



U.S. ARMY







## BRIAN BORDA

General Manager



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MEMORIES AT EDELWEISS LODGE AND RESORT

The Edelweiss Lodge and Resort is approaching a significant milestone in our long history of providing hospitality to service members and their families – our 20th anniversary in 2024.

Since the day we opened our doors two decades ago, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort has had the privilege of welcoming over 2.5 million guests through our Resort. Each visit has been an opportunity for us to create lasting memories, and it warms our hearts to know that many of you have shared those moments with us and continue to do so. To see guests who once visited as children now working with us as young adults is a testament to the bonds we have built over the years.

At the heart of our mission is a deep commitment to serving the dedicated men and women of the United States Armed Forces, retirees, and their families. Your trust in us has been the driving force behind our success, and we are immensely proud to have been a part of your cherished moments.

The Edelweiss team is motivated and inspired by the wonderful experiences we've shared with you, and we are fully dedicated to continuing our long tradition of hospitality. As we stand on the cusp of our 20th anniversary, we are also excited to share that we have several significant projects in the works. Our goal is to enhance and expand services, ensuring quality, affordable accommodations that will carry our legacy into the next two decades.

Your choice in making Edelweiss Lodge and Resort your destination of choice for family vacations has been the cornerstone of our success, and we look forward to many more years of creating extraordinary moments with you. We invite you to join us in commemorating this special occasion throughout the year, as we look back on the memories we've created together and set our sights on the exciting future that lies ahead.

Here's to 20 years of cherished memories and the promise of many more to come!

Warm regards,

Brian Borda  
General Manager  
Edelweiss Lodge and Resort  
An Armed Forces Recreation Resort





# THE AFRC STORY

Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRCs) provide rest, relaxation, recreation and sustainment for military personnel, their families and other members of the Total Defense Force.



The foundations of the Armed Forces Recreation Center, Europe were laid in 1945, soon after the end of hostilities in Europe. As soon as the occupation began, Army Special Services officers wasted no time in getting the prewar tourist facilities back into operation. Virtually every hotel, from downtown Garmisch to the top of the Zugspitze, was put to use by occupation troops. The Americans "confiscated" all those facilities that had been used by the German Armed Forces or the Nazi Party during the war, and "requisitioned" those hotels in Garmisch-Partenkirchen which had been used as temporary military hospitals and convalescent centers. Golf, hunting, fishing, skiing and sailing awaited the war-weary soldiers. Soon troops from all over U.S. Forces Europe Command were flocking to southern Germany for rest and relaxation.



With the formal end of the US occupation of Germany, USAREUR began returning the hotels used by the Garmisch Recreation Area to private ownership. As late as June 1952, the Garmisch Recreation Area still included 12 hotels in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Grainau, and on both the Kreuzeck and Zugspitze, as well as the golf course and numerous ski slopes. Throughout the years, AFRC Europe included a number of facilities including, restaurants, horse stables, tennis courts and campgrounds.

In April 1989, plans for the downsizing and consolidation of AFRCs began. Over half the buildings on the Artillery Kaserne were demolished in preparation for a new AFRC hotel. Bechtesgaden and Chiemsee hotels remained open until the final closure of Chiemsee in September 2003. Meanwhile, the groundbreaking ceremony for Edelweiss Lodge and Resort began in 2002. The 330-room resort would feature Alpine views, guided tours, wellness treatments and much more. Edelweiss Lodge and Resort opened its doors on 15 September 2004. We are proud to have been serving those who serve for the past 20 years and look forward to many more years to come.



# THROUGH THE YEARS

In 1945, the foundation of Armed Forces Recreation Centers were laid. Following the capture of Berchtesgaden and Chiemsee, initiatives to reintroduce recreational activities in Bavaria for fatigued soldiers gained momentum. With offerings such as golf, hunting, skiing, and sailing, the area evolved into a haven of leisure for service members.



1945



General Patton Hotel in Garmisch-Partenkirchen

1953



To accommodate the demand, the opening of three recreation centers began in 1953. The General Patton, General Von Steuben and Green Arrow Inn with over 600 rooms.

1956



USAREUR re-evaluated the control of German hotels. The decision from the report was to return hotels like Roterhann and Reisersee facilities back to Garmisch.

1989



April 19, 1989 plans were finalized for the consolidation of recreation centers. The demolition of buildings on the Sheridan Kaserne began to make room for the new AFRC Resort.

2002



Congress decided to consolidate the Chiemsee and Garmisch facilities. In 2002, ground breaking begun on the new modern resort later to be called Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.







# BUILDING VACATION MEMORIES SINCE 2004



Over 3.8 million Service Member guests



4,216 conference and unit groups hosted



Over 5 million coffees served



760,613 liters of beer poured







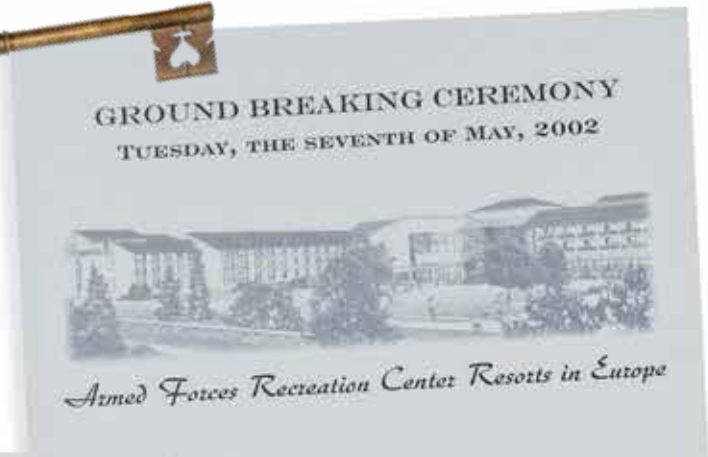






# GROUND BREAKING

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on May 7, 2002, marking the commencement of construction on Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.



Left to right: Mr. Richard Lebrun, Tim Bartlett, Mr. Pete Isaacs, Mr. Russell, Brigadier General Antonio M. Taguba, Mr. John McLaurin, Herr Ministerial, Direktor Hans Hermann Scheider, Mr. John Molino, Lieutenant Colonel Steven Tenant

### A Rich Past, An Exciting Future!

For 57 years, the Armed Forces Recreation Centers in Europe have supported the European Command with best and brightest locations for U.S. Service Members and their families in the beautiful Bavarian Alps. Established in the winter of 1945-46 as an E&A center for the U.S. Occupation Forces, AFRC immediately initiated programs to enhance the morale of the winter weary soldiers. During the winter of 45-46, with the help of 15,000 jobs of the and 12,000 pairs of ice skates provided by the European Theater Supply and Services Division, marching servicemen got to try their winter skills on world class facilities such as the 1936 Olympic ski run and the stadium in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

In the early 1950's as the mission of the U.S. Forces moved from an Army of Occupation to a Cold War Army, the mission of the Armed Forces Recreation Center changed accordingly. Formerly grand hotels, repurposed to meet the temporary mission of the occupation Army were refitted to their owners and former military troop billets, beautiful, quiet houses and officers clubs were reworked to support the long term re-education requirements of the cold war service members and their families. AFRC developed into a "vacation land" resort, where for an affordable price service members and their families could partake in activities such as tennis, riding, skiing, golfing, sledding, skeet shooting, fishing, hunting, camping, sailing, swimming, water skiing, rowing, ice skating, team and many more under the world class beauty of the European Alps.

The end of the cold war winter necessitated changes in AFRC. After 50 years of service, AFRC facilities in Berchtesgarden closed on 30 September 1995. In the spring of 2000, the US Army vision leadership and congress approved plans to consolidate AFRC Europe and construct a modern resort hotel in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. This facility will continue the long AFRC Europe tradition of providing recreation, sports, tours and lodging for our overseas American Service Members and their families.

### Program of Events

- Prelude "Celebrate The Future"
- ~
- Posting of Colors
- National Anthem
- ~
- Invocation
- ~
- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- ~
- "AFRC Resorts, Serving America's Armed Forces" (special video presentation)
- ~
- Remarks by Distinguished Guest Speakers (see insert)
- ~
- Bavarian Interlude "Our Neighbors, Our Friends!"
- ~
- Ceremonial Ground Breaking
- ~
- Retiring of the Colors
- ~
- Reception



BRIGADIER GENERAL ANTONIO M. TAGUBA  
COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER  
REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY AT THE  
**HOTEL GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY**  
ON TUESDAY, THE SEVENTH OF MAY, 2002  
AT TWO O'CLOCK  
SHERIDAN KASERNE  
GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, GERMANY



# BUILDING VACATION DREAMS





# THE EDELWEISS STORY

For generations this flower has been the inspiration for folklore, music and stories depicting the themes of love and healing. The Edelweiss flower serves as a symbol of prestige throughout the Alps and is often proudly displayed on clothing, like a soldier may wear a medal of distinction. The flower is also revered for its medicinal healing abilities, symbolizing the role Edelweiss Lodge and Resort plays in providing rest and relaxation to service members and their families.

On a crisp spring morning, a young couple set out on a hike through the mountains of southern Germany. The young man spots the white flower with felt like petals on an exposed cliff. In order to pick the Edelweiss, he ignores his own safety to prove his bravery. Reaching out on loose rock, he plucks the flower. He now has the "ultimate love charm" of the Alps to give to his lovely lady.



STARS AND STRIPES.

## AFRC to name new resort after Alps flower

BY RICK SCAVETTA

*Stars and Stripes*

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The new Armed Forces Recreation Center resort hotel in Garmisch will be named after a small white flower commonly found in the Alps.

Brig. Gen. Robert L. Decker, commander of the Community and Family Support Center, announced the name of the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort on Tuesday at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Expo here.

The Army also released an artist's rendering of what the resort will look like upon completion in the fall of 2004. The resort will have 330 guest rooms, a full-service conference facility, pool and wellness center and three restaurants with Alpine views.

"Just as no two flowers are alike, servicemembers all have different needs," Decker said when announcing the name. "This new hotel is designed with this in mind."

For centuries, edelweiss has been a symbol of prestige for Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Since 1878, the high-alti-



Photo courtesy of AFRC

**An artist's rendering of the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort to be built by the Armed Forces Recreation Center in Garmisch, Germany.**

tude grown perennial has been a protected species in the Alps.

The flower entered popular culture when, in the film "The Sound of Music," actor Christopher Plummer sang to the von Trapp children about the flower that represented the Austrian homeland.

Many Europeans living in the Alps still wear the flower or its

likeness on their clothing as a soldier might wear a medal of honor.

Also, the flower is revered for its medicinal healing abilities, symbolizing the role the resort plays in providing rest and relaxation to servicemembers and their families, according to AFRC officials.







Photos courtesy of the Armed Forces Recreation Center

Snow covers much of the partially completed Edelweiss Lodge and Resort at Garmisch, Germany. When the Armed Forces Recreation Center facility and its 230 rooms open in September, the last two of the AFRC's older hotels will close.

# Working hard on a relaxing resort spot

4-star AFRC hotel is preparing to open doors in September

BY JESSICA INIGO  
Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — Under the slaty shades of wood, cardboard boxes and piles of tile lies something worth \$60 million.

Once construction is complete in September, the new Armed Forces Recreation Center in Garmisch will be a four-star resort with spacious rooms and lots of extras, according to Mark Hendryx, director of operations. Complete with indoor pool and wellness club, conference center, and 330 guest rooms, the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort will replace the two smaller AFRC hotels in Garmisch.

Hendryx said one improvement will be the updated guest rooms. All will have two queen-sized beds, a work area, balcony, bathroom with larger showers and two sinks, and will be nearly twice the size of current rooms.

Hendryx also said the three themed exteriors, similar to those at a Disney amusement park, will be nothing to scoff at.

Guests will be able to dine at a self-service marketplace restaurant, a full-service steak kitchen restaurant or a casual bistro bar, all featuring ethnic food from around the world.

In addition there will be a conference center with a grand ballroom, 12 breakout rooms, an event terrace and a business area.

"This project uses no tax dollars and won't take away from other (non-appropriated funds) projects," Hendryx said last week of the multimillion-dollar commercial loan used for the con-



Workers check the heating system at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort being built in Garmisch, Germany. When the new Armed Forces Recreation Center opens in September, officials say it will be a four-star resort loaded with features. Rooms, nearly twice the size of those at current AFRC spots, will feature two queen-sized beds, a work area, a balcony and a bathroom with larger showers and two sinks.

struction of the lodge.

Though the older hotels will be permanently shut down, their history, along with that of previously closed resorts Chiemeise and Berchtesgaden, will be saved through small memorials and design within the Edelweiss.

**“These older hotels are quaint and hold a lot of history, but honestly, there is no way they can compete with the new facility.”**

Mark Hendryx  
Director of operations

The most obvious of guests will also notice we've cleverly incorporated some of the old art into the new resort," he said, knowing how important the hotels have been to guests throughout the years.

Currently, there are 113 rooms avail-

# Guests sad to see old resorts closed

GARMISCH, Germany — Out with the old and in with the new is sometimes easier said than done, according to guests at the Armed Forces Recreation Center hotels in Europe.

The buzz around the General Patton and Von Steuben hotels, the two AFRC hotels in Garmisch, is that guests are going to miss the old ones.

Families sitting under the watchful eye of the large painting of Gen. George S. Patton in the Patton hotel restaurant discuss how cute this hotel is, and single soldiers here on rest and recuperation leave talk about how convenient the Von Steuben Hotel is.

But the truth, according to AFRC officials, is that it's time for change.

"I know some guests will express sadness over the closure of the older hotels to make way for the new resort, but any sadness will be over in a blink of eye when they experience all that the new resort has to offer," said Richard E. LeBren, general manager of AFRC Europe. These features will include a fitness center with an indoor pool leading to a juice bar and a year-round outdoor hot tub, lounge room in the showers and hotel rooms large enough to hold highway beds or cribs. Plus, don't forget the massages.

"This will be four-star, world-class level provided at basically the same price we have always provided the facilities," LeBren said. "Larger rooms will not be assigned by rank, but rather by the space needed. Costs will be done the same."

Joe Strobel, a recent guest on assignment from 6th Area Support Group in Stuttgart, Germany, said the older AFRC facilities would be missed.

"First they took away Chiemeise from us, and now this. It is sad," Strobel said.

But in the same breath he added: "But I think the new hotel is going to be a big benefit, really impressing people with the modern design and American service standards military and their family are use to back home. It looks like it's going to be top quality."

Strobel said he and his wife shared a love of both Chiemeise and the Garmisch hotels, having visited the centers countless times since the mid-1980s.

"There's no doubt these older hotels have a lot of charm and people love them. We're not dismissing that, we just want them to get the same service offered at other AFRC resorts, like at the Hale Koa in Hawaii or the Shades of Green at Walt Disney World in Florida," LeBren said.

In fact, LeBren said the recent buzz of how great the old hotels have been kind of makes him feel good. And he expects a greater buzz when the new hotel opens that will make him feel even better.

— Jessica Inigo

E-mail Jessica Inigo at [inigoj@mail.mil](mailto:inigoj@mail.mil)

# Edelweiss resort getting good reviews

## Troops on Iraq leave, vacation find luxury, relaxation at getaway spot

BY CHARLIE COON  
Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — Terry Musket is a retired Army master sergeant, but he's not unemployed.

Musket spent the last eight months repairing helicopters in Iraq as an Army contractor. After a short rendezvous with his wife and kids, Musket is heading back to Iraq for eight more months.

The family spent part of its get-together last week at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, the newly opened, Army-owned hotel in the Bavarian Alps, which is getting good reviews from people who've come from overseas.

"It's awesome," said Musket, who works near Baghdad with 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. "In some respects, it's surprising because it's so peaceful. You're waiting for a rocket to go off, a mortar to go off."

"But I've gotten more sleep since I've been here ... it's very relaxing."

The 330-room Edelweiss Lodge, which opened Sept. 15, 2004, and cost \$80 million to build, replaced three hotels that were previously operated by Armed Forces Recreation Center Europe.

For U.S. forces on rest and recuperation leave or block leave, prices are fairly cheap. Single rooms go for \$90 for two nights and double-occupancy rooms cost \$120. There are complimentary tours and activities to keep the kids busy as well.

The opening hasn't gone off without a hitch, however. There have been a few hiccups along

the way — doors that needed adjusting, plumbing that leaked.

But there have been no major failures, according to Christopher Forbes, Edelweiss spokesman.

"[We have] been overwhelmingly pleased with how the facility is functioning," Forbes said. "We occasionally conduct maintenance repairs to mechanical items. When these situations occur, we attempt to minimize any guest impact."

The hotel has been operating at 90 percent to 100 percent occupancy since it opened, Forbes said, and while people have at times not been able to get a room on certain dates, he said rooms normally are available within a few days of the guest's first choice.

"If a guest has no flexibility in their dates, it is strongly suggested to book as far in advance as possible," Forbes said. "This is especially true for federal holidays, (schools') spring break and other times when children are out of school."

Staff Sgt. Justin Evans, of the 1st Infantry Division's Division Support Command in Kitzingen, was vacationing last week with his wife, Npa, and their 4-year-old son, Zachary.

Evans, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was among the first soldiers to return from Iraq from the 1st Infantry Division's yearlong deployment.

"It feels kind of nice to be pampered," he said. "You don't expect it to be this nice when you get here," he said. "I've paid a lot more to stay in much worse hotels than this."

When the rest of 1st ID returns



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Above: Terry Musket, center, a retired Army master sergeant who is working as an Army contractor in Iraq, spent part of his two-week leave at the Edelweiss Lodge in Garmisch, Germany, with, from left, wife Jane and their children, William, 6; Eva, 9; Anna, 11; and Grace, 14. Below: Nick and Tiffany Chobot, who are senior airmen with the 435th Services Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, said they found the resort a relaxing place to spend time after returning from Iraq.

over the next few months, Evans said he would share his experiences with them.

"Absolutely I'll be telling my soldiers about it," he said.

Nick and Tiffany Chobot, who are married and both are senior airmen with the 435th Services Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, also were pleasantly surprised when they arrived at the Edelweiss after a four-month deployment in Iraq.

"It's very nice, very relaxing," Tiffany Chobot said. "We thought it would be smaller."

More information about R&R and block-leave eligibility can be found at [www.edelweisslodge.afrc.mil](http://www.edelweisslodge.afrc.mil)

E-mail Charlie Coon at [coonch@mail.stripses.mil](mailto:coonch@mail.stripses.mil)





# SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

We take great pride in more than 2,000 devoted individuals who have enriched our team. Each member has been essential to our journey, exemplifying our dedication to our guests. It is their steadfast commitment that distinguishes Edelweiss Resort.





# A 20-YEAR LEGACY

Nestled in the Heart of Europe, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort offers a unique experience where guests have the opportunity to encounter distinguished visitors from a variety of backgrounds, enriching their stay with engaging encounters and cultural exchanges.









# MILITARY MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Friday, May 13, 2016

STARS AND STRIPES

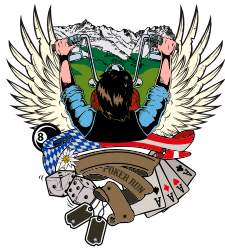
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WEEKEND

Europe

## THE EUROPE EXPERIENCE



BRIAN JACKSON/Edelweiss Lodge and Resort

The 10th annual Ride the Alps military motorcycle rally takes place June 24-26 on the scenic mountain roads surrounding Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Here, a past participant points the way to scenic views along marked routes.

### GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNIN': Ride the Alps 10th annual rally

The growls of Harleys and sport bikes will soon take over the Alpine roads surrounding the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, with the annual Ride the Alps military motorcycle rally June 24-26. The event brings military riders together from all over Europe.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the ride, which began as a customer-appreciation event sponsored by Military Auto Source, the overseas military motorcycle sales program for Harley-Davidson. Now, the event hosts as many as 300 participants from as far away as Spain and Iceland.

The Alps are one of the best destinations in the world for motorcycle riding, according to Brad Hays, marketing director for Edelweiss.

"This area in particular has many idyllic mountain vistas that let the riders enjoy the freedom of the road, but it's the

camaraderie of the military riders that keeps them coming back every year," he said.

One of the highlights of Ride the Alps is the poker run, in which riders collect five playing cards along a predetermined route. When they return from the 150-mile jaunt, they play poker with their hand for prizes. Last year 180 bikers participated.

In addition to the ride on marked routes, the rally takes on a festival atmosphere, with live music provided by Armed Forces Entertainment on Saturday.

Limited rooms are still available at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort. If you aren't staying at the Resort, you can still participate in the rally, poker run, all-you-can-eat buffets and entertainment for \$75 per adult.

For information about the rally and lodging, visit [edelweisslodgeandresort.com/news-deals](http://edelweisslodgeandresort.com/news-deals).



Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany



# UMGC EUROPE

## SERVING THE MILITARY IN WAR AND PEACE SINCE 1949

From its inception in 1947, University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) was a leader in accommodating and educating adult students across Maryland, including GIs returning from World War II. In 1949, at the request of the U.S. Department of Defense, UMGC became the first institution of higher education in America to send faculty to Europe to teach college classes to

active-duty servicemembers. From a handful of sites in postwar Germany, the overseas program expanded across Europe, as well as the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. UMGC's success in Europe positioned the university as the leading higher education provider to the U.S. military, veterans, and their dependents around the world.



## HISTORIC HEADQUARTERS

View of Heidelberg (home of UMGC's first headquarter in Germany) from the Neckar River. Today, UMGC Europe is based in Kaiserslautern, Germany, near U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz and Ramstein Air Base, which host the largest presence of U.S. Armed Forces outside of the United States.

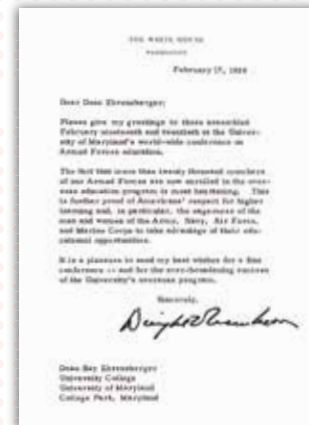


## THE FIRST FACULTY

Seven faculty members arrived in Germany in October 1949: (left to right) Lyle Mayer, Bruce Melvin, David Sparks, Phyllis Sparks, Warren Strausbaugh, Verne Chatelain, and Martin Moser. These seven pioneers laid the groundwork for what would become UMGC Europe.

## HAILS FROM THE CHIEFS

Eight U.S. presidents, from Dwight Eisenhower to Barack Obama, have sent letters commending UMGC's service to the U.S. military. In the first letter, sent in 1959, President Eisenhower cited the growing popularity of the program.



Patricia Coopersmith  
Vice President &  
Director 2022-Present



## THE FLYING DEAN

In 1952, William Raymond "Ray" Ehrensberger was appointed dean. He circled the globe overseeing existing programs and seeking new opportunities. He was appointed as the university's first chancellor in 1970 and served until 1975.



## THE MAP

This map, which dates back to UMGC's first decade in Europe, identified the locations of classes at U.S. military installations and embassies in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Russia. The color-coded flag pins tracked the continuously shifting locations. Gray pins denoted discontinued programs, mostly due to U.S. troop movements.



The map held a place of honor in the office of European Division Director Mason G. Daly (1960s). It remains on display in UMGC Europe's current headquarters in Kaiserslautern.



# THEN & NOW



**Left:** UMGC Europe faculty and staff in Heidelberg, Germany, 1990.



**Right:** MBA Professor Bert Jarreau demonstrates a live streaming format class offered by UMGC Europe. Among its many benefits, this innovative format widens the course offerings for remote sites with small student populations.



**Left:** UMGC was the first university to have “boots on the ground” in Iraq, with faculty teaching classes on U.S. bases. UMGC Europe graduates, faculty, and staff are pictured here at the first recognition ceremony on top of Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq, May 2009.



**Right:** This graduation recognition ceremony in Kandahar, Afghanistan, May 2012, was later disrupted by a rocket attack.



For-credit field study classes were introduced in the 1970s. Here, UMGC Europe students visit the site of an ancient Greek temple southeast of Athens, at Cape Sounion, 1983.



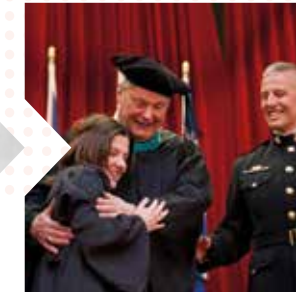
UMGC Europe students shake hands with Pope John Paul II while visiting the Vatican in 1983.



Students visit the Stirling Castle during a field study in Scotland, 2019.



**Left:** Dean Ray Ehrensberger in May 1951 with the first overseas graduate, Col. William C. Bentley, an enthusiastic and determined student who advocated for off-campus programs overseas that led to the founding of UMGC Europe.



**Right:** Lt. Col. Woodruff S. Bentley Sr. (U.S. Air Force, Ret.), son of UMGC Europe's first graduate, Col. William C. Bentley, congratulates his granddaughter, Lauren Bentley.



UMGC Europe's most distinguished alumnus, General John W. Vessey Jr. rose from the ranks of enlisted men to become the 10th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He graduated in 1963 and later served as chair of the UMGC Board of Visitors.



**Left:** During the early years of the European Program, nearly all students were men serving in the U.S. military.



**Right:** Here, students study biology in the Sinai. By 2018, approximately 44 percent of UMGC Europe students were female.



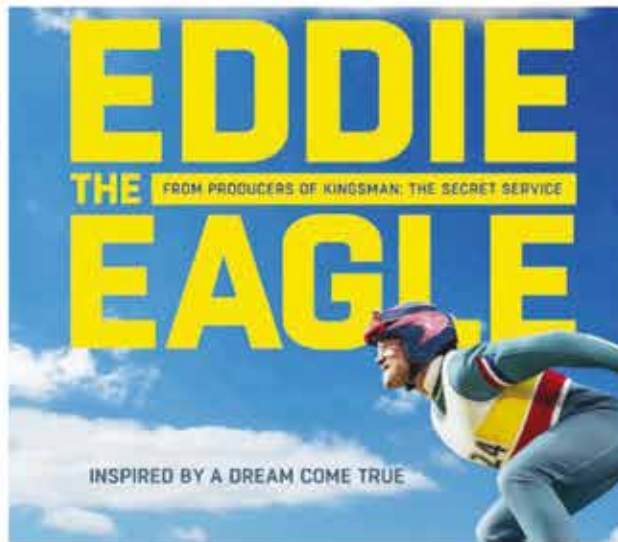
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
GLOBAL CAMPUS | EUROPE

[europe.umgc.edu](http://europe.umgc.edu)



# SILVER SCREEN

Germany's largest film studio, Babelsberg, used Edelweiss Resort to portray the 1988 Winter Olympic headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, where British ski jumper Michael "Eddie" Edwards began his underdog Olympic journey.



## MOVIES

# 'Eddie' comes to Edelweiss

DOD resort in Bavaria portrays Calgary Olympic headquarters in 'Eddie the Eagle'

By JOLENE CARPENTER  
Stars and Stripes

In March 2015, a funny thing happened to the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, an Armed Forces Recreation Center at the foot of the Zugspitze mountain in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The hotel and its grounds suddenly transformed into a 1980s Olympic ski lodge in Canada.

Germany's largest film studio, Babelsberg, used Edelweiss to portray the 1988 Winter Olympic headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, where British ski jumper Michael "Eddie" Edwards began his underdog Olympic journey depicted in "Eddie the Eagle."

In one day, the company shot seven scenes at the resort.

To make the transformation, the filmmakers had to work some magic. Hundreds of extras — including 75 Edelweiss employees ranging from housekeepers to desk clerks to ski instructors — donned 1980s outfits to portray Olympic ski teams, fans, security guards and judges. Decades-old buses and vans rolled in, and the film crew hauled in retro luggage, skis and Olympic emblems and flags. At least 25 trucks swarmed the Edelweiss grounds with film equipment.

The main modification to the resort involved replacing a large sled above the main lobby fireplace with Olympic rings, which also were hung above the hotel's front deck. Filmmakers also rigged up a giant lighting blimp in the main lobby and covered all telltale 21st-century gadgets, such as ATMs and flat television screens, with Olympic props.

"Walking into the Edelweiss Resort with all the lights, cameras, trucks and people walking around in '80s outfits made you feel like you might have just taken a trip in a time machine," said Brad Hays, marketing manager for Edelweiss (edelweissski.com). "Some of our guests who showed up to check in actually ended up being taken to the dressing room and put in ski outfits to be extras in the movie. It's a pretty fun addition to your vacation to be included in a big-budget film."

Neatly, some Edelweiss staff, who are Department of Defense employees, portrayed skiers at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen ski jump, where the movie's megastar, Hugh Jackman, filmed scenes as Brenton Postay, the rebellious and charismatic ski coach who helped Edwards achieve his dream of competing in the 1988 Winter Olympics.

Hays said the locals were delighted to share the snowy Bavarian location with Jackman and found him "extremely approachable."

Meanwhile, Taron Egerton, who plays Edwards in the film, was all business during the day of shooting, opting to stay in his dressing room between breaks in



Photo courtesy of Edelweiss Lodge and Resort

In March 2015, German film company Babelsberg brought not only movie-making equipment but also retro-looking buses, vans and ski gear to Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. The company filmed seven scenes for "Eddie the Eagle" at the lodge in the Bavarian Alps. Edelweiss is an Armed Forces Recreation Center serving U.S. troops and their families.

the filming. Hays said the most amazing thing about having Edelweiss turned into a movie set was seeing just how much coordination, personnel and equipment were needed to create a few seconds of film.

"There are dedicated staff for every role and it is all extremely well-choreographed," he said. "There is a stand-in actor that

just sits in place where the main actor will be so the director of photography can focus with the camera. There is one staff member responsible for just the camera lens, one staff member to push the dolly the camera sits on — and on and on."

Now that the movie has hit AAFES theaters, you can bet that plenty of American Edelweiss employees are packing the seats.

Hays hopes U.S. military members will "enjoy seeing their cherished mountain resort on the big screen" and perhaps book their own Edelweiss vacation. "You can't re-create the magic of Edelweiss Resort in a film studio," he said. "It's a unique and special place that everyone should experience while stationed in Europe."

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Above: Edelweiss employees portray skiers at the 1988 Olympic headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Here, they gather under an Olympic emblem added as a prop above the resort's main lobby fireplace.



Below: Taron Egerton, who plays the lead role in "Eddie the Eagle," plays a contemplative scene at the Edelweiss entrance.



Extras portray international teams relaxing at the 1988 Calgary Olympic headquarters in "Eddie the Eagle." The setting is a bar called Zuggy's Base Camp at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in the Bavarian Alps. Filming took place there in March 2015.





# PULLMAN CAFE

In 2020, we underwent an exciting transformation of Pullman Place, renovating our restaurant into a vibrant café that now offers an array of culinary delights, including sandwiches, locally sourced coffee, decadent desserts, freshly baked bread, and artisanal beers brewed right here in the region. Our beloved Pullman Cafe is now open daily. Step out onto our terrace and savor one of Germany's most breathtaking views while relishing in the culinary delights.





# GUIDED TOURS

Edelweiss Resort continually strives to elevate the guest vacation experience with distinctive offerings tailored to each season. During the winter months, guests are enchanted by the festive ambiance of Christmas markets and the exhilaration of night sledding tours in Austria's snowy mountains. In the summer, our Alpine Coaster tour invites guests to bask in the sunshine and embrace adventure and adrenaline.

Throughout the years, we've provided guests with opportunities to immerse themselves in the splendor of our region. From past excursions like the Three Country Boat Tour and Salzburg Tour to our current offerings such as the captivating Linderhof Palace Tour or the simple joys of a horse and carriage ride, Edelweiss consistently delivers unforgettable experiences that highlight the beauty of our landscape and culture.

As we celebrate two decades of hospitality, Edelweiss Resort takes pride in the diverse array of guided tours we've curated for our guests. Reflecting on the memories created and the sights explored together, we are grateful for the privilege of sharing in our guests' vacation experiences.



## 85,000

**guided tours given** to the popular **Neuschwanstein Castle**. This is a must-see tourist destination in Bavaria located only around one hour drive from Edelweiss Resort.



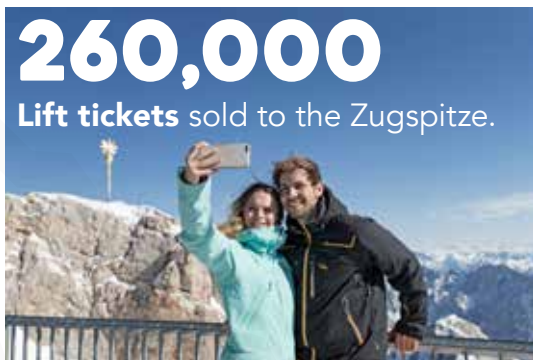
## 360,000

**tour participants** to one of our 21 various daily guided tours to local attractions, breathtaking sights and culturally significant destinations.





# SNOWSPORTS



**185,000**  
rental and tune ups  
for ski and snowboard  
equipment for service  
member guests.



**160,000**  
Kids have learned to ski  
or snowboard with our  
**Just For Kids program.**



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Above: This standard room at the Edelweiss Lodge costs from \$69 to \$99 per night, depending on rank. At right: Becky Garbey, left, 5-year-old Sarah Pacania and her mother, Emineh Pacania, all of Bamberg, Germany, relax by the fireplace at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany.



## Lodge draws skiers to Garmisch

BY CHARLIE COON  
Stars and Stripes

If you're just beginning to think about spending some of the winter ski season at the Armed Forces Recreation Center in Garmisch, Germany, you're coming to the party a bit late.

At this point, servicemembers and others hoping to take advantage of discount ski weeks might want to think about spring instead, according to Leigh Plovman, recreation director for AFRC and the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.

"Christmas is pretty booked, and there are a couple of weeks in February where everybody's got vacation and we're pretty full," Plovman said. "Holidays are tough. There are already people planning ahead."

"But from the end of February through March, there's great skiing and a lot of space available."

Ski season officially starts Thanksgiving weekend, and there are still spaces available in some of the ski and snowboard packages at Garmisch for guests of the new Edelweiss Lodge.

The 330-room hotel holds its official grand opening on Saturday. It had a "soft" opening in September and has been hosting guests and reservations ever since — between 600 and 800 per night, Plovman said.

The buzz created by its construction and opening has succeeded in luring skiers and snowboarders into reserving rooms there and at AFRC's nearby vacation cabins and Keats Lodge.

"We've got about 2,000 people signed up for our ski weeks," Plovman said.

AFRC's specially priced ski-week packages are four-day and weeklong deals that include instruction, equipment and lift tickets. There are 16 ski weeks this season, starting in mid-December.

Ski-week packages are for



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Youngsters get ready for their ski lesson at the Armed Forces Recreation Center's ski facilities in Garmisch in January 2003.

resort guests, Plovman said, including troops returning to Europe from Iraq and Afghanistan and those who are on rest-and-recuperation leave.

He said eligible persons staying at other hotels in Garmisch can rent equipment and buy discounted passes through AFRC. Persons not staying at the Edelweiss hotel and cabins can purchase ski-week packages only if space is available.

"We give first priority to resort guests; we just have to cater to these people first," Plovman said. "Some people think [smaller hotels in Garmisch] are a great deal, but they're missing out on a lot of things we have to offer our resort guests."

"We've got cool things we do every day for free or at low cost for resort guests that gets them out of the hotel," including local tours and side trips to places like Munich and the Neuschwanstein castle.

Plovman said people should not be dissuaded from going to Garmisch even if they can't get the ski-week package on the days they want.

"We've got a state-of-the-art [equipment] rental facility, probably the biggest in Europe, and we're right on the hill," he said. "It's a good American atmosphere and you're still skiing in Europe."

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coon@spain.mil

Here are the prices for packages available through the Armed Forces Recreation Center Europe in Garmisch, Germany. Ski Youth is for ages 8-15; Snowboard Youth is 12-15; and Ski Kids is 5-7.

• **Ski and snowboard week** (five ski days): adults \$295; youth \$235; Ski Kids \$225.

• **Four-day ski and snowboard instruction** (in conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. and Presidents Day holidays): adults \$250; youth \$200; Ski Kids \$190.

• **Two-day holiday specials:** adults \$110; youth \$100; Ski Kids \$90.

• **Lessons** (two hours): group \$25; semi-private \$35; private \$60.

All instruction packages include: Daily instruction, transport-

ation to ski areas, lift pass for appropriate slope, equipment and ski clothing, awards banquet.

Advanced booking for instruction is required. Contact the Hausberg Sport Lodge at DSN 449-2501 or civilian (4-49) (0) 8821-729400.

Information: Alpine Adventures at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort at civilian (+49) (0)8821-9440. Web site: www.afrc-europe.com. Enter site, click on "activities," "recreation programs" and "ski/snowboard" for 90-week schedules.

Note that ski-week packages are for guests staying at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort facilities, such as the hotel and cabins. People staying elsewhere will be accommodated as space and equipment are available.

Source: Edelweiss Lodge and Resort



# REST & RELAXATION

Throughout the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort prioritized visits for R&R guests.



## Troops on R&R are priority at Edelweiss Lodge

BY CHARLIE COON  
Stars and Stripes

GARMISCH, Germany — The new Edelweiss Lodge opened Wednesday and was quickly used by servicemembers, veterans and others connected with the U.S. Department of Defense.

But operators of the \$80 million resort in the Bavarian Alps pledged unwavering support for another set of customers — troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and ones on rest and recuperation leave.

"We serve all facets of military travelers," said Christopher Furber, an Edelweiss spokesman. "But our main focus is on family leisure travel, especially for junior enlisted troops."

"We do not have a [separate] mission for distinguished visitors or special quarters or accommodations for them."

The 336-room lodge had a "soft" opening on Wednesday and staff will use the next month to iron out any kinks. Its formal grand opening is scheduled for Oct. 30.

A number of rank-and-file servicemembers were able to book rooms at Edelweiss for the opening week.

Army Chaplain (Capt.) Richard Garbey of the 7th Cavalry Support Battalion in Bamberg, Germany, who was helping host a "single sol-

diers' retreat at Edelweiss, said the hotel should "roll out the red carpet" for troops returning from deployment.

Garbey noted that since October 2003, the nearby Von Steuben Hotel was used exclusively for troops on leave.

"It was very low-key and very accommodating," he said of the Von Steuben. "You felt welcomed when you came in, like the whole place was just for you."

The Edelweiss "is going to be a change," he said, referring to the plush accommodations and uniforms worn by the staff.

"They just need to be extra sensitive to our needs," Garbey said he knew of a soldier in Bamberg on R&R leave who was unable to book a room this week at Edelweiss. Furber, the Edelweiss spokesman, said the soldier must not have identified himself as being on leave or else Edelweiss would have made room for him.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Strong of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, in Schweinfurt, was on R&R leave from Iraq and was able to get a room at Edelweiss.

He hoped to make the most of it. "I just need someplace good to relax and enjoy my two daughters [ages 3 and 7]," Strong said.

### GOOD TO KNOW

■ One sponsor can reserve up to three rooms at a time, thus enabling one Department of Defense ID card holder to host three rooms of people at Edelweiss.

■ Edelweiss policy is to never turn down servicemembers on rest and recuperation leave or block leave. If no rooms are available, management will ask other guests, starting with conventioners, to vacate their rooms for the R&R or block leave troops, according to Edelweiss spokesman Christopher Furber.

■ Rooms are cheaper for people of lower rank.

■ Information: civilian (+49) (0)8821-9440; www.edelweisslodgeandresort.com — Charlie Coon



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Army Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Ann Findley, left, of the 2nd Medical Brigade, and her husband, Army Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Findley of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, get some help Wednesday from clerk Valerie Rowe at the Alpine Adventures store at the new Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany. Michelle Ann Findley was on rest and recuperation leave from Operation Iraqi Freedom; Ronald Findley returned to Germany in July after an extended deployment with the 1st AD.

"We already went through the [choice of] tours and picked out some stuff" for his wife, his daughters and himself to do. Retired Army 1st Sgt. Chuck Elkins said he was flown to Hawaii for five days of R&R when he was serving in Vietnam.

On Wednesday, Elkins, who was visiting Edelweiss with his wife, said he hoped to meet some troops on R&R from Iraq or Af-

ghanistan. "It kind of gave me faith that the Army wanted to do right by us," Elkins said of his five-day leave. "That's why I decided to stay in."

Edelweiss was built to replace several aging vacation sites operated by Armed Forces Recreation Center Europe. One of them, the General George Patton Hotel in Garmisch, closed Wednesday

morning at the same time Edelweiss opened its doors.

The Army used a 30-year, \$80 million note to build Edelweiss, which is located behind the George C. Marshall Center. The Zugspitze, the highest peak in Germany at nearly 10,000 feet above sea level, is one of many scenic backdrops.

Email: Charlie Coon at coon@starsandstripes.com



The exterior of the newly opened Edelweiss Lodge in Garmisch, Germany, is adorned with three murals that tell the story of the Edelweiss flower, which in the Bavarian Alps is known as a legendary flower of love.



**“I just want to relax, forget I was over there [in Afghanistan], forget I’m part of the military for a while. To unload everything I experienced over there and become a husband and father again, and spend time with the kids.”**

**Spc. Juan Colon**  
7th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment

## A little R&R for the entire family

Edelweiss resort offers an affordable diversion from life downrange

By CHARLIE COON  
Stars and Stripes

**T**imes have changed for Americans in Garmisch. The town used to be a playground for young, single soldiers. They’d ride kayaks, climb rocks and bomb down ski slopes, often coming as a unit and calling it “adventure training.”

Basically, whooping it up on the tarpaper’ duffs, before the Army started draining down from Germany in the 1990s.

Young soldiers still come to Garmisch. But these days it’s often as part of the military’s rest and recuperation program, or R&R. Wars are being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many troops are looking for a place to unwind. Many use the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort to do so.

And they’re taking their families. “It was like a prison,” Spc. Juan Colon said of his one-year deployment to Afghanistan during a recent R&R stay at the Edelweiss. “I just want to relax, forget I was over there, forget I’m part of the military for a while.”

“To unload everything I experienced over there and become a husband and father again, and spend time with the kids.”

The Edelweiss, an \$80 million, Army-owned hotel that opened in September 2004, and its predecessor, the Von Seubert Hotel, have hosted more than 30,000 troops and family members in the past 2½ years.

“I have three kids,” said Autumn Martinez, wife of Spc. Alex Martinez, who also had recently finished a one-year stint in Afghanistan. “It’s helped me to be relaxed, have fun and not worry about cooking and cleaning. It’s great. We’ve had just a wonderful time.”

“It gives us a break from the military life,” said Julie Colon, wife of Spc. Colon. “I know it’s an Army hotel but it doesn’t feel like it.”

Both Juan Colon and Alex Martinez are based in Illesheim, Germany — Colon with the 7th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, and Martinez with the 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry.

Chilling in the vast Edelweiss lobby, they and their families are part of the changed look of Garmisch.

That’s the idea, according to Edelweiss management.

The 300-room hotel was built with young soldiers in mind, according to Richard LeBrun, the hotel’s general manager.

It’s priced, at least for troops on R&R, to be affordable. A two-night stay, including two breakfasts and dinners, costs \$90 for singles, or \$120 for two people. Youth ages 13-17 cost an additional \$18 each. Children 12 and under stay free.

“It’s a very great price,” said Colon, who has a 5-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter.

On any given night, 30 to 50 rooms are occupied by families on R&R, LeBrun said.

Swarms of kids can often be seen at the evening in the hotel’s pool, which was made for frolicking, not swimming laps. Others might be gathered in front of a TV



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/STARS AND STRIPES

Children are temporarily diverted from watching a movie during Kids Night Out, a program under which they are supervised by staff members at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany, so their parents can have some time alone.

in the lobby, watching a children’s movie with members of the hotel staff while their parents get private time together.

“Now it seems [guests] don’t want to constant full days to stuff,” said Leigh Ploewman, Edelweiss’ recreation director.

Ploewman said it costs a lot to train instructors and maintain gear for former favorites such as rock climbing and kayaking. Those activities are now farmed out to local, English-speaking pros.

The Edelweiss now focuses on shorter

events.

“We’re changing our leisure activities to be more affordable and less time-consuming,” Ploewman said. “They can do a three- or four-hour activity in the morning and have the afternoon for themselves, or maybe do another [activity] in the afternoon.”

Little hikes for coffee and cake, horse-and-carriage rides through town, and boat rides on nearby Lake Elbssee, where guests can relax in the shadow of



Leigh Ploewman, recreation director at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany, said more guests are opting for shorter, half-day activities such as hiking or horse-drawn carriage rides through town. However, the old favorites — kayaking, rock climbing, skiing — still are available for the more adventurous.

Germany’s highest peak, the Zugspitze, seem to better fit the plans for families on R&R.

R&R participants also get most tours for half price, Ploewman said.

“The Patnach Gorge is an awesome hike, really pretty,” said Ploewman, whose staff took nearly 800 people on the hike in the past two months. “In the wintertime, it gets all these frozen rocks. It takes three or four hours and costs 12 bucks.”

The R&R theme seems to be working. According to Edward Fagan, the hotel’s assistant general manager, there have been only about five times when a soldier from downrange has become distressed enough during his stay to require intervention.

In each case, cooler heads prevailed, Fagan said, and the soldier continued with his vacation.

Chaplain (Maj.) Richard Pacania of Army Garrison Garmisch said his service to troops on R&R isn’t much different than what’s required downrange.

“Sometimes they’re searching for some spiritual significance in their life,” Pacania said. “Others are hurting, spiritually or emotionally. Others are just lonely, and they seek us out just to have some company.”

“A lot of the soldiers are not stressing on anything. What they do have is what they experience downrange, and they get that off their chest and move on.”

Email Charlie Coon at  
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# GUEST STORIES

## SNYDER FAMILY



### WHEN DID YOU STAY HERE?

We stayed here in September of 2004 during the soft opening of Edelweiss Resort. My husband, Michael, was on his two week R&R from Iraq.

### HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU VISITED?

We haven't been back since, but hopefully plan to visit for our anniversary in 2025.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY?

My favorite memory of the stay was the delicious food, the spacious rooms and the proximity of the surrounding mountains.



## VICKERY FAMILY



### WHEN DID YOU STAY HERE?

Our first visit was during the soft opening in September 2004. We stayed with some friends and enjoyed the Oktoberfest festivities and touring the local area.

### HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU VISITED?

We have stayed four times from 2003 - 2006 when we were stationed in Ramstein.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY?

Just being at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort when it was brand new.



## RICHARDSON FAMILY



### WHEN DID YOU STAY HERE?

We have lost count at how many times we have visited. We have been coming to the Resort since 2005. We have spent birthdays, baby moons, vacations, and marriage retreats at Edelweiss Resort. We will be coming back in 2024 for a birthday celebration!

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY?

Our kids love the Just for Kids program and the night sledding. We loved visiting the Linderhof Palace while on R&R and seeing King Ludwig's man-made cave.



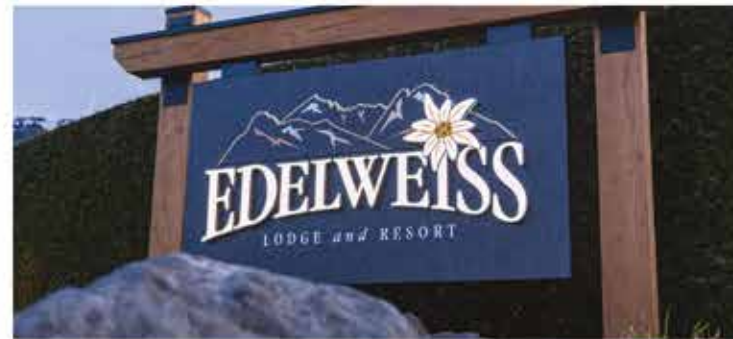


# THE NEXT CHAPTER

As we celebrate our 20-year milestone, we are excited to embark on a new chapter of growth and enhancement at Edelweiss Resort. With substantial commitments dedicated to facility improvements over the next five years, we are focused on elevating the guest experience to unprecedented heights. From the complete renovation of our guest rooms, to the revitalization of Zuggy's Base Camp and the installation of a brand-new hot tub, these major upgrades reflect our unwavering dedication to ensuring every guest enjoys a truly exceptional stay. Our ongoing investment underscores our relentless pursuit of excellence and sets the stage for an even brighter future at Edelweiss Resort.



Zuggy's Base Camp Remodel













# AFRC RESORTS

Hawaii / Germany / Florida / Korea



[WWW.AFRCRESORTS.COM](http://WWW.AFRCRESORTS.COM)





50<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
HALE KOA HOTEL

EST. 1975

35<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
DRAGON HILL LODGE

EST. 1990

30<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
SHADES OF GREEN RESORT

EST. 1994

20<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
EDELWEISS RESORT

EST. 2004





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