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Sergeant Major of the Army shares 'big picture' with U.S. Army Europe Soldiers

By Sgt. Micah E. Clare

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- While visiting United States Army Europe Soldiers here Oct. 24, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston echoed what he said during a tour to Kosovo in 2000 -- that USAREUR Soldiers demonstrate what right looks like.

During a speech at the Patrick Henry Village theater, Preston said USAREUR Soldiers



SGT DANIEL J. NICHOLS

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston talks to U.S. Army Europe Soldiers about Army transformation and initiatives at the Patrick Henry Village theater in Heidelberg, Germany Oct. 24.

remain an important part of the Army in a time of ongoing transformation.

“Over here, Soldiers are ambassadors of their country and the American people,” Preston said. “I’m proud of what’s been accomplished over the decades here.”

During the visit, Preston also discussed transformation, growth of the Army, and quality of life for Soldiers and family members.

“Despite what’s being said, we’re not a broken Army,” he said. “But we’ve had a problem with being stretched and unbalanced. We’re in the process of changing that.”

With recruiting numbers on the rise, the creation of new brigade combat teams and adjustments to the length of deployments and dwell times, life in the Army is now more predictable and stable, he said.

Preston emphasized the outstanding work Army non-commissioned officers are doing, citing successes in the Global War on Terror and increased recruiting as examples.

“Across the board, you have done an awesome job,” he said. “What the Army needs now is for people coming into the Army to aspire not just to be just good Soldiers, but outstanding NCOs.”

Preston said today’s Soldiers represent the best America has to offer.

“Our quality of Soldiers is the best we’ve ever had,” he said. “The all-volunteer Army is exactly what our nation needs.”

Preston also talked about initiatives to improve job satisfaction and education for enlisted Soldiers as they move up in the ranks.

Several Soldiers in the audience said getting the big picture straight from the Army’s senior enlisted member made an impact.

“He made it clear to us that becoming an NCO is worth it,” said Pfc. Treven Lagerman of the 66th Military Intelligence Group. “It was also nice to hear about what the Army is doing about uncertain dwell times and deployments.”

“The Army is changing in a positive way,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Carten, also from the 66th MI. “Hearing that we’re growing our forces back is great, and knowing that the caliber of civilians we are recruiting into our Army (is high) shows that we’re getting people who really belong here.”



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