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NEW FACILITY IMPROVES CONDITIONS FOR DEPLOYING SOLDIERS IN ITALY

By Gary Kieffer

Editor, U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza *Outlook*

VICENZA, Italy -- Vicenza's deploying Soldiers will no longer have to sit on a damp football field or in a noisy hangar waiting for their planes.

With the upcoming opening of the Personnel Alert Holding Area at Aviano Air Base, deploying troops will be treated to a fully enclosed, climate-controlled building just steps from their departing aircraft.

"This new building is a real force multiplier for our Soldiers," said Martin Fano, director of the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group, U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza. "This will streamline operations and give us the capabilities we have always needed."



GARY KIEFFER

Martin Fano, director of the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group, U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza, shows off the custom-built Swedish pine seats designed for paratroopers in the new Personnel Alert Holding Area at Aviano Air Base, Italy.

The new 62,400-square-foot building includes seating for 1,000 Soldiers, separate bathroom facilities, and custom-built seats for paratroopers modeled on a similar design at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Located on the base's expanded south ramp, planes can park close to the building, making it a short walk for Soldiers to exit the designated seating area and move onto their aircraft.

“We can have buses pull up out front and unload Soldiers and their equipment under cover if we need to,” added Fano.

“This helps keep their gear and parachutes dry, as well as making the trip just a little bit easier.”

For paratroopers there are also simulated C-130, C-141 and C-17 aircraft loading areas and a jump pit lined with shredded rubber to break practice falls.

“This new facility is state-of-the-art,” said Fano. “Even the visitors from Fort Bragg say it's the best they've ever seen. Much better than what they have now.”

The official opening for the new facility is scheduled for Feb. 25 at 3 p.m.



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