

V Corps Change of Command
Wiesbaden Army Air Field, Germany
10 JAN 2012

- MINISTER AXELMEYER (HESSEN STATE REPRESENTATIVE)
- MINISTER VON UNRUH (DIRECTOR, HESSE STATE PARLIAMENT)
- LORD MAYOR MUELLER

THIS SEEMS LIKE DÉJÀ VU!

IT'S A TREMENDOUS HONOR TO FINALLY BE HERE FOR A CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY THAT WE ALL KNEW WOULD HAPPEN THE LAST TIME WE WERE TOGETHER.

CSM JOHNSON, COLOR BEARERS, AND SOLDIERS...THESE ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT CEREMONIES IN THE HISTORY OF A UNIT. SOMEONE IS IN THE CROWD TODAY TAKING PICTURES, AND SOMEDAY, 50 YEARS FROM NOW, THEY WILL PULL UP THOSE PICTURES AND SAY "THAT'S WHEN V CORPS STARTED A NEW CHAPTER."

EITHER THAT, OR THEY'LL SAY "THAT'S WHEN V CORPS GOT A NEW COMMANDER...AGAIN!"

AND IN ALL THOSE PICTURES, YOU WILL SEE LORD MAYOR MUELLER OF WIESBADEN, ALWAYS SUPPORTING THE US ARMY.

MAYOR MUELLER, THE PEOPLE OF WIESBADEN HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF SUPPORTING OUR UNITS, OUR SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP, AS WE SUPPORT V CORPS AS IT DEPLOYS, AND ALSO AS USAREUR MOVES IT'S EUROPEAN

HEADQUARTERS TO THIS TERRIFIC CITY BEGINNING NEXT SUMMER!

(PAUSE)

HAVING BEEN TO A FEW CEREMONIES IN MY LIFETIME, I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN KEEPING MY REMARKS SHORT AND TO THE POINT.

IN AUGUST, WE CELEBRATED V CORPS' UNCASING, AS WE CELEBRATED A CORPS RISEN LIKE A PHOENIX FROM AN ORDER TO INACTIVATE.

AND NOW IN FRONT OF US WE SEE A CORPS HEADQUARTERS WELL ON IT'S WAY TO BEING A MISSION COMMAND ORGANIZATION THAT WILL HELP FINISH A TOUGH AND DEMANDING FIGHT.

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE THE VICTORY CORPS WILL BE ASKED TO DO THAT.

BACK IN AUGUST, THERE WEREN'T SO MANY OF YOU.

AS I RECALL, BETWEEN BG GIBBS, CSM JOHNSON AND A FEW STALWARTS, WE HAD JUST ENOUGH FOLKS TO CARRY THE COLORS!

LAST AUGUST WAS SPECIAL IN MANY WAYS FOR A COUPLE TEAMS I ADMIRE THAT WERE ONCE CONSIDERED DOWN AND OUT.

THERE WAS V CORPS, WHICH WAS JUST BEGINNING TO REBUILD AS A FIGHTING UNIT, AND THERE WAS THE ST LOUIS CARDINALS, WHICH WERE 10 ½ GAMES BACK IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE CENTRAL AT THE END OF AUGUST.

NOW, YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHY I MENTION BASEBALL WHEN WE'RE IN THE THICK OF THE SUPER BOWL SPIN UP. IT'S BECAUSE I BELIEVE BASEBALL'S A LOT LIKE LIFE.

IF I MIGHT BRING YOU ALL BACK TO AMERICA'S GAME, IN BASEBALL A STARTING PITCHER IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE THEY ESTABLISH A PACE, THEY GAIN A MOMENTUM, AND THEY HELP SET THE TONE FOR THE GAME.

THAT REMINDS ME OF WHAT RICKY GIBBS HAS DONE.

BG GIBBS HAS TAKEN THE CORPS THROUGH THOSE TOUGH FEW FIRST INNINGS, AND HAS SHAKEN OUT THE OPERATIONS CENTER, EXECUTED SOME PLANS FOR BATTLE-DRILLS, AND WORKED WITH ALLIES, JOINT AND INTERAGENCY PARTNERS IN MISSION-FOCUSED SEMINARS.

HE'S HELPED GAIN MOMENTUM, AND HE HAS SET THE RIGHT TONE.

HIS WONDERFUL WIFE NOLLY ALSO BEGAN BRINGING THE FAMILIES TOGETHER AND ESTABLISHED THE SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT THE CORPS WHEN IT DEPLOYS.

RICK AND NOLLY, THANKS FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

YOU'VE DELIVERED A SOLID TEAM THAT'LL TAKE THE FIELD AND YOU'VE SET THE STAGE FOR TAKING CARE OF SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES THE RIGHT WAY.

(PAUSE)

BUT WE'RE NOW IN THE MIDDLE INNINGS, WHEN THINGS REALLY GET INTERESTING.

WE'RE BRINGING IN THE MIDDLE RELIEVER AND A CLOSER SIMULTANEOUSLY, A SOLDIER WHO'LL TAKE THE CORPS TO THE TOUGH PART OF THE GAME, AND HELP THEM SET THINGS UP FOR A CLOSER.

IN MY VIEW, OUR ARMY COULDN'T HAVE FOUND A FINER, MORE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL THAN JAMES TERRY TO TAKE THE MOUND.

HIS HOME FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEEN THE FIGHT IN AFGHANISTAN.

HE'S FELT THE HARSH, BITING, WINTER COLD, THE OPPRESSIVE SUMMER HEAT, AND HE'S GONE SEVERAL INNINGS – HE MIGHT EVEN SAY IT WAS 18 INNINGS IN A DOUBLE HEADER -- AGAINST A CONSTANTLY CHANGING ADVERSARY.

HE KNOWS SOLDIERS – HE KNOWS THEY'RE OUT THERE EVERY DAY NERVOUSLY SCANNING EACH BOULDER AND RIVER BANK AS THEY REACH OUT TO CIVILIANS AND HUNT FOR AN ELUSIVE ENEMY.

HE KNOWS OUR SOLDIER'S COMMITMENT, OUR SOLDIER'S RESOLVE AND OUR SOLDIER'S DEDICATION TO THE PROFESSION OF ARMS AND TO WINNING.

AS THE RECENT COMMANDER OF RC-SOUTH -- AND AS THE DEPUTY COMMANDER OF COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE 76 BEFORE THAT -- HE KNOWS THE KIND OF CORPS LEVEL GUIDANCE SOLDIERS AND UNITS NEED.

JAMES TERRY HAS PROVEN HIMSELF IN COMBAT, AS A LEADER, AS A COMMAND, AS A SOLDIER.

JAMES AND JULIE, WE'RE THRILLED TO HAVE YOU JOIN OUR TEAM, AND WE KNOW HOW LUCKY THE SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES OF FIFTH CORPS ARE TO HAVE SUCH A CARING AND AMAZING COUPLE AS THEIR LEADERS.

(PAUSE)

ONE LAST THING.

WHILE TODAY I'VE TALKED ABOUT THE PITCHERS ON THE MOUND OF THIS TERRIFIC ORGANIZATION, THE ONES WHO REALLY DESERVE MOST VALUABLE PLAYER RECOGNITION ARE THOSE OF YOU OUT IN FORMATION AND IN THE STANDS.

FOR THOSE OF YOU DEPLOYING, AND TO THOSE OF YOU WHOSE LOVED ONES WILL SERVE FAR AWAY, THIS WILL BE A CHALLENGING YEAR.

SUE AND I OFFER OUR DEEPEST RESPECT AND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND YOUR SERVICE.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL... STRONG SOLDIERS, STRONG TEAMS!