

General Bell Meeting Notes – 23 April 2004

USAREUR Commanding General B.B. Bell spoke to Family Readiness Group members and Rear Detachment Soldiers on April 23 in Friedberg, Germany. The meeting was a frank and spirited discussion of the challenges facing 1st Armored Division spouses who have had their family reunions delayed by 90 to 120 days as the division extends its mission in Iraq. Bell promised to "cut through the nonsense and start serving soldiers better" by ensuring that regulations work for Soldiers and their families. Spouses had concerns about powers of attorney, counselors, child care, mentoring, summer school, Visa processing, and vehicle registration extensions. Bell directed his subject matter experts to solve all of these issues immediately. Bell also announced that each Soldier who was extended in Iraq will receive \$800 of Assignment Incentive Pay and \$200 of additional Hazardous Duty Pay for each month they are extended.

Questions from spouses:

1. Will summer school be offered? DoDDS will look into it.
2. Can youth services programs be extended into the summer time. Yes, we're working it now.
3. Can we get more doctors, chaplains and pediatric dentist. USAREUR Staff is working the issues now.
4. Can we get sports camps. IMA has requested sports figures to host sports camps for us.
5. General Bell will contact the USA Ambassador concerning visas for foreign spouses....so they may obtain a visa without their spouse being present.
6. How will soldiers get passports? Soldiers do NOT need passports for traveling to the USA or within NATO countries. They can travel on ID card and leave form.
7. Are PCS orders remaining the same or will assignments change. Orders will remain the same and will only be deferred. Please talk to 55th Personnel Support Battalion about when you would like to move and we will try to accommodate your desires.
8. Some banks do not accept General Powers of Attorney. What should we do? Contact legal assistance and they can contact the SJA in Iraq and assist you in getting a Special Power of Attorney. It can be done via email and notarized in Hanau.
9. The military pays for the travel of one parent to enroll a student in college. Can this be extended to other family members that are required to travel with the family as well due to the deployment? Looking into it.
10. For those that have taken an ERD (Early return of dependents), can the Army pay for their travel back for the Redeployment Ceremony? GEN Bell is pushing hard to make more Space A travel available for spouses.
11. Will soldiers lose leave if they are over 60 days. No, soldiers can carry up to 120 days (4 years of leave) under the combat exclusion act.

USAREUR published a Redeployment and Reintegration Guide for Kids, which is hot off the press and will soon be available in our community.