



21ST THEATER SUSTAINMENT COMMAND
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE No. 20130108

January 4, 2012

Wounded Heroes Service Center opens on Kleber Kaserne

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21st TSC Public Affairs

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – A 21st Theater Sustainment Command initiative has resulted in a one-of-a-kind Soldier clothing sales facility that caters specifically to wounded Soldiers, enhancing their ability to obtain new and replacement uniform items in an easily accessible and discreet environment.

The Wounded Heroes Service Center, located next to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's Military Clothing Store on Kleber Kaserne, is expected to streamline the process of Soldiers receiving replacement uniform items after being medically evacuated from a combat zone.

The project was funded and constructed by the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern. Wheel chair-access ramps and an improved fire prevention system were the bulk of infrastructure and upgrades. AAFES funded additional improvements that included new shelving.

Although the WHSC is currently in operation and serving wounded Soldiers, the store is scheduled to hold its official grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony, Jan. 16.

“This is the first store that is just for the wounded heroes,” said Deniz Barcala, the Kleber Military Clothing Store manager. “We didn’t use to have a wheelchair entrance or a dressing room that would fit wheel chairs.”

“Now, we have a (wheelchair-user) entrance, (wheelchair-user) bathroom, and (wheelchair-user) dressing room,” Barcala added. “Everything in the store is designed for our wounded heroes.”

“It’s a lot quicker and a lot easier for the Soldiers, and it’s less stressful on us,” said Sgt. Brett Boman, a medically evacuated wounded Soldier from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Schweinfurt, Germany, and native of Albuquerque, N.M. “It helps out a lot having a process that is so easy. It’s user friendly which is good for the Soldiers.”

“The opening of this facility is another example of the Army’s continued investment in the care of our wounded servicemen and women,” said Maj. Gen. Aundre F. Piggee, commanding general of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

It was Piggee’s backing that paved the way for the 720-square-foot facility that carries an assortment of uniforms, gloves, hats, boots and duffel bags. In addition to having automatic doors and being wheelchair-user friendly, the facility is also tucked away on the backside of the normal military clothing store to provide a bit privacy for Wounded Heroes.

Prior to the opening of the WHSC, Soldiers who were evacuated from a combat zone to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center were required to be transported by bus to Kleber where they would wait in the back of the store for their items.

“We used to have to help them walk through the warehouse, and it was very hard to get through the warehouse,” Barcala said. “They needed a shopping cart, because they were getting at least 30 items and it wasn’t healthy for them to go through the warehouse like that.”

“About a year ago, Army and Exchange leadership decided we could serve these heroes better,” Barcala added. Wounded Soldiers receiving replacement uniform items now have access to much better service.

“Out of 3,100 operations worldwide, the Exchange has nothing else like what was built at Kleber Kaserne,” said Col. Fredrick Hannah, the AAFES’ European commander. “Beyond having a facility that is easier to navigate, we also have associates who shop with the service member, put items in their cart and even pack their merchandise up for the bus ride back.”



Clothing Issue

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – Sgt. Brett Boman, a medically evacuated wounded Soldier from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Schweinfurt, Germany, and native of Albuquerque, N.M., shops for an Army combat uniform shirt while visiting the Wounded Heroes Service Center on Kleber Kaserne, Jan. 8. The WHSC is a 21st Theater Sustainment Command initiative which has resulted in a one of a kind wounded Soldiers clothing sales facility designed to give Soldiers the ability to obtain new and replacement uniform items in an easily accessible and comfortable environment. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Warren W. Wright Jr., 21st TSC Public Affairs)

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