



The salute battery adds some firepower from their 105-millimeter guns.

# Salute Battery Serves USAREUR Communities

*By Mr. Dave Melancon*

The 105-millimeter, towed Howitzers from the 529th Military Police Company saw their last battles during World War II. However, the three guns in the company's salute battery have not stopped firing. "They do not fire projectiles any more, but they do fire out a boom," said Second Lieutenant Meagan Vosburg, the company historian and leader of 1st Platoon. "We are the only MP unit in the Army with 105-millimeter pack Howitzers."

Although the 529th performs several key missions, the duties of the salute battery are the more publicly visible operations performed by the company. Military police Soldiers patrol the community around Heidelberg, provide protection to some of the top leadership in the U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR), manage military working dog teams, and train for combat. The 529th—part of the 95th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command—is the largest military police company and ". . . the most diverse MP company in the Army," according to Captain Whitney Jensen, commander of the 529th.

The 529th was activated in June 1945 in New Delhi, India, and relocated to Giessen, Germany, in 1946. In 1951, the company relocated to its current location at Patton Barracks in Heidelberg, where it

assumed the honor guard mission (which includes operations performed by the salute battery, color guard, and rifle-firing team) for USAREUR. Soldiers serving in the color guards have to meet height requirements; however, any Soldier in the 529th (except those serving on security details) can serve on the honor guard or salute battery. Each platoon has its turn in the honor guard, and clerks and supply personnel can also participate. "Historically, there was just one platoon dedicated to honor guard missions, but that's evolved over the years," Captain Jensen said. "With the Global War on Terrorism [sic], we have also been asked to deploy platoons to Operation Iraqi Freedom and to Afghanistan." Captain Jensen estimates that the company participates in at least one ceremony a month, with the spring and summer months being busier due to high-level changes of command.

In addition to changes of command, the salute battery and color guard participate in observances and celebrations for Independence and Memorial Days. The unit has also traveled to Lourdes, France, and Luxembourg to commemorate D-day activities. For Specialist Justin Haney, Headquarters Platoon, service in the battery includes travel and opportunities to support the community and show off

the company's skills during high-visibility events. "It's all about precision and practice," he said. "It's all about firing the cannon at the right moment."

There are no artillerymen in the company. The military police rely on one another to learn about maintaining and firing the guns, preparing the blank ammunition, and executing the drill movements. "It's fun. We get to go to a lot of different places—get seen by a lot of rank," Specialist Haney said.

Specialist Haney and his fellow Soldiers serving in the 529th are part of a long tradition. "We were the sharpest military police company in USAREUR," said Max E. Rockafellow, a sergeant who served in the honor guard from 1960 through 1962. "It was a privilege and a great life-forming experience." Similar to the current mission, the Soldiers of the 529th honor guard in the early 1960s were responsible for providing security to USAREUR leaders in the garrison and the field—the culminating event to the long hours of preparation and training. The

Soldiers even used tricks that included putting glue on leather items to ensure that they would keep their shine and helping one another dress to avoid wrinkled uniforms. "We walked out to the inspection before the honor guard ceremony like penguins, stiff legs and arms," Mr. Rockafellow continued. "The hours of marching practice for honor guard formations, to make them perfect, paid off when we marched onto the field."

The salute battery still uses the same three guns that it did in the early 1960s. These days, the battery recognizes each of the 50 states during a salute-to-the-nation ceremony held every Fourth of July. Mr. Rockafellow said he was part of this same formation in 1960 that honored the new 50-star flag of the United States. "It was a great honor to serve in the 529th Military Police Company," he said.

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