



**18th Engineer Brigade
United States Army
Unit 29060
APO AE 09081**

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE: 2011-06-10-01**

June 10, 2011

18th Engineer Brigade bonds together with Luau

Story by Sgt. Wesley Petrus, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany - Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Engineer Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, gathered for a farewell dinner prior to their upcoming deployment and to celebrate Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month at the Spanferkelhof restaurant here, May 18.

The Family Readiness Group sponsored the event and based the evening's activities on a luau theme. Guests were greeted at the door with leis, a traditional Hawaiian wreath of flowers draped around the neck when arriving or leaving an event to show appreciation or affection.

"Pacific Islanders are usually very proud of their ancestors," said Capt. Orlando Fraser, an assistant intelligence officer from Honolulu, Hawaii. "It is nice when we can recognize people and their heritage. The event was a great success."

"The luau is a way for the Soldiers and families of the 18th Engineer Brigade to join hands and celebrate our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan," said Capt. Po Tsui, the HHC, 18th Eng. Bde. Commander, and a native of Honolulu, Hawaii. "

Pam Nelson from Campbell, N.Y., and wife of Maj. Kurt Nelson, 18th Eng. Bde. plans officer in charge, said that not only was the event beneficial to the Soldiers, but equally beneficial to the friends and families. She believes the social atmosphere of the event provided family members an opportunity to meet new people, form relationships prior to their spouse's departure and learn about the many resources the FRG can offer them throughout the deployment.

In keeping with the Hawaiian theme, the evening began with a feast including authentic Hawaiian foods such as crab potato salad, mixed tomato salad and whole roasted pig.

Following dinner, Soldiers and family members dressed in Aloha attire performed traditional Hawaiian dances beginning with the females performing the Hukilau and Hawaiian lullaby.

The Haka, a traditional dance performed by the Māori of New Zealand, was demonstrated by male Soldiers in the form of a war dance that consisted of vigorous movement, feet stomping and rhythmical shouting.

The Tauluga, a Samoan dance performed by a son or daughter of a tribal chief, was the final dance of the evening. Throughout the dance, Samoans “lafo,” or throw money at the dancer to acknowledge her skills and status as the child of a chief.

Additional entertainment was provided by Soldiers from the U.S. Army European Band who played a variety of lively Hawaiian and island music that got the crowd involved. Also, there were multiple activities for the children including a bounce house, lei making stations, face painting and a display of farm animals.

“The whole program was just fun and enjoyable, and the costumes and decorations were outstanding,” said Lt. Col. Terrence Hayes, the 18th Eng. Bde. Chaplain and originally from Grants Pass, Ore. “I give it two thumbs up!”

“These Soldiers (Pacific Islanders) have fought foreign enemies and prejudices at home and have contributed significantly through the years to the armed services. It is with this framework that we celebrate their accomplishments with our luau,” added Tsui.

The HHC, 18th Eng. Bde. will deploy for a one-year tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in the near future.



1st Sgt. Thetus Roberts Jr., the first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Engineer Brigade, gets plates for himself and his family at the 18th Eng. Bde. farewell luau held at the Spanferkelhof restaurant in Heidelberg, Germany, May 18. The event was sponsored by the Family Readiness Group. Soldiers were treated to an Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage meal consisting of crab potato salad, bread, mixed tomatoes and whole roasted pig. (Photo by Sgt. Wesley Petrus, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)



Soldiers and spouses of the 18th Engineer Brigade, perform a native Hawaiian dance during the 18th Eng. Bde. farewell luau sponsored by the Family Readiness Group held at the Spanferkelhof restaurant in Heidelberg, Germany, May 18. The Hawaiian themed event not only gave Soldiers and their families the opportunity to bond prior to the unit's upcoming deployment, but was also a celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. (Photo by Pfc. David Huddleston, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)



A group of Soldiers and family members were part of the entertainment during the 18th Engineer Brigade farewell luau as they demonstrated a native Hawaiian warrior dance, May 18, in Heidelberg, Germany. The Hawaiian themed event, sponsored by the Family Readiness Group, not only gave Soldiers and their families the opportunity to bond together prior to the unit's upcoming deployment, but also serve as a celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. (Photo by Pfc. David Huddleston, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)



Sierra Fraser (center), from Honolulu, HI and daughter of Capt. Orlando Fraser, entertains the 18th Engineer Brigade Soldiers with the Tauluga, a native Samoan dance during the 18th Eng. Bde. farewell luau sponsored by the Family Readiness Group, May 18, in Heidelberg, Germany. The Hawaiian themed event, sponsored by the Family Readiness Group, not only gave Soldiers and their families the opportunity to bond prior to their upcoming deployment, but was also a celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. (Photo by Pfc. David Huddleston, 18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs)