

Extract from an unfinished personal memoir called *Up From Cambria City* by COL Basil J. Hobar, USA (Retired)

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NOTE: I placed my description of USAREUR in the book in Chapter 12, “Germany and the U. S. Army, Europe” at the point I found myself on a German train traveling from *Frankfurt/Main* to *Bamberg* to join my infantry unit in *Bamberg* in January 1960. I was a 22 year old second lieutenant right out of Fort Benning:

“As I sat in my first class compartment, I wondered about *Bamberg* and the Army in Europe. I did not know it at the time but my Army career would bring me to Germany two more times over the next 20 years. Just what was this U.S. Army, Europe? Here at the height of the Cold War at least one-third of our Army was in Europe. It was more or less a self-contained institution that traced its lineage back to the World War II invasion beaches of Sicily, Anzio, Southern France and Normandy.

“USAREUR was huge! It was as a collection of units and organizations spreading from the English Channel coast in France through northern France and into West Germany right up to the Iron Curtain. There was a significant Army presence in Italy. At the height of the Cold War its strength peaked at about 270,000 troops in 1962. It also contained thousands of dependents and it was an employer of thousands of German, French, Italian and other nationals. Former displaced persons (DPs) worked for the Army with some of them in quasi-military “labor service” units such as smoke generating outfits. *Thousands* of troops and dependents were coming and going all the time, as I was at the time. The “local national” employees in supporting jobs provided stability and continuity in a number of areas other than war fighting.

“In Germany, France and Italy the Defense Department, the Army, and the Air Force operated the administrative organizations supporting the combat and other tactical units. These included such things as dependent schools, hospitals, military finance offices, recreation centers in the Alps, military schools, post exchanges (PX), PX auto repair shops, supply and maintenance depots, commissaries, dependent housing, laundries, officer, NCO and enlisted clubs, PX snack bars, counterintelligence units, drivers licensing, and military police. (The Navy had its headquarters, USNAVEUR, in London and had little presence on the continent. The U. S. Air Force, Europe (USAFE) had its headquarters in *Wiesbaden*.)

“There were other important services and institutions. At the top was the military services postal system that had small APOs located in most Army garrisons and air bases and operated by GIs. Mail came and went by air and by ship. “Boat mail” was very slow. Air mail was expensive and limited. An arm of the American Express Company operated more than a few small “banks” on military bases so the troops would have banking service. In 1960 USAREUR even had two “area commands” with the mission of operating the posts, camps and stations and administrative support structure. These were called the Northern Area Command and the Southern Area Command or NACOM (headquarters in *Frankfurt*) and SACOM

(headquarters in *Munich*). They soon fell under Secretary of Defense McNamara's budget axe after the election of 1960.

“There were two famous or at least well-known institutions serving the U.S. military throughout Europe and the world for that matter. One was the European Edition of “The Stars and Stripes” newspaper. This famous paper had its origins in World War II. Published daily in a plant in *Darmstadt* the tabloid-sized paper brought us basic news but no editorials! This practice changed sometime during my career when the Defense Department added editorials. My daily read of the Stripes was important to me. Also available to U.S. troops and civilians was the Paris edition of “The New York Herald Tribune.” It was called simply “The Herald Tribune” and was printed in Paris by the New York Herald Tribune company. I read the Stripes daily but the expensive Tribune had trouble reaching us in *Bamberg* or I was just not interested. Both papers were sold by “Stars and Stripes News Stands” set up in the vicinity of PX stores. These S & S News Stands stocked books and magazines to be sold to the troops and dependents and were an important fixture of life for many of us who liked to read and stay informed.

“The second institution serving us in Europe was part of the worldwide Armed Forces Network of radio stations that we called simply “AFN.” There were more than a few stations of this service in Europe that had its roots in World War II. Since German radio (*Rundfunk*) was state controlled and therefore very dull, many Germans would listen to the popular American music played by the DJs of AFN. In *Bamberg* we listened to the station “AFN Nuremberg” as stations were located in major troop areas such as Munich and *Frankfurt am Main*. The AFN system furnished programs worldwide to the locations of our far-flung military. Some of these broadcasts reached across the Iron Curtain as well although AFNs job was to entertain the troops. (Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were organizations broadcasting propaganda and real news behind the Curtain, their *raison d'être*.)

“The headquarters of USAREUR was located in Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg.<sup>1</sup> The command had two major subordinate commands. One was the mighty 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army; the second was the U.S. Army Communications Zone (COMZEUR). CINCUSAREUR was charged with training and equipping the Army force in Europe but not with fighting WW III. The war would be fought by the commander of the “joint” command called USEUCOM (U.S. European Command). USEUCOM was subordinate to the NATO Supreme Commander of Allied Powers Europe. Both of these headquarters were located in Paris, France. The chain of “operational command” (a joint service term with a precise meaning) went from the Secretary of Defense to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the commanding general of USEUCOM; and then to the commanding general (CG) of the 7<sup>th</sup> US Army. Not to be forgotten or omitted, USAREUR also maintained a battle group and supporting units in *Berlin* that fell under the command of the Berlin Brigade.

“The 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army, with its headquarters near *Stuttgart*, was the Army war fighter and its commander could focus on that mission. It was made up of two corps, five combat divisions, two armored cavalry regiments, and many other “non-divisional” units and organizations such as corps artillery, aviation and logistic support units. One corps was the 5<sup>th</sup> with its headquarters

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<sup>1</sup> Sadly, Campbell Barracks closed in September 2013 and USAREUR headquarters moved to *Wiesbaden*. Today's USAREUR is only a shadow of what it was back then and even into the 1980s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall changed the world.

was in the infamous *I.G. Farben* Building in *Frankfurt*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, which I was joining, had its headquarters in *Würzburg*) and was one of the three divisions in the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ID had two battle groups in *Bamberg*, two in *Schweinfurt*, and one in *Aschaffenburg* all focused on the nearby Iron Curtain frontier with East Germany. The other divisions were the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry (headquarters in *Bad Kreuznach*) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored (headquarters in *Frankfurt*). The other corps was the 7<sup>th</sup> with its headquarters near *Stuttgart*. The 7<sup>th</sup> Corps had two divisions: the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry (*Augsburg*) and the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored (*Göppingen*). In Army doctrine, the geography occupied by the 7<sup>th</sup> Army was called the “Combat Zone.”

“The divisions and many other combat (e.g., artillery), combat support (e.g. engineers) and technical service (e.g. medical, quartermaster, ordnance) units were arrayed in depth from the Iron Curtain to the French border. The U.S. sector reached from the southeastern part of West Germany to the vicinity of *Fulda*. In the area north and west of *Frankfurt am Main*, the 7<sup>th</sup> Army was flanked by units of the *Bundeswehr* and the British were on the German’s left in northern Germany. We were all preparing to fight World War III.

“The second major Army command in Europe was called the U. S. Army Communications Zone Europe. USACOMZEUR or COMZ was the “wholesale” logistic organization with units and depots spread throughout northern France and with some in Italy and Germany. The COMZ operated the port system in France and the major seaport in *Bremerhaven*, Germany through which men and material headed for Germany entered the country. There were at least two Navy Military Sea Transport System (MSTS) troop ships plying the north Atlantic and many merchant freighters. COMZ’s Petroleum Distribution Command operated the extensive U.S. and NATO petroleum pipeline. The pipeline extended from *Donges*, just up the Loire River from *St. Nazaire*, on the French coast to several terminals in France and Germany. The pipeline was a combination of U.S. and French national pipelines and supplied fuel for the Air Force as well.<sup>2</sup>

“We will see later that I had a role in moving the Army out of France later in the decade. COMZ had its headquarters in *Orleans*, France, not far from Paris. The COMZ ran a very big business as I would learn in the future first hand. The geography occupied by it was the “Communications Zone.” The land, sea and air “Line of Communications” or LOC operated by the DoD extended then from the United States through France, Italy and other countries on into the Combat Zone in Germany. This was a very big deal.

“Now when you superimpose the U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) with 1,500 aircraft on this scene you will see that our country’s commitment to NATO was tremendous. Maintaining air bases and a similar support structure as USAREUR, the USAFE was a formidable force. It had bases in France, Germany, Italy, Turkey and the Netherlands. I do not know if it was part of USAFE, but the Air Force had a major airbase in Libya, called Wheelus Air Base. Khadafy would kick us out when he took power in a coup and Wheelus AB would go by the wayside in the late 1960s. I would feel some fallout from that when I was stationed later in *Zweibrücken*.

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<sup>2</sup> David Egan, The Cold War Lifeline in France, (Draft Unpublished Manuscript). 2007. Chapter 5 – Donges–Metz Pipeline.

“It took years for me to develop even an understanding of this array of organizations and units oriented on defeating the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies when they attacked. From the standpoint of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Hobar soon to be on the “front” in *Bamberg*, the headquarters of 7<sup>th</sup> Army and USAREUR might as well have been on the moon! Even the headquarters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ID in *Würzburg*, 100 kilometers away, was only a notion. For me, USAREUR would be confined to the reaches of my rifle company in the 2/4 Infantry and the *Umgebung von Bamberg*. Later in this tour my horizon would expand to *Würzburg* and my area of operations (AO) to the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> ID and beyond.

“All these layers of bureaucratic organization caused problems with each piling regulation upon regulation. The Headquarters of the Department of the Army (HQDA) in Washington issued Army Regulations (ARs) and other directives that governed *every phase of everything* the Army did. General Inspections, called IGs, were mostly about how well you were following those regulations. Each major headquarters down the chain of command issued regulations on top of regulations creating an impenetrable bureaucratic lash up. This maze of regulations flummoxed those of us who had to try to carry them out. In an extreme case I might be tasked to do something and before I could act I would have to have available the AR, the USAREUR regulation, the 7<sup>th</sup> Army regulation, the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps regulation or directive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ID regulation! This could drive a man to drink. Somehow we muddled through and the Army did a lot of things very well.

“An overarching fact of *everyday* life in USAREUR was to be ready *always to go to war*. What did this mean? In my infantry company we could not have more than 5% of us on leave at a time. We could not travel more than two hours from our home stations except on leave or special pass so we could not range very far on weekends. When a practice alert was called we had two hours to muster 90% of the troops and be ready to move out. After being roused out of bed by a telephone call we dressed quickly and headed for the company. As a bachelor officer I had to park my car in a designated lot with the keys in it so dependents could use it in the event of an evacuation. Then I went upon my business. As we will see, life in USAREUR *tactical* units was tough and far from the stereotypical vacation perceived by many Americans.

“So as my train made its way through the snow covered and forbidding forests and hills of the *Spessart* and *Steigerwald* on that winter Sunday, I pondered what was waiting for me in “Sin City,” my piece of this vast enterprise called USAREUR.”

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