



# USAG BENELUX Quarterly

VOL. 1, ISSUE 2, Summer 2021  
LINE OF EFFORT 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

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Line of Effort 2: Infrastructure



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TOP, OPPOSITE PAGE: U.S. Army Garrison Benelux personnel install a U.S. Army M24 "Chaffee" tank as a static display in a roundabout May 19, 2021 at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium. (U.S. Army photo by Libby Weiler, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)

BOTTOM, OPPOSITE PAGE: Teams from U.S. Army Garrison Benelux and its mission partners planned and converted a chapel building at Caserne Daumerie into a medical holding facility during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. (U.S. Army photo by Bryan Gatchell, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)



TOP: Grand opening for a barbecue area at the unaccompanied service member barracks at Chièvres Air Base.



BOTTOM LEFT: The courtyard at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux - Brussels.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Building 8 at sunrise at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux - Brunssum, the Netherlands.

## A note on this publication, on infrastructure

By the editorial staff

This publication is the second in a series of quarterly online magazines scheduled to be produced by the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs staff, compiled from new and existing stories.

Each online quarterly will focus on one of the garrison's major lines of effort in accomplishing its mission and vision. Those lines of effort are 1) People, 2) Infrastructure, 3) Protection, 4) Services and 5) Operationalizing the Garrison. All four quarterlies (and stories concerning operationalizing the garrison) will be compiled into one physical publication at the end of the cycle.

This publication's focus is on infrastructure.

U.S. Army installations provide secure and sustainable facilities and infrastructure that support combatant commanders' top priorities, enable Army missions, and main-

tain Soldier and unit readiness, according to the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management. Well maintained installation infrastructure enhances projection of national power and enables the Army to deploy ground forces, prevent conflict, shape outcomes and conduct military operations. Installations enable Soldiers to be trained and ready to fight and win.

USAG Benelux has made some major breakthroughs in infrastructure with the move of its Netherlands operations from Schinnen to Brunssum in 2020. Work continues for the Brussels community, as Sterrebeek Annex is being built up and plans are under development to move there permanently.

And at Chièvres Air Base, major works have been conducted to improve roads, to enhance life at the unaccompanied service member barracks and much more.

We hope you enjoy a few of these stories dedicated to infrastructure.



Construction equipment sits outside a road deviation near Gate 14 at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium.

# Planning proves key to unlocking garrison successes present, future

Story by USAG Benelux Public Affairs

CHIÈVRES, Belgium – The story of U.S. Army Garrison Benelux and U.S. Army support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is one that extends back decades and one that involves deliberate, long-term infrastructure planning.

It is also a story rooted in the present that should extend decades into the future.

The famous and successful U.S. investor Warren Buffett once said, "Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."

Deliberate planning is familiar to the USAG Benelux team since 1967, when the NATO and its supporting U.S. military organizations moved from France to Belgium.

From the NATO-SHAP Support Group to the 80th Area Support Group and now to the USAG Benelux, leaders and their teams have

continuously striven to improve its infrastructure, people and processes, evolving from a local and static environment to a holistic and dynamic environment ready to meet the challenges of a power projection platform.

The unit redesignation to USAG Benelux in 2005 marked an important point in the organization's history. The garrison became the Army's home in the Benelux, and its role expanded to help provide agility, capability and interoperability to customers and mission partners.

Seven years later in 2012, USAG Benelux underwent a major transformation when subordinate garrisons USAG Schinnen in the Netherlands and USAG Brussels deactivated and became satellite sites of USAG Benelux.

As the Army continued to modernize, Installation Management Command – Europe transformed through a strategy of consolidation  
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The commissary at Chièvres Air Base, once located in a hangar, above, relocated to a new building and its current location, below..

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tion, divestiture and investment in 2015. The garrison became part of the European Infrastructure Consolidation process. A year later, the garrison accepted the strategically vital Army prepositioned stock mission, which included APS-2 Dülmen in Germany, APS-2 Eyselshoven in the Netherlands, and APS-2 Zutendaal in Belgium.

Year after year, the garrison planned to shape its future, moving to new sites, renovating aging buildings, repairing roads, building new facilities, improving lighting, designing, maintaining and modernizing. Through all this planning and work, the garrison kept one goal in mind: to provide top-notch real world property in support of readiness and well-being. Projects, such as the conversion of a hangar into a modern commissary at Chièvres Air Base and such as the building and opening of facilities at Brunssum, provide concrete proof of this support.

The garrison is located at the gateway of the Atlantic bridge that joins the European Union and the United States. Together, the impact of the garrison workforce goes far beyond the Benelux borders, and the workforce takes immense pride in its mission.

In the face of an ongoing global pandemic, the garrison continues to plan so future

tenants and community members can enjoy the fruits of their labor. The Directorate of Public Works provided handwashing stations outside building entrances as well as other protective measures. They also converted the formal chapel at Caserne Daumerie to a COVID-19 medical holding facility for incoming personnel to the garrison area of responsibility.

The garrison conducted other non-pandemic business in 2020. They moved the bell tower from its location at the former garrison headquarters at Caserne Daumerie to the new headquarters at Chièvres Air Base. They completed the move from the former Netherlands site of Schinnen to the new facilities at Brunssum, which include a commissary, recreation facility, and many other offices and organizations.

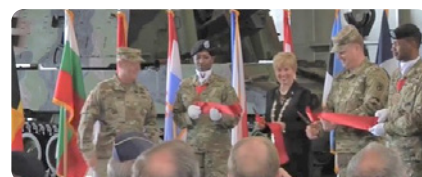
In 2021, the garrison built up new roundabouts to ease traffic flow at Chièvres Air Base as well as built up walkways and made further roadway repairs. The team made improvements to the unaccompanied service member quarters there too, including installation of sunscreens and a newly constructed barbecue area. At garrison sites at Brunssum, Brussels and Chièvres, the garrison workforce took part in area

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In this photo collage, the history of U.S. Army Garrison Benelux is depicted from the move of NATO from France to Belgium, upper left, through several unit redesignations, right and second from the top, to the assumption of subordinate sites at Brunssum, the Netherlands and Brussels, middle bottom photographs, and the assumption of the Army prepositioned stock site mission in Europe, bottom right three photographs.





TOP: Workers decorate the walls of the USAG Benelux headquarters at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium to reflect the three Army prepositioned stock sites the garrison manages in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.



BOTTOM: Sun sets at the bell tower at the USAG Benelux headquarters at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium.



**(Continued from Page 4)**  
beautification. At SHAPE, the school-age center underwent renovation.

Nevertheless, the garrison's story does not end there as the team looks ahead to a new vision of growth and opportunity. USAG Benelux continues to plan, program, budget, and execute projects to ensure its customers receive the quality of life commensurate with their service, so they can continue to operate and win within the beauty of the Benelux. New Family housing is currently in planning, and a new school at Sterrebeek Annex is un-

der construction for the Brussels-area community.

Beneluxians do work to deliver the best infrastructure and services for warfighters and their Families. The garrison strives to be agile, innovative and dedicated to pay homage to those who came before, so that those who come after us can live and work in the European community and workplace of choice.

This is already a garrison committed to building teams that are stronger together.





Single service members prepare hot dogs and hamburgers at their new barbecue area July 25, 2021 at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium. (U.S. Army photo by Libby Weiler, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)

# Single service members enjoy new barbecue area at Chièvres AB

By the USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office

CHIÈVRES, Belgium – U.S. Army Garrison Benelux officially opened a new barbecue pit during a rain-pelted Sunday afternoon July 25, at the single service member quarters at Chièvres Air Base.

During the grand opening, attended by members of the garrison and Installation Management Command – Europe command groups, scores of single service members from the barracks cooked and ate hamburgers and hotdogs, drank cold drinks, cut and ate cake and enjoyed an event despite some rainy weather.

"This directly gets after quality of life," said Col. James Yastrzemsky, commander of USAG Benelux, during the event to the attendees. "This is what it's all about. People doing work behind the scenes to bring a beautiful project from idea, conception to where we are today, on behalf of you all, on behalf of Soldiers."

Most everything at the barbecue area save the wooden awning and refurbished picnic tables are new, and personnel at the garrison's Directorate of Public Works designed and oversaw the project.

Contractors removed a chimney in disrepair that was attached to the awning. An outside marble-top kitchen area was built up, which includes a hot plate, a barbecue, an outside fridge, a bar area, hot and cold water taps, and a hose for cleaning. The awning itself was repainted. Electrical outlets are available so the residents can plug in and listen to music while enjoying the area.

On the other side of the barbecue area are two almost fully circular metal benches, in which the sitting space transitions almost as a Möbius strip from the outside to the inside of the partial circle. One bench is a designated smoking area and the other sits beneath a broad, wide-weave sun screen. At one point during the design and planning,

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DPW had considered wooden benches, but given the often wet weather in the Walloon region of Belgium, metal would dry faster and last longer.

Other considerations for the barbecue area included safety measures such as an on-hand fire extinguisher and lighting and security systems.

Contractors working with the DPW team also replaced the clinkers that once covered the ground and placed down new flagstones in their stead.

Frenz Slayton, manager for Army Family Housing and Unaccompanied Persons Housing, pushed for the new barbecue area and initially set forth a design for it.

"This was a great opportunity to show these single Soldiers that, yes, we do care about you, and that this was especially only for you," said Slayton. "That's what makes the whole thing extra special.

"We're really proud of it," she continued.

Slayton further credited one of DPW's engineer, David Diricq, for his work with the contractors to make the project happen.

"We do our best to provide a nice place to allow a good time to the Soldiers and the

community," said Diricq.

The opening of the facility, initially planned to be a small event, turned into an event of larger significance and attendance as Tommy Mize, director of IMCOM-E, and IMCOM-E Command Sgt. Maj. Samara Pitre joined the festivities.

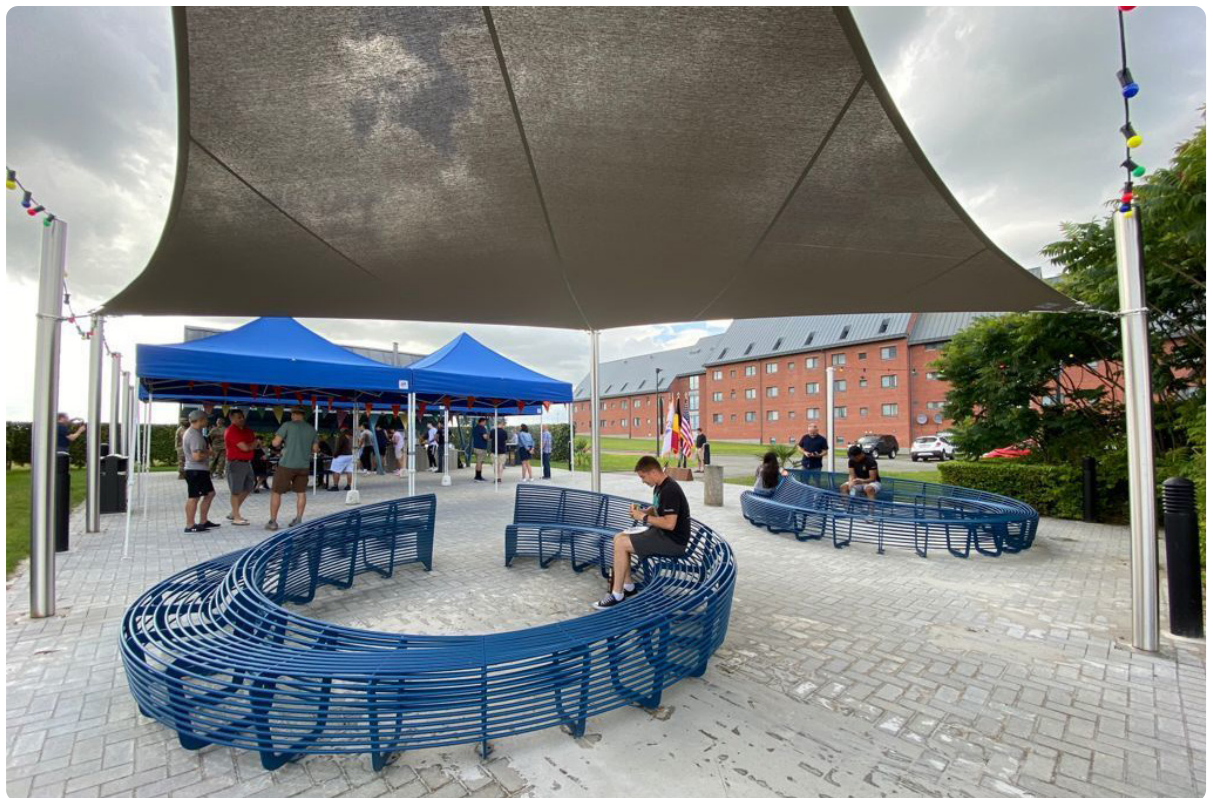
Pitre, herself a previous command sergeant major of USAG Benelux, provided a unique perspective to the event and to the newly opened facility.

"I spent quite a lot of time around these barracks, and one of the things we kept talking about was that we make things better," she said. "I hope you guys take advantage of it as much as you can."

The larger ceremony included aid from other garrison and tenant organizations. The Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation provided open-air tents, which proved useful during the downpour. The on-post Commissary provided much of the food for the events, including the hot-dogs, hamburger patties and buns for both.

Slayton echoed the point that, like the barbecue area itself, the generosity for the event was also aimed at the single service members.

Single service members enjoy new benches at their new barbecue area July 25 at Chièvres Air Base, Belgium. (U.S. Army photo by Libby Weiler, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)





# Lunch pail awardee: Amanda Hill, Master Planning Division chief

Story and photo by Libby Weiler,  
USAG Benelux Public Affairs

CHIÈVRES, Belgium – As a recurring segment of the garrison's online town hall event "Coffee with the Commander" and employee town halls, several employees' contributions to the community were highlighted with the lunch pail award.

The lunch pail symbolizes the "Do Work" ethic of the garrison workforce, according to Col. James Yastrzemsky, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux commander. The garrison's people do work daily on behalf of themselves and their community, never seeking spotlight or reward. They simply roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty with great pride in putting in an honest day's work.

Each awardee is the steward of the lunch pail until it is awarded anew. The awardee leaves behind a token for the next awardee to take with him or her and keep safe.



Amanda Hill

Amanda Hill, Master Planning Division chief, was a recipient of the lunch pail in May. She left a ten-millimeter wrench in the pail.

"We are blue-collar problem solvers," Hill said. "The term is 'iron major' – someone who is working in the trenches and working to make the mission get done. I thought the wrench was pretty clever. I wanted to make sure it was metric, not U.S. customary, because metric is really the language of science, and so much of what we do is always based in metric."

"What I do is plan and program facilities and think about really the future of our installations for the mission," continued Hill. "I work with an incredible team, my team here at master planning; it is nice for their work to be recognized, because it is not just my work."

"Probably the thing I'm most proud of is we got a 16 million dollar water line project," said Hill of her work on Chièvres Air Base. "I am doing a full-scale replacement of all of the three types of facilities - the water line, the sewer line and the fire loop line."

"Most people do not think about the fact that we have water pipes that are so old that they are actually collapsing, because the pressure drops so much in them," she continued. "Most people don't think about that."

Construction is scheduled to start in the autumn.

"We are going to have groundbreaking right about November," said Hill. "You are going to see massive trenching for about 18 months. It really is the entire installation. This is going to set us up for success for not only future development, but also our housing."

"People always want the shiny building," Hill concluded, "but if you don't have the water line to support your shiny building, it doesn't matter."



# Ribbon-cutting marks grand opening of multi-faceted recreation Hub at Brunssum

Leadership from Installation Management Command – Europe helped to cut a ribbon for the Hub, the Army's premier open-concept indoor recreation facility, July 27 at its location at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – Brunssum. (U.S. Army photo by Jessica Abbas, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)



[Editor's note: Portions of this article were previously published.]

By the USAG Benelux Public Affairs Office

BRUNSSUM, Netherlands – Leadership from Installation Management Command – Europe joined a grand opening ceremony for the Hub, the Army's premier open-concept indoor recreation facility, July 27 at its location at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – Brunssum.

Tommy Mize, the director of IMCOM-E, and IMCOM-E Command Sgt. Maj. Samara L. Pitre helped cut a ribbon on the facility with members of the garrison command team and a crowd of Brunssum Army community members.

"It's an honor to deliver the Hub to the community today," said Col. James Yaszemsky, commander of USAG Benelux. "It's a place to build and strengthen relationships, a place to break bread and gather with one another, share a beverage of choice. It's a place to work out and sweat. It's a place for moments that matter. And last, but not least, it's a place to have fun. It truly is a place to create a home away from home."

The Hub is a 38,750-square foot facility that houses in its open-concept space a restaurant, areas to hold Family board game nights, an indoor playground for small children, a suite of virtual reality computer systems, and an artificial turf on which to play lawn games or watch a film on the Army's largest television screen.

The open-concept space is only part of what the Hub offers. The facility also has a versatile indoor sports court, a physical fitness center, a bar, a slot casino, meeting spaces, two themed escape rooms, and long-term storage with 24-hour access.

With the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux's move of its Netherlands-based operations from the former site at Schinnen to its Brunssum facilities in 2020 as part of the Army's European Infrastructure Consolidation, the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) seized the opportunity to design from the foundation up a facility that can serve the military Family of today.

On the cutting edge, players can don virtual reality headgear, wield two handheld

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controllers, and navigate the globe. Spectators can see on a screen what the virtual reality user is doing from the VR user's perspective. Another two virtual reality set-ups include chairs that can function as the seat in a car or the seat in a cockpit. Flight simulation and drivers testing are possible on these machines.

In the indoor sports court, there is a large projection system, which can turn into a large, physically interactive gaming system. Staff of the Hub can dim the lights, light up one of the walls, and play both educational and recreational games for students, who score points by throwing balls at images on the wall. The system has many programmable games that teach physics, math, nutrition and much more, all while engaging the players physically.

"We really wanted to focus on recreation that is current, and we think we've done that," said Stacy Perez, director of USAG Benelux DFMWR. "The ultimate goal is to provide MWR services, of course, under one roof that speaks to what Soldiers and Families want today."

And oftentimes, service members and their Families simply wish to relax. There is a space to sit next to a hearth (with an artificial fire) and read. And there are a few spaces, where Families or friends can play classic low-tech board games, which MWR has stocked.

Also in the facility is a bar called The Mine, which is themed after the Staatsmijn

Emma, a locally famous coalmine. Next door to that is a small casino containing slot machines.

"There's something for everyone," said Perez. "We've created an indoor park environment. And for those gloomy days, you can come in, and we're going to brighten your day."

Brian Cook is the facilities manager for the Hub. He oversees DFMWR operations at Brunssum. He said that although the facility has its precursors throughout the Army, this is the first of its kind.

"There are recreation centers that have food ops and programming rooms, but nothing with the size and scope of this one, where every last element of MWR is in one facility," said Cook. "It is unique. It is a milestone for the Army."

The Hub was scheduled to open in early 2020, but the onset of a global pandemic delayed the grand opening. Services within the Hub opened when COVID-19 prevention measures loosened, but the community never held a grand opening for the facility.

As part of the July 27, 2021 ceremony, community members played cornhole on the lawn area inside, played shuffleboard and board games in the Family area, donned virtual reality helmets, ate cake and drank coffee, and talked with one another.

To learn more about the Hub and other DFMWR services at USAG Benelux – Brunssum, visit [brunssum.armymwr.com](https://brunssum.armymwr.com).



Community members play corn hole and other indoor games at the Hub, the Army's premier open-concept indoor recreation facility, July 27 at its location at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – Brunssum. (U.S. Army photo by Jessica Abbas, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)





## Workforce beautifies its garrison

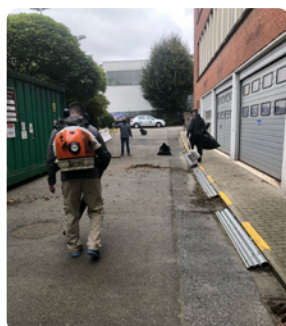
In the autumn and spring, the U.S. Army Garrison workforce takes part of the day to clean up their work spaces and beautify the common areas of the garrison.

**TOP:** Concrete planters at Chièvres Air Base receive a power wash during the 2021 spring area beautification.

**MIDDLE:** Team members clean up USAG Benelux - Brunssum, fall 2020.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** A team member blows leaves at USAG Benelux - Brussels, fall 2020.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Team members sanitize the Religious Support Office at Chièvres, fall 2020.







From left, Jeroen Smeets, carpenter; Hilmo Korac, painter; and Math Kubben, ground maintenance worker, at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux - Brunssum collectively share 72 years of experience working for the U.S. Army in the Netherlands and the tri-border area.

# Benelux tradesmen share combined 72 years of Army history

Story and photos by Naomi van Loon,  
USAG Benelux Public Affairs

BRUNSSUM, Netherlands – Few people have seen as much of U.S. Army Garrison Benelux as Hilmo Korac, Math Kubben and Jeroen Smeets have – respectively painter, ground maintenance worker, and carpenter at the garrison's Brunssum installation.

Throughout their careers, the three have experienced working at sites in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, maintaining materiel, buildings and terrains, and repairing the homes of service members stationed in the tri-border area.

The tradesmen with the Directorate of Public Works recently shared memories of their combined 72 years at U.S. Army Garri-

son Benelux: memories of road trips to the Army Prepositioned Stock Site (APS-2) in Zutendaal, Belgium; of oiling train tracks at APS-2 Dülmen in Germany; and of various sites, old and new, in the Netherlands.

Their story began in Brunssum, at the former NATO Industrial Complex (NIC) site that now hosts USAG Benelux - Brunssum.

"We used to work in Brunssum in the nineties, back when NIC-central was still a POMS site, so we do have a connection to it," Kubben said. "Take the office we're in now, that beam used to hold a crane that would hoist tank components. Over there, you'd be sitting on the roof. And there were a lot of people. Mostly young mechanics, who liked a bit of mischief."

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POMS stands for Prepositioned Organizational Materiel Storage. Between 1984 and 2006 there were five locations for storage and maintenance of U.S. Army materiel in the Netherlands: Brunssum, Eygelshoven, Vriezenveen, Coevorden and Ter Apel. In total, between 2,000 and 3,000 people worked at the POMS sites.

Korac, Kubben and Smeets faced reorganizations when the POMS sites closed in Brunssum in 2004 and Eygelshoven in 2006. Initially, they transferred to Eygelshoven, where they maintained and cleaned Army vehicles. They then transferred to DPW at the now-closed Schinnen installation.

"I think it's a pity how Eygelshoven is sometimes portrayed; I had some of the best years of my working life there," Smeets said. "I was originally an Army vehicle mechanic. We had a lot of fun among colleagues, we would crack jokes. But we always got the job done in time.

"There was some insecurity when we transferred," continued Smeets. "I initially worked through an employment agency, but then I got a fixed contract. When Eygelshoven closed, I was very fortunate to become a carpenter at the Schinnen site."

At DPW in Schinnen, the tradesmen became responsible for repairs and maintenance of terrains, buildings and homes. Their work included fixing roof leaks, painting, emptying the recycling center, and salting the roads during winter. It was rewarding work, according to Korac, with the occasional memorable case.

"One time, we were asked to come to clean up a tree," Kubben said. "It had fallen on the chaplain's Mercedes convertible, leaving a dent in the hood. Fortunately, it missed the retractable roof. After we removed the tree, out comes the chaplain and says, 'My sons, you are blessed!'"

Some assignments were further away, like the time Korac, Kubben and Smeets helped a large German train company inspect and maintain train tracks at the APS-2 Dülmen.

"And we used to service addresses in Rotterdam and Brabant," Korac said. "Once, we even worked at a base in Rheindahlen, where they had a complete village with American and British families."

Kubben appreciated the chance to work in a different location every now and then.

"I enjoy mowing the lawn at the CYS (Child, Youth and School Services), for instance," he said. "It feels like a little excursion when work isn't always at the same place. I enjoy taking the car for a few hours to drive to a different site, like Zutendaal."

When the USAG Benelux installation in Brunssum opened, the 'new' site was one the DPW tradesmen were closely familiar with.

"It's nice to see how the buildings have changed since we worked here the first time," said Smeets. "You can really see a difference in how it's become. The buildings are definitely an improvement, and it's easier now that the offices are closer together. Of all the sites I've worked at, Brunssum is my favorite."

Having such a long history at the garrison means Korac, Kubben and Smeets relationships spans decades.

"I remember, I took my little boy to a Fourth of July gathering, where the public affairs specialist held a speech," Kubben told. "During the speech, my kid was making so much noise. Twenty years later I ran into the public affairs specialist again, and she still remembered – 'It was your boy who shouted at that speech!'"

"We're still in touch with our former colleagues in Eygelshoven," said Smeets. "When we go there for an assignment and run into colleagues we used to work with, it's nice to greet each other."

"We're a close team," Kubben said. "Our team consists of about ten people in total, so we have each other's back."

To learn more about the Directorate of Public Works at USAG Benelux, visit [go.usa.gov/xFVMX](https://go.usa.gov/xFVMX).

Sparks fly as contractors perform construction work for the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux, on Chièvres Air Base, Belgium, Nov. 27, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by Pierre-Etienne Courtejoie, Training Support Center Benelux)



# USAG Benelux plans, constructs Chièvres Air Base of the future

Story by Bryan Gatchell,  
USAG Benelux Public Affairs

CHIÈVRES, Belgium – The personnel of the Directorate of Public Works at U.S. Army Garrison Benelux have turned their vision onto Chièvres Air Base, aiming to transform the western Belgian installation into a “community of choice” for members of the Armed Forces.

That transformation has taken different manifestations in the garrison, from road work to replanting.

One of the more obvious places is near Gate 14 on the north side of the air base.

Until recently, stanchions and signs bedecked in reflective material appear before visitors who pass through the gate. The drivers on their way to the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux headquarters, Commissary, Post Ex-

change, fitness center or other facilities now drive onto a newly built roadway that runs parallel to the former road, which heavy machinery remade.

Community members now drive through a roundabout, which has replaced a Y-shaped intersection.

Furthermore, contractors are installing medians near the garrison headquarters buildings. A pedestrian / biking path will run parallel to the Gate 14-headquarters corridor. At the on-post barracks, contractors upgraded a barbecue pavilion structure and put up solar filters and blackout curtains in the rooms for warmer, longer days.

This is in addition to other improvements that have already occurred, such as the renovation and restriping of the Commissary and Post Exchange parking lots, the creation of a

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roundabout in front of the lodge, and the replanting of the concrete planters.

"People take pride in their workplace, and they take pride in their work," said Nathan Rowland, director of Public Works for the garrison.

The garrison's mission is to "provide integrated Base Operations to diverse, multi-national, geographically dispersed communities to enable readiness and resiliency in support of a 'Strong Europe.'" Rowland explained why ensuring the well-being of its people is critical to its mission.

"The garrison is people," he said. "Every aspect of all the garrison does is fueled by human ingenuity, human creativity, and human passion. We organize resources but at the center of that is us: people."

These projects are largely taking place at the "Community Support District" of Chièvres Air Base. The Community Support District is one of four at Chièvres Air Base. The others are the Airfield, the Special Operations Forces District, and the Operations District, which includes the Directorate of Public Works, the Logistics Operations Center and other industry-like activities.

DPW and the garrison have different visions for each of the different districts based on each of their planned usages. For the Community Support District, the vision is for a Belgian-style neighborhood. Proposed plans for Army Family housing would incorporate Walloon-style architecture (in keeping with the host nation community).

Amanda Hill, the Master Planning Division chief for DPW, spoke about planning out the future of the garrison and Chièvres Air Base in particular.

"We're allowed to do prudent planning so we can have a really solid way forward," she said. "What can you improve? What can you demolish if a structure is outdated? What sort of building standards do you need?"

These plans have been in the works since 2018, and the garrison will continue planning out to 10 years along a five-year planning cycle.

The planning documents propose building and road standards. The document even elaborates on which trees and shrubs are likely to thrive at Chièvres.

"We have a planting guide that was developed as part of our area development plan for Chièvres," said Rowland. "That guideline was used to kind of do the final plant selection for the planters."

The improvements are not merely aesthetic; many improvements will also enhance safety through the base.

As winter settles in and days shorten, it's more likely that community members will run or ride bikes in the dark before or after work. Keeping the pedestrians and cyclists separate from the automobiles will keep them safer, especially as visibility decreases.

Also, the intersection, which the new roundabout is replacing near Gate 14, adjoins roads at a non-90-degree angle, with one approach having a relatively high speed limit and with the other two approaches having relatively low speed limits.

Whether laying out plans for improving the airfield or for making the SOF District a "walkable campus;" to outlining the standards to which new buildings are built or which plants are planted, Hill said the Army's purpose for thinking through this level of detail is for the benefit of not only our people, but also our nation:

"We want a deliberately cohesive plan that will endure (so we can) be the best stewards possible for the American taxpayers."

"Infrastructure projects across our garrison like these directly contribute to the Army's number one priority on people," said Col. James Yastrzemsky, garrison commander of USAG Benelux. "These projects directly tie to the health, safety, morale and welfare of our people – even the smallest improvements matter. It is all about improving our home away from home and being proud to drive through the gates each day. Our workforce takes great pride doing work to deliver the best infrastructure and services for our community. Do Work and We Deliver – that's what the Benelux does."

# Environmental Division proves crucial to European APS mission

Story by Naomi van Loon,  
USAG Benelux Public Affairs

BRUNSSUM, Netherlands – At U.S. Army Garrison Benelux's three Army prepositioned stock sites in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, Europeans and Americans work together to receive, transfer, maintain and store vehicles and other equipment in support of U.S. Army Europe and Africa missions.

Enabling this logistical mission, the Directorate of Public Work's Environmental Division collaborates with knowledgeable authorities to ensure the continued health of local flora and fauna.

"APS operations and infrastructure development are incredibly layered," said Dwayne Key, APS program manager at USAG Benelux. "The work of our Environmental Division

facilitates the execution of millions of dollars of US-funded projects on time and in support of USAREUR-AF."

A case in point is the estimated 38 million-euro modernization upgrade at APS-2 Eygelshoven, the Netherlands, which houses 15 protected species, including salamanders, lizards and grass snakes.

"Before the construction begins, the area has to be inspected and cleared for threatened and endangered species by external ecological specialists," said Hans Verwasch, environmental engineer. "Based on that, we know if a project is allowed in the area."

During the process, which takes six to nine months, external experts use various tools to survey the area, including bio-screens – gray shields that cordon off future construction areas, within which mats are placed up-

**(Continued on next page)**



LEFT: A Glanville fritillary, a type of butterfly, perches atop a flower in this undated photo from 2020 at Army Prepositioned Stock Site Zutendaal, Belgium.

BELOW: A squirrel has approached the fence at one of U.S. Army Garrison Benelux's Army prepositioned stock sites Sept. 17, 2020.

(U.S. Army photos courtesy of Environmental Division, DPW, USAG Benelux)





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side-down. After experts inspect the mats for bugs and animals that gather underneath, they release the creatures into the ecological preservation areas on-site.

Environmental preservation takes place at each of the APS-2 sites in the USAG Benelux footprint. If you look hard, you will find traces of it everywhere: branches that serve as breeding places for grass snakes, nest boxes, floating bucket traps and more.

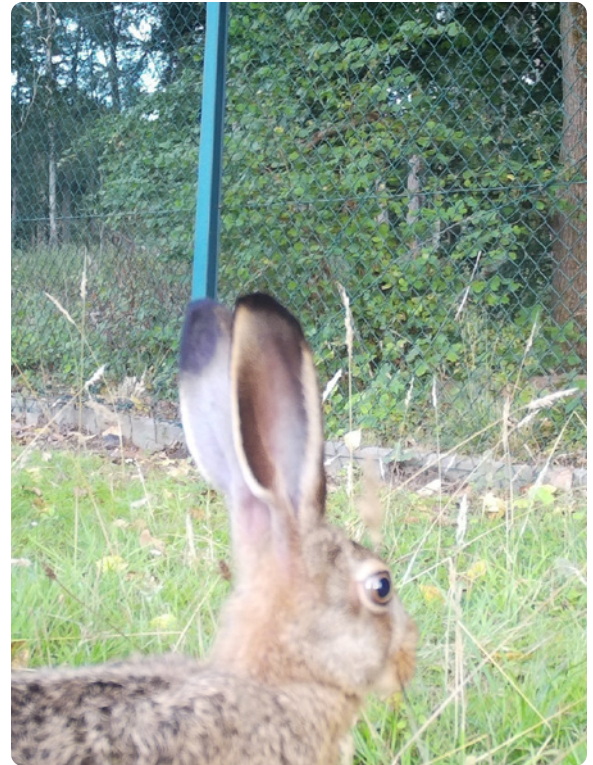
While some surveying depends on traditional methods, like searching for bat droppings, the environmental division also employs high-tech tools. At APS-2 Dülmen, Germany, for instance, specialists used a special bat recorder, set at different frequencies to detect all bat species. After the experts identified three endangered species, the serotine, Bechstein's and whiskered bats, they recommended lowering artificial lighting around ponds and forests to avoid disturbing the bats' hunting paths.

Preservation is even present in the way the grass is mown.

"Because the area around the runway at APS-2 Zutendaal (Belgium) is protected, the mowing has to be done at just the right intensity," Juliette Vermeulen, external ecological specialist, said. "It's a rare habitat that's very important to the protected Glanville fritillary butterflies, so there is a specific nature management plan for this site."

The Environmental Division partners with local, regional and national authorities, including municipalities, water authorities and forestry commissions. And as each site is located in a different country, the division also navigates regulations in three countries.

"When you cut trees in Flanders you have to compensate by planting trees," said Vermeulen. "During deforestation in Zutendaal last year, we worked in coordination with the Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos (ANB, the Belgian nature and forestry agency), to identify compensation measures. Rather than natural afforestation, they advised planting native shrubs and broad-leaved trees. That's much better for nature than the pine



TOP: A rabbit appears on camera near one of the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux's Army prepositioned stock sites.

ABOVE: Newts move about on the lid of a bucket trap as they are photographed and counted at one of the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Army prepositioned stock sites in this undated photo.

(U.S. Army photos courtesy of Environmental Division, DPW, USAG Benelux)

trees that were less interesting for biodiversity.

"In Eygelshoven (the Netherlands), we collaborate with German partners," continued Vermeulen. "As we're right on the border, a tree that has fallen over in Germany could affect our site in the Netherlands. It's great to be working with so many organizations; it gives a much better picture and allows us to take a more comprehensive approach.



Workers with the Directorate of Public Works replant at Chièvres Air Base Nov. 19, 2020. The next issue of the USAG Benelux Quarterly will focus on the third line of effort, Protection. (U.S. Army photo by Christophe Morel, USAG Benelux Public Affairs)







**FRONT AND BACK:** Contractors perform construction work for the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux, on Chièvres Air Base, Belgium, Nov. 27, 2020. (U.S. Army photo by Pierre-Etienne Courtejoie, Training Support Center Benelux)

