

Assumption of command ceremony remarks by Lt.Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., commanding general, US Army Europe

As prepared for ceremony on Jan. 9, 2013 at Clay Kaserne in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Adm. and Mrs. Stavridis, Minister President Bouffier, Ambassador Mandell, Lord Mayor Dr. Muller, fellow land forces commanders and distinguished guests.

Thank you all for attending this ceremony this morning. It is an honor to be here with you all today, and it feels great to be back in Germany, both to reconnect with old friends and to make new ones.

Most of all, it's great to be joining this wonderful and storied USAREUR team. USAREUR for decades has been our nation's defender of freedom forward. Ann and I are truly humbled to be joining your ranks.

First of all, I'd like to thank Command Sgt. Maj. Davenport and the team for putting on this terrific ceremony. The color guard looks sharp and the USAREUR Band looks and sounds terrific. Thanks for doing such an outstanding job. A special thanks also to the USAREUR Executive Services Division, whose tireless work behind the scenes is making this whole day possible.

Adm. Stavridis and Laura, thank you for many years of support to the USAREUR community and mission. It has been with your support and leadership that USAREUR has been able to strengthen and sustain the many partnerships we have throughout this theater -- partners that are lasting.

Finally I'd like to thank our European friends and allies for attending.

Our European partners, many of whom are represented here today, have stood side by side with us in many parts of the world for the last decade in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, North Africa and the Balkans, to name a few.

These partnerships -- partnerships grounded in trust -- remain the cornerstones for the U.S. engagement with the world. Our European allies continue to be the most likely partners that America's sons and daughters will have on their left and right flanks when our nation calls us to action. This is why USAREUR remains more vital today than ever; because partnerships, and more importantly trust, don't just materialize out of air. They have to be constantly nurtured and developed. USAREUR is in a unique position to do just that.

I am fortunate. For the last two years Lt. Gen. Hertling and Command Sgt. Maj. Davenport have worked tirelessly to strengthen the relationships with our allies by visiting over 40 countries

and making the case for stronger partnerships. Along the way they challenged our units and our allies to think about the future of Europe and the U.S. Army's role here. A future post-Afghanistan, where threats to our security remain but the perceived sense of urgency is diminished.

We have made impressive gains with our allies and partners over the last decade, but our challenge will be to maintain and build upon these gains in a postwar era of dwindling resources. One thing is clear: regardless of resources or troop levels, no less will be asked of us. We will have to maintain our edge as we transition to the postwar environment.

This means that as an organization we will need to get back to the basics and focus on imperatives like discipline, comprehensive fitness and teamwork. As the Army's forward element in Europe, it is up to us to build and maintain trust with our allies and partners.

Over the last decade we have spent a lot of time together training, fighting and learning from each other, and we can't afford to lose that edge as combat operations wind down. Building trust starts with training. Where we keep that edge sharp is at places like the Joint Multinational Training Command, the crown jewel of USAREUR.

JMTC remains the world-class training environment for coalition and multilateral exercises. As a testament to that, recently USAREUR's own 2nd Cavalry Regiment hosted Saber Junction, the largest USAREUR training exercise since 1990, with over 19 allies and partners participating. This training event pitted our units against a complex, hybrid threat in a realistic environment.

This is the future of training here in USAREUR -- realistic training as part of a coalition across the full spectrum of threats. In a future where coalition operations will be the standard, JMTC is the standard.

We also nurture partnerships through higher level leadership training in such places as the Combined Forces Land Component Command seminar or in supporting the creation of professional noncommissioned officer corps infrastructure, the real backbone of the modern-day army.

Training with our allies and partners builds the trust that will carry us to victory on the battlefield. But the bread and butter of what we do as an organization and our first line of effort is preparing our troops for combat.

Training and preparing for unified land operations remains our primary mission as an organization and my primary responsibility as a commander. Therefore we will continue to focus our efforts on preparing combat-ready Soldiers and units.

The commanders and command sergeants major that stand before you all have elements supporting up to three different combatant commands. They have Soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, on intelligence security cooperation missions in Africa, or conducting logistics operations in support of contingency operations. And all of these units adhere to a set of standards and discipline, and trained effectively for the singular purpose of completing their mission and bring their Soldiers home. These are the strong Soldiers of USAREUR.

While all of this is going on forward we can always depend on our host nation friends to be there for us, whether it is enjoying fests together, communities helping out with trips for families, or just goodwill that you share with us all.

Last month I had the pleasure of attending the German-American Christmas concert at the Wiesbaden Kurhaus -- and how about the USAREUR Band and Chorus; they were great! That was a great example of the great relationships we have with our German hosts. Thanks again, Lord Mayor Mueller for that wonderful event.

Speaking of thanks, a special and much-needed thanks to Ann for this 24th move. It seems our life has been in transition for over 34 years and you have been there by my side the entire time. Times of transition have challenged us, and in the end we have endured and embraced them all.

Recognizing the burden faced by our military and civilian families, I make support of families one of my top priorities here at USAREUR. Strong families and communities enable our Soldiers to stay focused on the mission and strengthen our team as a whole.

USAREUR is in a time of transition. Our headquarters has a new home in Wiesbaden, we are in the process of deactivating two long-storied brigades, and we are reducing our garrison footprint across Europe. This transition makes us leaner, better organized, and more agile. In the end we will be better prepared to face the challenges of the future.

You know Fort Hood might be a great place to be, but when it comes to tackling future security challenges... It's only in Europe, through the continuous building of trust with our team of teams -- that's our host nation partners, our European partners and the strong Soldiers of USAREUR -- that this can be done.

Strong Soldiers, Strong Teams!