

**170TH CASING CEREMONY
BAUMHOLDER, GERMANY
09 OCT 12**

(HOST NATION MAYORS/VISITORS),
COMMANDERS,
COMMAND SERGEANTS MAJORS,
FAMILY AND FRIENDS

GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE. THANKS FOR SHARING THIS
EVENT WITH ALL OF US, AS WE CASE THE COLORS OF A COMBAT
HARDENED ORGANIZATION.

(PAUSE)

I'VE OFTEN STATED THAT COMMANDERS DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT
TO HAVE A BAD DAY.

BUT TODAY, I'M GOING TO VIOLATE THAT RULE

IT SADDENS ME TO CASE THE COLORS OF THE BAYONET BRIGADE,
SO I WILL NOT TRY AND PUT A POSITIVE SPIN ON TODAY'S EVENTS.

(PAUSE)

THERE HAS BEEN A GROUND COMBAT BRIGADE IN BAUMHOLDER
FOR OVER 50 YEARS.

THOSE UNITS HAVE HAD DIFFERENT DESIGNATIONS, WORN
DIFFERENT PATCHES, ACCOMPLISHED A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT
MISSIONS.

BUT THE BAYONET BRIGADE HAS BEEN VERY SPECIAL.

SO WE DO WHAT WE SOMETIMES DO WITH THE VERY BEST UNITS.

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS – AND ESPECIALLY THE LAST SIX MONTHS
– WE'VE GIVEN ONLY THE MOST DEMANDING MISSIONS TO THE
BAYONET BRIGADE.

AND THE LAST FEW YEARS – AND ESPECIALLY THE LAST SIX MONTHS -- HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY TOUGH ON THE SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES OF THE 170TH, AND THE CITIZENS OF BAUMHOLDER.

(PAUSE)

TODAY, THERE ARE NOT MANY OF YOU LEFT

THE MAJORITY OF YOUR FORMATION HAS DEPARTED, ON TO OTHER ASSIGNMENTS, NEW MISSIONS, NEW ADVENTURES, NEW COMMUNITIES.

THOSE WHO REMAIN HAVE SAID GOODBYE TO TOO MANY FRIENDS, TOO MANY BATTLEFIELD COMRADES, TOO MANY NEIGHBORS.

THOSE WHO REMAIN – COMMANDERS, SOLDIERS, FAMILIES, AND THE GERMAN CITIZENS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES – HAVE EXPERIENCED TOO MANY EMOTIONS.

- THE CHALLENGES OF COMBAT
- THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF INCREDIBLE SOLDIERS
- THE REINTEGRATION OF FAMILIES...AND OF THE COMMUNITY
- THEN, THE SHIFT OF FOCUS FROM COMING BACK TOGETHER, TO BEING SPLIT APART...GOING OFF IN ALL DIRECTIONS, TO NEW ASSIGNMENTS, NEW CHAPTERS IN YOUR LIVES.

IT'S NEVER EASY TO SAY GOODBYE TO THOSE WITH WHOM WE'VE SHARED JOY AND PAIN. LAUGHTER AND SORROW. PEACETIME TRAINING AND WARTIME HARDSHIP.

BUT WE HAVE ASKED YOU TO DO ALL THAT, ON AN ACCELERATED TIMELINE.

AND LIKE ALL THE OTHER MISSIONS RECEIVED BY THIS BRIGADE, YOU PERFORMED THAT MISSION MAGNIFICENTLY.

(PAUSE)

THE FLAG WE JUST CASED WILL NOW GO IN THE ARMY ARCHIVES.

AS EACH YEARS PASSES, FEWER WILL KNOW THE DEMANDS PLACED ON THIS BRIGADE, AND THE PHENOMENAL HISTORY YOU HAVE RECORDED.

AN EVER-INCREASING FEW WILL KNOW HOW THE SOLDIERS, NCO'S, AND OFFICERS OF THE 170TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM WERE TESTED AND FOUND VICTORIOUS IN COMBAT

- HOW YOU HUMBLING YOUR FOES, GAVE HOPE TO THE DESPERATE, FOCUSED ON THE DIGNITY OF A FOREIGN PEOPLE, AND REMAINED TRUE TO OUR ARMY AND OUR NATION'S VALUES.

OTHER THAN STUDENTS OF USAREUR'S HISTORY, EVEN FEWER WILL KNOW WHEN YOU RETURNED, YOU EPITOMIZED PROFESSIONALISM, FLEXIBILITY, AND SPEED OF ACTION WHEN THE ARMY GAVE YOU A NEW AND ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE INACTIVATION MISSION.

FEW WILL KNOW HOW YOU CARED FOR YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR EQUIPMENT.

HOW YOU SHOWED A SPECIAL KIND OF HEROISM IN ATTACKING AND OVERCOMING ALL THE CHALLENGES THAT CAME WITH THAT TIME CONSTRAINED INACTIVATION ORDER.

FEW WILL KNOW IT...BUT YOU WILL.

(PAUSE)

THERE IS ONE THING TO CELEBRATE TODAY.

THE YOUNG PRIVATES OR SERGEANTS OR 2D LIEUTENANTS WHO PROUDLY WEAR THE BAYONET COMBAT PATCH TODAY WILL LIKELY BE ASKED IN TEN YEARS "WHAT UNIT IS THAT?"

THEY WILL KNOW.

(PAUSE)

SO, TO ALL THE SOLDIERS AND LEADERS WHO REMAIN, YOU HAVE MY HEARTFELT THANKS. JOB EXCEEDINGLY WELL DONE.

TO ALL THE SPOUSES WHO REMAIN. THANK YOU AS WELL. THE KINDNESS, CARING AND LOVE OF YOUR SOLDIERS, THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN ARMS AND YOUR FELLOW SPOUSES HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN MAGNIFICENT.

TO COL MARK AND KAREN RASCHKE, AND ALL OF YOUR BAYONET LEADERS WHO LED THIS BRIGADE IN THE VERY LAST CHAPTER OF ITS HISTORY....WE GAVE YOU A TOUGH MISSION, AND YOU EXECUTED IT WITH GRACE, PRIDE, AND A SENSE OF FAMILY. THANK YOU FOR THAT.

AND FINALLY, TO MY DEAR FRIEND OF MANY YEARS, LORD MAYOR PETER LANG.

AND TO ALL OF YOUR CITIZENS, AS WELL.

THANK YOU FOR TREATING ALL OF THE SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE LIVED HERE OVER THE YEARS LIKE YOUR FAMILY.

THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING THE TOUGH MISSIONS THEY HAD TO ACCOMPLISH, AND THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING YOUR SUPPORT.

THE BAUMHOLDER COMMUNITY IS OUR VERY STRONGEST AND MOST SUPPORTIVE, AND IT IS BECAUSE YOU UNDERSTAND US.

AS NEIGHBORS, WE ASK MUCH OF YOU.

WE MAKE NOISE THAT IS LOUDER THAN IS FOUND IN MOST GERMAN COMMUNITIES. WE HAVE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE IN THE SEASON OF THE RISING SAP, AND WHO SOMETIMES ARE NOT THE BEST OF CITIZENS.

BUT WE ALSO LOVE YOUR CITIZENS, THE BEAUTY OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THE BEER.

BUT YOU ALWAYS UNDERSTAND US, AND YOU SUPPORT US.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU. VIELEN DANKE.

(PAUSE)

SOMEDAY IN THE FUTURE WE'LL REMEMBER THIS UNIT ...AND
WHAT WILL COME TO MIND IS NOT THE FORMATIONS, THE COMBAT
STREAMERS, THE CASSED FLAGS, AND ESPECIALLY NOT THIS
SPEECH.

BUT WE'LL ALL REMEMBER THE PEOPLE WHO STOOD NEXT TO US
BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE OUR LEGACY.

AND THAT IS A LEGACY WE SHOULD ALL BE VERY PROUD OF.

(PAUSE)

GOD BLESS YOU ALL, AND GOD BLESS OUR COUNTRY.

STRONG SOLDIERS, STRONG TEAMS!