

EARLY BIRD 2 – 8 February 2013

USAG SCHWEINFURT

German Army “Bundeswehr” wants to take over training area “Brönnhof” (Feb. 2)

The German “Bundeswehr” showed interest in the largest conversion area of the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt. The Infantry School located in Hammelburg would like to use the entire military training area known as “Brönnhof.”

Last Friday Colonel Wolfgang Schrauth, Deputy Commander, Infantry School Hammelburg, explained to Lord Mayor Remele of Schweinfurt, Mayor Göbhardt of Üchtelhausen and conversion experts from both communities that the “Bundeswehr” has a big interest in the local training area “Brönnhof.” Hans Schnabel, conversion representative of the city of Schweinfurt, informed everyone that the Bundeswehr has concrete plans for use of the 2,500 hectares large area. Requests were already submitted to the Ministry of Defense.

According to Colonel Schrauth there is a big and urgent demand. The presently available training areas are not sufficient. Now all parties concerned are awaiting the decision by the Ministry of Defense. The Bundeswehr would not be using the training area for training purposes constantly but for days and weeks at a time.

Schnabel said surprised: “That’s the first time I have seen those Afghan villages and Camp Robertson – that’s a small city.” (see: www.army.mil/article/68335/Allied_forces_share_training_areas__expertise_in_Germany)

Lord Mayor Remele and Mayor Göbhardt received the information, however, they have not made any personal comments.

The city owns a large forest area near the training area for which there are not many options. If there is not a big gap in time between the use of the area by the U.S. Army and further use of the area by the “Bundeswehr, the communities would not have many possibilities for a different use of the area. Therefore it is possible that the largest conversion area will not have to be converted at all – but will remain what it is: A military training area.

However the Federal Real Estate Agency, BImA, owns the area which means the Federal Ministry of Finance is involved. This is what Mayor Göbhardt points out, “We have acknowledged the plans and considerations of the Bundeswehr but until a decision can be made in regard to what will happen with the area, several discussions and meetings will be necessary since the committees, in her case the community council, will also have to decide.” However, she was surprised how Colonel Schrauth explained the further military use by the Bundeswehr in such detail. The military could live with some wind turbines, while paratroopers would have to land at a greater distance away.

Another use of the area as mentioned at the “Ideas forum” held at the “Maininsel” in December – especially for sport and recreational use – are still fresh in mind. That discussion group was not interested in U.S. casernes and housing areas but in the local training area. They were not interested in military use but were planning a “Mountain-Trail-Park”, or a “Soft-Air-Field.” Another use of the area was for production of energy from reusable sources. In a political aspect it could be difficult to explain to the people that the “Brönnhof” area is still off-limits for hikers and bikers, because now instead of American Soldiers, German Soldiers need it for training.

Troy Salvant of U.S. Army dreams of title

BBC Coach Michael Böhm is still mad about the defeat on the second weekend in January against the team “Flyeralarm Marktheidenfeld.” No wonder, because the Coburg basketball team now can no longer win the championship in the “Bavarian League” under their own power.

Böhm states: “Since Derochowsky has not returned from home leave for family reasons and a few other players were also not able to play that day – but you can only play with what you have.” The BBC acted quickly: Lemar Gayle took over the vacant center position and from Schweinfurt they got the top scorer, point guard Troy Salvant.

And already only one week later in Litzendorf everything had changed. The BG Litzendorf was literally overrun (106:70). Already in the first game BBC Star Dejon Prejean (22 points) had to give over his title as top scorer to Salvant (25).

Salvant stated: “I was welcomed with open arms by everyone and therefore it was not difficult to integrate myself into the game of the Coburg team.” Not without adding that the BBC had played “team ball” and that’s why he was able to have so many free throws.

Today at 1800 at the DFK gym Salvant will meet his old team mates and there he expects it to get more difficult. “Their defense will be tough – they’ll be guarding me but I am looking forward to this interesting game.”

At first glance the 24-year old American did not improve in a pure athletic view. The Schweinfurt team is level on points with the Coburg team.

And whoever loses today can kiss the championship good bye. But Salvant is confident: “We have to have a good defense , we have to watch that the DJK will not get a fast break and we have to play team ball like we did in Litzendorf than we can make it.”

In November first talks with those responsible at the BBC took place and Salvant was open for a change, because “Coburg as a team is better developed and has better prospects.” That he does not only have to cross the street and now has an hour drive to go to practice twice a week does not bother him, because “I have a car and what are 70 kilometers for an American” he said.

Money does not matter either. He stated: “The guys in Coburg understand how I try to play the game, and they think it’s good.” The change has been an exceptional opportunity which he

accepted. The question if there is still a chance for the championship he answers: “Sure, that’s too easy, we can make it.”

Coach Böhm is not quite that confident. He knows that his team needs help. He states: “In March we will have to be there when Würzburg, the top of the league, goes to Bamberg and we’ll have to cheer on the TTL Bamberg.” He does not seem to worry about the fact that the BBC Coburg cannot afford to lose any points. The Coburg team with Salvant and Gayle now are a lot more unpredictable.

SAFETY/SECURITY

Fatal Accident – cause unknown (Feb. 4)

On Friday afternoon a traffic accident occurred between Schweinfurt and Dittelbrunn which resulted in 5 people suffering serious injuries and the death of a nineteen-year old women. According to a witness the young woman was travelling on B 286 towards Schweinfurt. About half-way between Dittelbrunn and Schweinfurt she got off the road for unknown reasons and crashed into the guard-rails. Then her vehicle slid onto the oncoming traffic lane where it crashed into another vehicle. The young woman and the 61-year old driver of the other vehicle were jammed in their cars and had to be rescued by personnel of the Schweinfurt Fire Department. The federal road was blocked off for several hours.

Car hit 14-year old girl who died at the scene of the accident (Feb. 5)

On Sunday evening at approximately 6:30 p.m. a 14-year old girl, living in the district of Bad Kissingen, was on her way home from a “Fasching” event when she was hit by a car and died at the scene of the accident. At the time of the accident visibility was very poor because it was snowing heavily. Furthermore, the accident occurred on top of a hill so it is possible that the driver had no time to react. So far it has not been cleared why the girl was walking on the road and not on the shoulder like her friend and why she did not avoid the car coming at her. According to the police the 20-year old driver who hit the girl did the right thing, he called an ambulance and then rendered first aid; however; in vain.

LEADERS/POLITICS

Future of local training: Troops from all Europe expected (Feb. 6)

The report showed clearly what city and county really have to say to the subject “conversion” in the end. Should the U.S. Army withdraw, then the Federal Ministry of Finance will decide on how to use the vacant areas. And if, as in the case of the local training area “Brönnhof” the “Bundeswehr” wants to use the area for war games, the city and county will not even be asked. Furthermore, they will also not be asked should the “Bundeswehr” need parts of Ledward or Conn Barracks for logistical purposes. But that’s not all. Should the “Bundeswehr” get the area, then not even the federal government will be able to control further developments. Because in the contracts of Lisbon it has been regulated that security and defense politics are governed by

the European Union. This means that in the future not only the “Bundeswehr” will play there but troops from all over Europe will train there. Hardly an improvement to the present situation.

Benevolence for County Commissioner Florian Töpfer takes oath (Feb. 5)

On Monday afternoon Florian Töpfer (SPD party) was sworn in as county commissioner of the county of Schweinfurt backed with benevolence and best wishes. 180 guests and a number of visitors, among those his friends from the SPD, attended the ceremony. In his speech, accompanied by lasting applause, he promised to live up to his slogan of the election campaign: “A county commissioner for all”. And the citizens can expect transparent and citizen close decision processes. Robert Wächter (CSU party) took the oath, as oldest member of the county council. The ceremony was imbedded in a meeting of the county council. In a dignified ceremony the new county commissioner formulated his demands in a resolute tone and clear words. He sees his work reaching across parties and therefore he gave up all positions in the SPD party. Töpfer stated: “The political diversity cannot lead us to losing sight of the essentials: It is not about offices and positions but it’s about the best for the people who we are obligated to and just as I will treat all communities the same.” Also when facing challenges such as the conversion, the demographic development and public transportation Töpfer has an optimistic outlook.

Conversion (Feb. 4)

The city of Schweinfurt wants to declare all U.S. real properties within its boundaries – Ledward Barracks, Askren Manor, Kessler Field, Yorktown Village – as areas of urban development. According to Hans Schnabel, conversion representative of the city of Schweinfurt, by doing so the city “holds its hand over the conversion areas and shows the federal government: We are interested.” Therefore the main and finance committees will have a joint meeting with the construction and environmental committee on Thursday, Feb. 7 at 8 a.m. at the city hall to prepare the introductory resolution.

ECONOMY

Production of organic food (Feb. 7)

The Bavarian Minister of Agriculture wants to invest €5.4 billion for a new program “organic food region 2020.” The money will be spent to support education, consultation, promotion, marketing and research in the organic food branch. The goal is growing twice as much organic food by 2020. Even though Bavaria is number one in regard to organic food, the products do not meet the local demand. People still have to depend on imported food mainly poultry and pork.

Threat of E.ON strike eliminated (Feb. 7)

Employees of Germany’s largest electricity company were threatening to go on strike while temperatures were below freezing, having many customers worried about keeping their homes warm. This was something the E.ON executives did not want to see. The threat of the trade union to organize the first strike in the power-industry in 100 years was effective. The electricity company will give its 30,000 employees a 3 percent pay increase this year even though the expected profit is decreasing. On Wednesday the majority of the tariff commission of the trade

unions Ver.di and the IG BCE accepted the offer. A second strike vote is required before a settlement can be reached.

More immigrants needed for job market (Feb. 5)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has given the Federal Republic of Germany a mediocre rating in regard to bringing foreign skilled workers to Germany. There has been an enormous progress in recruiting highly qualified foreign academics in the past years; however; there are still considerable deficits for skilled labor according to Vice General Secretary of the OECD Yve Laterme. He presented a 210-page study in regard to the development in Germany in Berlin in the presence of Federal Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Ursula von der Leyen. In his opinion Germany has to bring more foreign skilled workers into the country in its own interest. "Germany's wealth depends on staying compatible in spite of its aging population." Without a consequent migration strategy it will be difficult to deal with the lack of skilled workers, which is already noticeable especially since Germany has the worst demographic results in the entire OECD area. Approximately 25,000 workers come to Germany from third countries, outside the European Union and Free Trade Association (EFTA) which is 0.02 percent of the population while Australia, Canada, Great Britain or Denmark has five to 10 times as many which has significantly contributed to the economic growth of those countries. Therefore Laterme demands: "Germany has to break the mold in regard to immigration of non-academic foreigners."

SPORT

Mighty Dogs back on the road to victory (Feb. 5)

The Mighty Dogs scored a 2:1 during the last five minutes of the game against TSV Erding. With this victory the Mighty Dogs go into a break with hope for eighth place. After the break on 15 February they will play against Selb in Schweinfurt. More than 1,000 spectators are expected to come to the game.

Mighty Dogs – have to play in the relegation round (Feb. 4)

There were only 5.6 seconds left when the team of Deggendorf scored the 3rd goal against the Mighty dogs and won the game 3:2. This ended the Mighty Dogs victory series and their hope to play in the play-offs.