

In Peace and War

1st Personnel Command



by Debbie McClellan

The 1st Personnel Command has the distinction of being the *first theater personnel command in the United States Army*. The command provides the full range of personnel and administrative support to the US Army Europe Soldier—in war and in peace.

In 1978, following the US Army Europe's Commander in Chief guidance to "organize for war, modify for peace," 1st PERSCOM became the first table(s) of organization and equipment Theater Army personnel command.

The services performed by 1st PERSCOM touch the lives of every commander, soldier, and Army family in the European Theater. As signified in the unit's motto "Soldiers 1st," the personnel of this command strive to ensure that every service is performed with concern for the individual soldier.

The mission of 1st PERSCOM covers a wide range of services. To illustrate a few of these, imagine that *you* are coming to Europe. The following scenes will demonstrate just how 1st PERSCOM will serve you during your tour.

You have received Permanent Change of Station orders from your stateside assignment to US Army Europe. Whether you are officer or enlisted, offices of 1st PERSCOM are already working to determine your exact assignment location and reporting date. Do you have a family? Of course, you are concerned about their traveling to Europe with you. The decision to authorize travel for family members is determined by a 1st PERSCOM elements based on individual communities' family housing forecasts. The decision will be provided to you prior to your departure from the States. After careful planning and taking care of personal and professional

business, you're on your way to Europe on a Military Airlift Command (MAC) flight.

You have just stepped off the plane at Rhein Main Air Base in Frankfurt, Germany. You finally made it to Europe. But what next? Where do you go and how do you get there? Personnel from the 21st Replacement Battalion, a subordinate organization of 1st PERSCOM, will meet you upon your arrival and transport you to their unit, your initial USAREUR processing point. After processing, the 21st Replacement Battalion will arrange your transportation to your new unit.

After departing the 21st Replacement Battalion, you process in at your new duty station and begin your new assignment. One of your first concerns will be to ensure that your family and friends have your new mailing address. US Army Postal Groups, Europe, another subordinate organization of 1st PERSCOM, is responsible for processing all mail for US Army Europe. Moving approximately 130 tons of mail each day, their motto "First Class All The Way" typifies their concern for timely movement of each piece of this large quantity of mail.

While you are inprocessing at your new unit, there's a possibility that your SIDPERS arrival transactions may be processed by the 25th Data Processing Unit, also a 1st PERSCOM activity. The 25th Data Processing Unit manages three of Europe's eleven SIDPERS Data Bases, supporting 1,300 units and 85,000 soldiers stationed from Norway to Saudi Arabia.

You've completed the inprocessing at your unit and are ready to get to work at your job. Your first task is to update and requisition new forms and

regulations. In addition, you have some special printing requirements. 1st PERSCOM's Administrative Management Directorate and US Army Printing and Publications Center, Europe, will assist you in determining your exact needs as well as fulfilling your orders.

Do you want to find out more about the country and its people? Try your local Army library. The Administrative Management Directorate's Library Services Division is responsible for the operation of all libraries in the US Army Europe. Their goal is to provide the most up-to-date information available.

Now that you're settled at work—how about a little recreation? Whether you are interested in hunting, fishing, camping, bowling, sports, art, crafts, music, theater, traveling, or family youth activities, the Morale Support Directorate of 1st PERSCOM and US Army Recreation Services



Programs of well balanced leisure time activities are available for soldiers to enjoy in Europe. (Photo by Roileen D. Chamberlin)

Support Center, Europe, a subordinate unit, will ensure that programs of well-balanced leisure time activities are available for you to enjoy through your community morale support activities.

You are now approaching the end of your tour. Did the time go by too fast? Would you like to stay in Europe a little longer? 1st PERSCOM will be happy to process your Foreign Service Tour Extension—or if you're ready to head back to the States, 1st PERSCOM will process your new assignment orders. And then, as 1st PERSCOM assigns a new individual upon your departure, the personnel and administrative system continues to serve the soldier

in Europe.

These are just a few of the many ways 1st PERSCOM will serve you throughout your tour—from your arrival to your departure.

HISTORY: 1st PERSCOM

The 1st Personnel Command as we know it today grew out of the experience of war. The personnel systems were supporting over eight million US soldiers at the end of World War II - hard to imagine when compared with the theater strength today of 215,000.

The lessons learned then are being used today to shape an organization that can begin on the run. There were many obstacles in supplying a war zone with personnel replacements for a full force of 8 million. A rapid succession of military organizational structures devoted to personnel and administrative operations were created, eliminated, modified or resurrected in different forms to meet mission changes and evolving requirements.

At the beginning of World War II there was no centralized theater-wide replacement system. Experiments with the replacement system conducted in the United States in 1942 resulted in the activation of the first replacement depots and battalions that same year. 1st PERSCOM's own 21st Replacement Battalion was activated at that time. It is credited with participation in the battle campaigns of Naples, Rome, Southern France, and the Rhineland of Germany.

In October 1943, the Commander of the Services of Supply was directed to establish and operate a replacement system for the Field Forces. In November of that year the Field Force Replacement System was established. Its headquarters was at Ben Hall Farms, Cheltenham, England.

On June 10, 1944, the Ground Force Reinforcement Command (European Theater) was established. This command operated directly under the Deputy Theater Commander and was charged with the responsibility for the replacements for all ground units. That command was a forerunner of the replacement operations of the 1st Personnel Command. The genealogical roots of 1st PERSCOM units came from a number of organizations.

The 25th Data Processing Unit, constituted in 1942 as the 25th Machine Records Unit, received credit for the Sicily, Naples, Rome and Rhineland campaigns. In addition, the 25th is honored with three Korean Battle Streamers for the years 1951-1954.

Postal Units have been in Europe for as long as the US Army has been in Europe. Many of these



The key to success is in staffing the Personnel Administration Center with dedicated, trained non-commissioned officers. (US Army Europe Photo)

received campaign credit for all of the major battles from Normandy to the Rhineland, and their decorations include crosses of gallantry and presidential unit citations. The current parent organization, United States Army Postal Group, Europe, was organized in 1969.

Recreation supply and services support in Europe began in early 1944 with the establishment of the Special Services Depot in Bloom, Belgium. It later moved to Bremerhaven and then to its present location in Aschaffenburg.

In July 1942, the first US Army printing plant was formed at Oakley Farm near Cheltenham, England. It was moved to Reims, France in September 1944 and to Hoechst, Germany in June of 1945. The first publications center began as a combined publications and records control center in Oxon, England. Publications later moved to Paris, France, and then numerous other locations around Europe until 1969 when US Army Printing and Publications Center, Europe, was established in its present location in Roedelheim, Germany.

In 1974, the US Army Military Personnel Center, Europe was activated in order to integrate all Theater Army-level personnel management and administration elements into one organization. Included in its charter was the responsibility for the management of various soldier-support services to include Personnel information systems, postal operations, and recreation services.

Several years later, the US Army Military Personnel Center, Europe was deactivated, and in its place, on October 20, 1978, the 1st Personnel Command came into being, commanded by Brigadier General Robert M. Joyce. The current commander, Brigadier General William G. O'Lesky took command in April, 1979.

1st Personnel Command is an organization that performs most of the functions in peace that it would be expected to perform at a time of war. There is one notable exception. During mobilization, the 290th Military Police Brigade (enemy prisoners of war), is assigned to the 1st Personnel Command. Under the CAPSTONE, this reserve component unit based in Nashville, Tennessee, recently successfully participated in a major war exercise here in Europe, proving beyond any doubt its readiness to assume its wartime mission at a moment's notice.

1st Personnel Command is currently involved in the most broadly based participation in war exercises in its history. 1st PERSCOM's mission is real and critical to the theater mission - whether in peace or war.



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