugs to the children in the audience, Elmo said goodbye to the children by reminding them how proud he is when each child contributes to the overall wellbeing of the family.

"Elmo is proud of you and thanks you for all that you do for Elmo, his family and his friends on Sesame Street®," he said.

"Elmo loves you," he said in his signature high-pitched garble, repeating a phrase so familiar to American families.

[www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc)





Gemeente Schinnen



Community Partners  
Since 1969

# Partnership & Peace Celebrating Across Generations

By Tom Budzyna ◀ USAG Schinnen Public Affairs

[Special thanks to H.P. Hermans, Jr., physician, who adapted the diary of his father H.J. Hermans, Sr., in 1994; to Jos Schoonbroodt, a member of the Schinnen Historical Society, who provided access to the diary; and to Rita Hoefnagels and Gaby Haas for translation support.]

Seventy years ago, Schinnen built a chapel dedicated to peace on top of a rugged hill in the Town of Schinnen. With a Second World War threatening and amid uncertain times, great effort was undertaken by the citizens of Schinnen to muster resources and prepare the site on a hard-to-reach hill with thick trees and bushes that had to be cleared. The peace chapel was consecrated as the Chapel of Our Lady June 16, 1939. May 10, 1940, the Netherlands was invaded – World War II was underway. Today, the Municipality of Schinnen and the Chapel is in a different world...

Schinnen's neighbor in Brunssum is host to Joint Forces Command – a NATO command that supports International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. NATO is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year and is comprised of 28 independent nations and 22 partner nations. And, this year the U.S. Army marks the 40th Anniversary of USAG Schinnen's presence in the Town of Schinnen.

In 1967, after France withdrew from the military structure of NATO, the Army moved from its locations in Fontainebleau, France, to towns in Brunssum, Landgraaf, Treebeek and Heerlen, The Netherlands. In 1969, the Army formally established its presence on the Emma Mine Complex's Shaft IV in Schinnen.

Today, after a few name changes and reorganizations, U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen provides base operations support to personnel serving in international military communities across northern Germany, eastern Belgium and the Netherlands from its Dutch home in the Municipality of Schinnen.

It is an annual tradition for citizens in Schinnen to walk in a procession from the town's main church to the Chapel of Our Lady, and this year's procession was special for several reasons. The Chapel was restored in 1989 and rededicated Sept. 19, 2009 to mark its 70th Anniversary, which coincided with the 450th Anniversary of the Bishopric and the 65th Anniversary of the Town's Liberation by U.S. forces in 1944. These anniversaries combine to make a perfect opportunity to celebrate – and for an entire weekend, Schinnen did.



Tom Budzyna

This archway is the beginning of a rugged set of stairs that leads to the Chapel of Our Lady, which was consecrated in 1939 and stood in times of peace from Sept. 1944 to present day. Each year, citizens from the Municipality of Schinnen lead a procession to the chapel from the main church.

## Looking Back

H.J. Hermans, a senior physician living in Schinnen wrote in his diary Sept. 18, 1944, "We saw the American infantry walking through the streets; these soldiers seem very relaxed, some of them even took some time to come into our living room to smoke a cigarette with us. They were simple, nice, cheerful guys. Upon leaving they greeted us with their index finger and middle finger raised: the V-sign for vrijheid (freedom)."

Hermans' diary entry for that day ends, "At 6 p.m. the brass band, which has dug up the brass (instruments) they put in hiding, go to the Chapel of Our Lady and then walks round the village."

"Since that day (Sept. 18), the Town of Schinnen and the Chapel of Our Lady has known peace, a very special thing for this part of Europe," said Wilfried Dabekaussen, the Public Affairs director for the Municipality of Schinnen in an interview Sept. 10, 2009.

Sept. 18, 2009, became a the perfect day for USAG Schinnen and the Municipality of Schinnen to co-host a joint reception at the Schinnen Town Hall where dignitaries and invited guests of the Town of Schinnen, the local Church and USAG Schinnen came together for an evening of camaraderie, reflection and celebration.

"The Chapel of Our Lady is a special place. People from the entire municipality go there to simply be there. It's a beautiful place where one can bring their mind to focus on essential things. There is also a feeling that even though we have enjoyed 65 years of peace, we, knowing that the Dutch Army has also sacrificed Soldiers in NATO operations, that there still is not enough peace in this world," Dabekaussen said.

During the height of the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s, the Army base in Schinnen assisted with the NATO Alliances "Return of Forces to Germany", or "REFORGER." This exercise, which took place every two years from 1969 to 1993, was a way to show Russia that the NATO Allies were determined



© Bouniers

Scenes like this one in Oirsbeek, a town in the Municipality of Schinnen today, took place in Schinnen and Oirsbeek Sept. 18, 1944 to welcome U.S. forces.

to keep Western Europe free. During the Gulf War in 1992, the logistics of bringing forces into Europe was reversed as U.S. forces deployed from Europe through ports in the Netherlands to deploy to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in Southwest Asia.

Through these times, periodic friendship fests between U.S. military bases and local communities were common, and then the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 changed all that. Security measures tightened and living in such an open atmosphere changed. USAG Schinnen's celebration Sept. 19, 2009, was the chance to once again open the doors of friendship and celebrate.

Similar to a humble act taken Sept. 19, 1944, as Hermans wrote in his diary for that day: "Together with Jan, Hub and Henri, I go pick up my car that I put in hiding. For one month it stood underneath a large heap of straw in a barn at Castle Terborgh. In the courtyard I get red American fuel from the resistance. The battery is flat. The car is pulled by a horse and after a few moments later we can start the car for a short drive through the village – now decorated with orange sashes." ▶▶▶

◀ 1969 ▼ 2009



U.S. Army File Photo

**The Old Gate:** In a photo taken in 1969 (or soon after), a Soldier waves someone into visit the headquarters of the U.S. Army Military Community, The Netherlands



Tom Budzyna

**The New Gate:** With the more sophisticated array of force protection measures left out of this photo, this is the entrance to the headquarters of USAG Schinnen today.

# The 40th Anniversary

By Sept. 19, 1944, as revealed in Hermans' diary, all the villages that comprise today's Municipality of Schinnen – Sweikhuizen, Amstenrade, Doenrade, Puth, Oirsbeek and Schinnen – were greeting U.S. Soldiers from the 30th "Old Hickory" Division as they made their way toward the German border. The northern part of the Netherlands would suffer a terrible, deadly famine through the winter until Victory in Europe was proclaimed in May 1945. Peace was no longer distant for Schinnen. The town was liberated exclusively by U.S. forces in September 1944.

"We started planning our 40th Celebration over a year ago, but the reception on Sept. 18 was the easy part. The challenge was coordinating an entire weekend of festivities. Both the town and the garrison worked very hard," said Rita Hoefnagels, Community Relations specialist for USAG Schinnen.

"We announced the day of our 40th celebration to the public in August, and over 200 responded in two weeks. By the Sept. 14 deadline we had over 800. Considering that we already expected 1,200 or more U.S. and NATO personnel to join us, having over 2,000 guests on our small base is quite a few," said Hoefnagels.

USAG Schinnen put on a big show. Four bands provided musical entertainment. Army Entertainment and Armed Forces Entertainment provided musical talent. There was a two-hour America Gospel Concert, and the evening's feature band was the group Ember. In between, Task Force X, a band comprised of Soldiers from NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, and the Royal Dutch Army Brass band of the National Reserves entertained the crowds. WWII re-enactors from Belgium and Heerlen displayed vintage vehicles and equipment and there were more than 25 vendors.

"There was so much activity both on and off the base. The Town of Schinnen's youth group arranged several music concerts that performed Sept. 19 and 20 and held a walk around the town Sept. 19 that led participants to historical landmarks in Schinnen, memorials sites and past the famous Alfa Brewery. The walk ended at the front gate of the base where they could immediately join the celebration on the base and discover one of the special displays we made – a mini-museum of the Emma Mine," Hoefnagels said.

"We contacted the National Mining Museum in Heerlen, collected old photographs of the base, and then transformed the headquarters foyer. We wore uniforms from post WWII, uniforms typical of 1969, and displayed photos and artifacts to depict the transformation of the mining facility into the Army base that it is today," said Kathy Foley, Workforce Development coordinator for USAG Schinnen.

Many locals still refer to the site of USAG Schinnen as Shaft IV of the Old Emma Mine complex. Construction of Shaft IV took place 1946 to 1956 and coal production stopped in 1965, when natural gas was discovered in other parts of the Netherlands. The Emma mine employed 10,000 workers, 6,000 of whom worked underground. More than 45,000 workers and families were affected by the closure of the mine.

Where the Schinnen Post Exchange is today, miners once changed shifts, more than 230 at a time three times a day, and crossed a bridge to be lowered into the shaft. From there, they would travel underground to either mine coal or deliver filler stones to replace what had been taken. Shaft IV was also designed to provide ventilation to the entire Emma Mine complex that extended over an area of 42,423 acres, including Hoensbroek to Hoensbroek Castle to the south, then westwards to the villages Nuth and Schinnen and northeastward to the villages Puth and Oirsbeek.

"The entire town of Puth, next to Hoensbroek, is held up today by a pedestal of filler stones, and there are seven such pillars under the ground in this region," Hoefnagels said.



Tom Budzyna



Tom Budzyna



Tom Budzyna



Tom Budzyna

**1** Children enjoyed many rides, games and activities at USAG Schinnen's 40th Anniversary Celebration Sept 19.

**2** Wearing the white hat, Wilfried Dabekaussen, the Public Affairs director for the Municipality of Schinnen, shares the stage outside the Schinnen Town Hall with USAG Schinnen Commander Lt. Col. Fern O. Sumpter (to his left) and the SHAPE Task Force X band.

**3** U.S. Army Maj. Marius Price, USAG Schinnen DPTMS, gives the thumbs-up as the entire garrison is readied for the celebration.

**4** The Town of Schinnen Fire Department joined USAG Schinnen's celebration with a display Sept. 19. Here, children and spectators learn how to extinguish a grease fire.



John Glantz  
Students from the College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout Missouri pose with World War II Veterans from the 101st Airborne Division at a re-enactor display at USAG Schinnen's Celebration Sept. 19. The Veterans participated in Operation Market Garden and were part of a tour arranged by the Market Garden Committee, which comprised of memorial services and special events across the Benelux region. The Veterans enjoyed the visits to old battlefields now at peace. Local citizens cheerfully and respectfully greeted them on the 65th Anniversary of the Town of Schinnen's liberation.

# Veterans celebrate

In the late afternoon, some special guests arrived. WWII Veterans from the 501st, 502nd, 504th and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments, who participated in Operation Market Garden and battled onward until the end of the WWII, dropped in to celebrate. The group included Albert Mampre, who was part of the 506th PIR "Easy Company" made famous in the HBO series "Band of Brothers," along with the 82nd Airborne's most decorated officer, Lt. Col. (Ret.) "Maggie" Megellas. The group of about 50, including spouses and members of the Market Garden Committee, were treated to the hospitality of the USAG Schinnen Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment Family Readiness Group.

U.S. Army Capt. Shannon W. Shackelford said, "We work hard to bring together family members from the unit. We were looking forward to having a booth at our 40th celebration, but to have war heroes that were here 65 years ago as our guest – it's just great. It's an honor. Having them here connects their sacrifices and reinforces our role today to defend freedom."

## Going out with a bang

From Hermans' diary Sept. 20, 1944: "Together with Jan, Cécile, Margot and Henri, I went to the field at Hommerterweg. There we could watch the small American reconnaissance planes in action. They can take off and land on a tiny bit of land, as tiny as 'a handkerchief!' The people from Schinnen have already given a nickname to these six planes: 'de dreuvice' (the sad ones), because of the moaning noise they make ... upon returning home I hear that Sittard has been liberated and that Mayor Kruyen will soon return to Schinnen."

So, on Sept. 20, 2009, Mayor Barry Link opened a day of celebrations for the Municipality of Schinnen's in the center of town. Each of the six towns in the municipality provided brass bands and entertainers. In the mix of all the music, SHAPE's Task Force X band treated local citizens to a show that was contemporary, a bit American, but more significantly a multinational mix of NATO allied musicians – something no one could have thought possible in 1944. The town's youth group organization held concerts and gatherings. The entire day was a distinct opportunity for U.S. Servicemembers and family members to experience a celebration inspired by Soldiers who preceded their presence in the Netherlands by 65 years.

## A path for the future

"It was about ten years ago, in my opinion, that the finger pointing or the feeling that we have to hold blame for the war began to diminish. Everyone may have an opinion, but Western Europe is at peace. The old aggressors are part of the same Alliance, and this is good," Dabekaussen said.

There were three Axis Powers opposing the Allies. Japan cooperates with NATO but is not a NATO member. Italy joined NATO in 1949 with the other founding nations of United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. West Germany joined NATO in May 1955. When the Berlin wall fell in Nov. 1989, today's Federal Republic of Germany was born. Coincidentally, 1989 was the same year that Schinnen restored the Chapel of Our Lady – fifty years after it was built and dedicated to peace.

USAG Schinnen's diary for September 2009 is this remarkable alignment of so many anniversaries: 450 years for the Bishopric, 70 years for the Chapel of Our Lady, 65 years for the Town of Schinnen's liberation, 60 years for NATO and 40 years for the U.S. Army's presence in the Netherlands.

It's hard to predict where the world will be in 40, 60, 65, 70 or 450 years, as many conflicts and atrocities continue today. The Chapel of Our Lady is a reminder of the peace that is possible, and visitors to Schinnen are highly encouraged to visit it. But be warned – it is at the end of a rugged uphill path. Then again, so is the path to peace.

# United Through Music



Securing our Future  
 ••• 1949-2009 •••  
 Garantir l'avenir de notre sécurité

By Rachel Parks & Justine Vanderschueren

◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs Staff Writer & Intern

The members of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe International Band enjoy their jobs and it shows. The group is the often seen face of NATO at most local events within the American and International communities, as well as events in towns across Belgium and other NATO countries.

The group is a mixed bag of musicians, with an American Bandmaster, a French Director and military members of the group from the United States, Italy, France and Estonia.

The band was first formed in 1983 when former Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Bernard Rogers created a musical ensemble to perform at various ceremonial occasions. In 1985, Rogers declared the band to be the official musical ambassadors of NATO and SHAPE.

Any member of NATO is allowed to contribute at least one member from their national military to the SHAPE Band. Currently, the makeup of the band is predominantly American Soldiers and Airmen but First Sgt. Pedro Quiñones, who serves as bandmaster, said he would like to see an increase of international Servicemembers in the future.

“We highly encourage as many nations as possible to take advantage of having at least one member in the group. Right now, because of normal transition we have a smaller number of countries represented, but we hope that expands in the future,” he said, as he discussed the national identities of the group.

The band has been making the rounds on a variety of circuits this year to promote the 60th anniversary of NATO. The final concert on the anniversary tour will be held on Oct. 16 in downtown Mons, at the Le Manège Royal Theater. The band spent most weekends during the summer months playing at events in local towns like Ath, Lens and Soignies but they’ve traveled to many far-flung locations in the past.

“We have performed in places like Italy, Latvia Bulgaria, Ukraine and Estonia, where we’ve done everything from jazz type sets to perform in concert halls,” said Quiñones.

The group is configured to be a big-band style setup but they aren’t limited to any one style of music added Quiñones as he listed a band repertoire of jazz, rock and even semi-classical music. The group’s music goes over well with members of the public who come out to hear a taste of American culture supplied to them by representatives from a myriad mix of Alliance nations.

Julienne Chevalier, a Belgian audience member at a recent concert in Soignies said she was excited to see the jazz ensemble for the first time. “I haven’t attended a SHAPE Band concert before,” she said in French. “But knowing they would come to Soignies was fantastic. I think it will be unique to experience how the collaboration of an international band works,” she said before she took her seat in the packed auditorium.

Quiñones said that his interactions with the Belgian public have always been a positive experience. “I think it’s great when they see the joint effort. We don’t always speak the same language, even in the band, but music is the universal language that brings us together and the audience appreciates and enjoys that I think,” he stated.

The joint international atmosphere is seen as a positive experience within the band. Currently, the director of the ensemble that performed in Soignies is a French national who previously worked with the band as a musician and returned as the director of the jazz ensemble. Adjutant Olivier Drean, who is a member of the French Marines Band in Versailles, said the international group creates a strong learning environment not only within the group, but with the community as a whole.

“We don’t all have the same way to learn. We practice and learn lessons every day,” he said of the group of musicians. “And the music helps make contacts with the audience. We speak English, we speak French, but most importantly we speak the language of music,” he added.

That idea came across loud and clear at the recent concerts held in the community. Another audience member at the Soignies concert, Vanstals Sir said the concert was top-notch.

“I saw a SHAPE Band concert in Mons ten years ago, and I can still remember how wonderful it was. To have the opportunity to attend an international concert in Soignies with

people playing jazz is great,” he said in French.

The audience was so appreciative of the music they demanded an encore, and gave the group a standing ovation as they left the stage.

The band spends their time perfecting their craft, as well as building bridges in the community and forming lasting friendships with each other. Quiñones said members of the group often keep in touch with each other even after they have moved onto their next mission and location.

In addition to the new friendships, there are also new experiences to be had by those who are members of the band. Especially within the American military community, some members who have never had previous experience working with a NATO mission said that the ability to work with musicians from a different country is a first for them. Quiñones added that sometimes working with other Americans is a new experience, too, because of the mix of both U.S. Soldiers and Airmen.

“This is actually my first experience working with Airmen, and it’s been an excellent one,” said Quiñones. “Army musicians train with the Navy and Marines as part of their initial training, but we don’t get a chance to interact with the Air Force, so this has been something new, and it’s been a very positive aspect.”

As the SHAPE Band continues to provide music to accompany the face of SHAPE and NATO, other Servicemembers from various nations and services will have the chance to make their mark, not only on each other but within the Alliance as a whole. And, the diverse cultures continue to create a unique and creative atmosphere that is visible not only to the collaborating musicians but to the Belgian public.

“I work every day with a great group of professionals. They are aware that we not only represent our own nations but the rest of the members of the Alliance. It is because of this that they are always ready to do their best in every performance,” concluded Quiñones.



Members of the SHAPE International Band play big band music in Lens, Belgium, to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Belgium and the 60th anniversary of NATO. The band performed a series of summer concerts across Belgium.  
**Front row (left to right):** Sgt. Jon Oxford (guitar) U.S. Army; Tech. Sgt. Brent Swaney (saxophone) U.S. Air Force; Sgt. Tyler Shultz (saxophone) U.S. Army; Sgt. Daniel Galipeau (saxophone) U.S. Army.  
**Back row (left to right):** Staff Sgt. Timothy Kresse (bass) U.S. Army; Adjutant Olivier Drean (trumpet) NCOIC, French Marines; Master Sgt. Christopher Jeffery (trumpet) U.S. Air Force; Sgt. Andrew Meronek, (trombone) U.S. Army.  
**Not pictured (but also in attendance):** Sgt. 1st Class William (Dan) O’Riley (piano) U.S. Army; Sgt. Peter Greenberg (percussion) U.S. Army; Staff Sgt. Michael Smith (sound engineer) U.S. Air Force.



First Sgt. Pedro Quiñones leads the SHAPE Ceremonial Band at the official Accession Ceremony on SHAPE, April 7, 2009, that welcomed Albania and Croatia into the NATO Alliance. The SHAPE International Band performs at numerous official ceremonies, as well as concerts and events throughout the Benelux community.



# ALLIANCE

# United On and Off Duty

By Christie Vanover ◀ USAG Benelux Public Affairs

Hundreds of Soldiers, wearing dozens of different uniforms march into the headquarters building on SHAPE each day. They're mission-focused in a joint environment that supports NATO's Allied Command Operations. After hours, around 40 of those Servicemembers and other's throughout SHAPE and Chièvres unite even further and don the same uniform – that of the SHAPE FC.



Christie Vanover

The SHAPE Football (Soccer) Club is made up of players from nearly a dozen countries, and this summer, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Adm. James Stavridis, and the Italian National Military Representative, Maj. Gen. Valter Mauloni, received honorary jerseys to kick off the season.

The American admiral took time out of his busy schedule to shake hands with each player. He asked them about the positions they played, if they played in their home countries and even spoke to some in their native languages of Spanish and Greek. Jason Tomasetti, one of the goalies, said it is a great opportunity to have the SACEUR as an honorary player.

"We're representing the SHAPE community. We're multi-national. We've got all the different family members, Soldiers and civilians, and having his support was great boost for the team," he said.

"We're going to play 16 home games this year, and we need a home field advantage," he said, adding that the SACEUR planned to attend a game to show his support.

Even though European Football is not as popular of a sport in the States, SHAPE FC has managed to recruit a handful of Americans, like Tomasetti, from the Army, Air Force and Navy. Having Americans on the team allows them to play in the Installation Management Command-Europe League where they compete against other military teams in Germany and Italy.

The SHAPE IMCOM team won the championships last year, after defeating every team in tournament play. Karl Lenau, the coach of SHAPE FC, said as for this year's tournament in Italy: "We are able to defend the cup. We have a strong international team, including good American footballers."

In addition to Americans, the club is represented by players from Germany, Norway, Greece, Turkey, France, Denmark, Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic and the UK. And the mix of nations is evident on the field, as plays are called out in a variety of languages.

"Each country has a different mentality," said Rob Webster, another SHAPE FC coach from the UK. "In the U.S. it's a minority sport. The way people play is different. It's our job to mold people together."

In addition to the IMCOM-E league, SHAPE FC plays in the Belgian League against other teams throughout the country. Lenau said SHAPE FC received an invitation directly from the Belgian football association to play in the league this year. The league is broken up into four levels of difficulty, and because this is SHAPE FC's first season, they will start out in Division 4. The season began in September, and after the first two rounds, SHAPE FC was already top of the league

If, or according to Lenau, "when" they receive first or second place at the end of the season, they will be promoted to a higher division. "We will win," he said.

A recent game in Corpo Chapelle helped to solidify his point. SHAPE FC defeated the team 14-0, and Lenau scored 7 of the points. As the coach, the German soccer player doesn't usually take to the pitch, but with an all-volunteer military-based team, filling the field can be a challenge.

"Since we've started, we've never had the same team on the pitch," said Daniel Röber, the team captain from Germany. "It's difficult but also a strength," added Tomasetti, "because we have a strong team with a deep bench."

Lenau said normal Belgian league teams are made up of around 16 players, but SHAPE FC has nearly 40 registered.

"The fact that we're military, Rob could go TDY; I go to ISAF. You've got to have the depth to fill in. It's a bigger challenge than the other teams in the Belgian league will have," said Tomasetti, but he added that as one of five goalies, he can leave for a military mission and know that the team is in good hands.

This fall, SHAPE FC plays Belgian League games on Saturdays and IMCOM-E games on Sundays. Tomasetti encouraged locals to attend the games. "We need the home field advantage, so we hope we have some fans show up," he said.

The IMCOM-E championships are in Camp Darby, Italy, at the end of October, and Belgian league games go through May. To see the different league schedules, visit [www.shape-fc.com](http://www.shape-fc.com).



Christie Vanover



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**Top:** The Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Adm. James Stavridis (#54) and the Italian National Military Representative, Maj. Gen. Valter Mauloni (#13), receive honorary jerseys to kick off the SHAPE FC 2009 season. The senior NATO leaders also took time to meet with the individual players.

**Left Center:** SHAPE FC players celebrate their 2008 IMCOM-E victory after being named the season champions.

**Right Center:** As one of the SHAPE FC goalkeepers, Jason Tomasetti from the U.S., blocks shot after shot during the IMCOM-E game against Kaiserslautern in September.

**Bottom:** Necip Sürer from Turkey scores a goal against Corpo Chapelle FC in Chapelle-lez-Herlaimont, Belgium, during a Division 4 Belgian league game in September. SHAPE FC took home the win with a final score of 14-0.

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