

Air Force

## Print News Today

Air Force news from around the world

**A cut above: Ramstein barber celebrates 40 years of KMC service**

by Airman 1st Class Ciara M. Travis  
86th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

7/8/2010 - **RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany** – Known simply as "Gerhard" across Ramstein Air Base, one local barber has watched the base grow and change immensely over the last four decades.

Gerhard Schmidt, 62, has worked at Ramstein for 40 years as of this month, averaging 25 haircuts a day.

In July of 1970 he began working in the southside barber shop, later moving to the old base exchange. Today he's trimming away in the Kaiserslautern Military Community Center mall.

"I can remember my first customer was a major," he said. "And my second was a captain and a pilot of the F4 Phantom."

Mr. Schmidt has seen and heard a lot through cutting hair. He even mentioned once meeting Clint Dempsey, an American soccer player who visited Germany to play in the 2006 FIFA World Cup.

Though his work is active, it's very rewarding for Mr. Schmidt.

"I stay very busy," he said. "But, cutting hair is relaxing to me."

Mr. Schmidt isn't the only person who enjoys the work he does - his customers do as well.

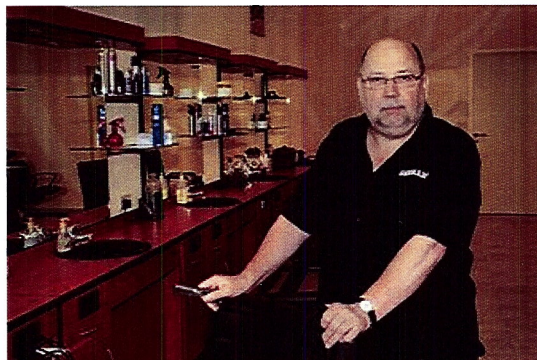
"I'm proud to say I know Gerhard and can't say enough great things about him," said Brig. Gen. Mark Dillon, 86th Airlift Wing commander. "He's become an institution here, and like all of our host nation employees, he's a pleasure to serve with. Gerhard, thank you for all you have done for all of us in the past 40 years ... and can I get an appointment next Wednesday?"

Although Mr. Schmidt has worked on base for the majority of his adult life, he has been cutting hair for 48 years, including the three years he attended a specialty school to receive certification per German standards.

After that many years of cutting hair, Mr. Schmidt is now preparing to hang up his shears and start down a new life path.

"I'm hoping to retire in January," he said. "Then, I can go on vacation and pick up my hobby of going on Volksmarches."

Until then, Mr. Schmidt plans to keep busy, adding to his nearly 260,000 haircuts and stories heard since his time at Ramstein, and will probably see a few more changes to the gateway to Europe before he's done.



Gerhard Schmidt poses for a photo behind his barberchair at the KMCC Barber Shop, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, June 30, 2010. Mr. Schmidt has been employed as a barber for AAFES on Ramstein for 40 years. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Tony R. Ritter)