Kaserne for non-German speakers

Kas-ern-eh,
Okay, in English, Kaz-ern,
Auf Deutsch,
eh, just short of a gasp,
an exclamation,
like the “eh” in bed,
Kaserne,
a barrack, singular,
plural, barracks,
a box,
a barracks box,
Kaserne,
a box of beds,
not unlike a cheese box,
Kaese, Emmentaler,
Muenster, Gouda,
Butterkaese
mit oder ohne Knoblauch,
—with or without
the garlic, that is—
Kaserne,
with a short a, *ka,*
Like the caw of a crow.
Soldiers provide
the age, the youth, (18 and up)
with the seasoning,
the aroma, the spice,
the texture,
hard or soft,
spreadable
or cut
with a
knife. #

Predictable

Lifer

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Eh, what's that again?
A helpful Cold War glossary of terms

Mission: what the people of the United States send their Army and its military services to do.
MFR: a Memorandum for Record, usually a written report of what was said or what happened. Valuable for covering one's behind.
SOP, the Standard Operating Procedure.
Article 15: Basically, non-judicial military justice, administered by a company grade officer for minor infractions and by a field grade officer for the more severe with penalties proportionate to the offense.
Article 32 Investigation: A preliminary on-the-record hearing/investigation to determine the severity of the offense and to recommend the appropriate course of justice.
OD green: Olive drab, the soldier's color coding for everything military
Protocol: the unspoken and sometimes written rules that govern official and non-official social and/or administrative interaction.
Wild Chicken: the soldier's term for Wildflecken. Wildflecken, Hohenfels, Graffenwoehr (Graf), and Baumholder were the main bases for weapons and maneuver training in Germany. Each training area in the 7th Army Training Command (the 7th ATC) had its own hardships, personalities, and training opportunities, rain or shine.
Cardinal Points and Compass Points: field exercises conducted in the Germany countryside to assess and train for command and control on a wide battlefield.
PRP: Personal Reliability Program for nuclear weapons designated for use during the Cold War.
Miesau: The Army's depot located miles from anywhere for the storage of nuclear weapons.
The "sandbox" was a local designation for a large training area outside of Lee Barracks in Mainz-Mombach. The area provided a many a wakeup call of diesel engines and churning transmissions for those living in the adjacent high-rise apartments.
Rhein River Crossings were exercises to train for crossing the Rhein River, a complex problem due to the flow the river, the normal river traffic of

barges, freight boats, and tourist outings. The Rhein River Crossings were conducted with a combination of German military who coordinated the use of pre-positioned heavy barges capable of rapidly loading and offloading of heavy equipment such as heavy trucks, tracked vehicles to include tanks, armored personnel carriers, and artillery. The crossings were normally routine but fraught with danger should something go wrong.

Lariat Advance: the code word for an early morning "round up" of soldiers—for wherever they happened to have been for the night—to report to their headquarters for purposes of accountability. The minimum might be a "sign in" only or as critical and busy as drawing weapons, personal equipment, vehicles, and an assembly in the local "sand box" to await whatever would come next.

TLA was the highly lucrative "temporary living allowance" provided to soldiers' families upon arrival or departure for staying in what was called "transient guest quarters." Transient quarters could be quite nice—even plush—as the American Arms in Wiesbaden, or as simple as quonset huts for single soldiers awaiting transportation to their units.

The Mark Rate varied from day to day and if the Mark rate was up, Soldiers benefited a high dollar value on the Germany economy. Soldiers lived high when the Mark's rose. E. g. One dollar equals 4 DM. Contrary-wise, if the mark rate slipped to say, $1 to 1.40 DM, soldiers watched their budget and bemoaned what niceties cost on the German economy.

Paulinerstrasse was the Wiesbaden Military Community's headquarters after WWII. The building was palatial in style, suitably positioned in a posh area of Wiesbaden and sizeable enough to serve as the administrative headquarters for general officers and staff.

Mainz Kastel: was a city on the Rhein River directly across from the city of Mainz. Mainz-Kastel housed a couple of Army support units and various storage warehouses. Most families knew Mz-Kastel as the center for post exchange high value items from "the economy" (i.e. German

and/or European origin items) not available through normal Army Air Force Exchange Service stores. American military families especially shopped for the rugs from Belgium and Turkey as well as European furniture and antiques.
Shoot-outs were line-item-by-the-number logistical reviews for maintenance and supply.
Off limits was the designation for any establishment forbidden to American military members.
Pass and ID was the operational administrative offices for military identification cards and subsequent passes for host-nation country personnel to receive passes for access to posts and military facilities.
***Brat* stand** was a small food stand located on the street or in high-volume traffic areas. They were also called a *Schnell Imbiss,* literally a quick bite! *Brat stands* normally served curry wurst, brat wurst, polish sausages, or sometimes the sausages popular in the local area.
Sandflora was an enlisted family housing area of 4-floor stairwells (walkups, no elevators) on Canisiusstrasse directly adjacent to Lee Barracks.
The high rise: Mainz Military Community rented "economy housing" for military personnel and their families in the Mainz/Mombach area. The buildings were about 15-16 stories high and served by an insufficient number of elevators to serve so many families.
Rail heads and rail loads were loading platforms, especially for heavy and tracked vehicles, when units deployed to a major training area. The loading and unloading operations were overseen by German railway personnel and conducted by American military who became quite proficient at loading and unloading vehicles with all the safety protocols that were required.
Mainz-Gonsenheim was a sub-community of the City of Mainz.
The Gonsenheimer Hof was a popular restaurant located on a main street between Martin Luther King Village and the Lee Barracks.
PCS, The Permanent Change of Station was abbreviated PCS and designated a permanent move

for soldier and family as compared to a TDY or temporary duty assignment which was for a much shorter duration usually for specific training or the performance of a specific mission.

COT: the COT or the Continuous Overseas Tour was sometimes allowed when soldiers and/or family chose to remain in a specific theater of operations such as Germany or a plum assignment at some other European location. The tour counted as an overseas tour whereas an extension was just a tack on of time on to the original overseas tour. Sometimes the COT entailed a move to another assignment within the theater. There was always monetary benefit to the family for an in-theater PCS move. The COT was different than an extension that was granted only in one-year increments.

Behind the Wire

1992. Fall. The Big Red One was returning from the last REFORGER exercise. The setting was Ramstein, Germany at what's called the Rear Area Assembly (RAA) on the runway, just prior to boarding the military's contracted 747 back to the states, The soldiers of the Big Red One were waiting behind the wire. Nothing new to them: armies always wait behind somebody's wire. In Germany the wire on the Eastern zone separated the Russians from the allies and everyone waited. At Ramstein, Air Force wire held the 400--plus or minus—soldiers in place. The airplane was parked just on the other side of the wire. On the soldiers' side of the wire the toilets were full to overflowing and smelled of such. There were no snacks; no cruising AAFES roach trucks that had always appeared to take the money of hungry soldiers in the exercise area. The GIs were hungry but according to the RAA commander there was nothing to eat because there was no plan. The food, he said, was on the plane, but because of a problem, the plane could not be loaded. No food until boarding and nobody knew when that would be. Until then the soldiers would not to be fed. The RAA Commander finally acquiesced to the moans and groans of the 400 plus soldiers and agreed to off-load the food from the airplane and bring it behind the wire. "But," he snapped, "don't expect anything on the plane, because this is it!" Hungry soldiers agreed, happy that they'd get something to eat. Even snacks were better than nothing. It wasn't long and the tired but happy soldiers were loaded and homeward bound. Landing in Iceland to refuel, the realization suddenly dawned there was no food on the airplane. Soldiers are not exactly tourists who could deplane to visit the airport bars or delis at 0300. With no passports and everyone carrying weapons the soldiers remained seated, glancing out the windows at the lights of the beckoning but somewhat empty terminal. Food was still an issue; it had been a long flight from Ramstein. Most expected that soldiers would tough it out like good soldiers do. The old army saying was "Nothing is too good for the troops, and nothing is what they get." Then an unknown colonel quietly spoke to the flight attendant. She said that sandwiches could be made and brought on board the plane during the refueling, but there would be a cost. She explained that it was for the whole plane or nothing. And she added, "Someone will have to sign for it." The colonel produced a credit card and signed for the 400 box lunches. About $2500. Yes it was a government card, and yes, he asked for the receipt for reimbursement. But his generosity was impressive. People were generally too tired to notice, but this unknown colonel was taking care of troops. It may not have been as dashing as John Wayne leading a charge, but dashing is when you're up against it and you do it anyway! The colonel probably knew the

regs and he also knew the inevitable paperwork yet to come. No matter what the rank, one must always justify to higher. Faith may be too strong a word. Compassion? Maybe. The colonel would probably have explained that he was just doing the right thing. At any rate the VISA card solution was an unlikely way for a small Army to be fed. The ravens who fed Elijah in the wilderness could not have done better. But nobody in their right mind expects the kingdom to come in a 747 full of bored, sleepy, and out-of-sorts GIs sidelined on the tarmac in Reykjavik where the only mountain to be moved was the red tape that produced a meal to go and a paper cup of coffee with cream and a sweetener. #

A litany of the closed
(Who could have seen it coming?)

Closed: Bad Aibling Station:
Neither bad nor sad;
left with no forwarding information.
Closed: Bayern-Kaserne
Bavaria turned from down to off
with nothing left to burn.
Closed: BFV or Benjamin Franklin Village:
This five & dime shut down,
with naught else to pillage.
Closed: Coleman Barracks:
No Ronald, no carpets
no floors or doors
no leftover tacks.
Closed: Ernst von Bergmann Kaserne:
So sad, too bad, old Bergmann
ran off to Lucerne, never to return.
Closed: Flak Kaserne:
No slack Jack, taken aback
with *nichts* to learn.
Closed: Fuerst-Wrede Kaserne:
Fuerst's gone
so now it's Wrede's turn.
Closed: Ayers Kaserne:
The rock's the rock;
from stem to stern.
[*On Ayers Kaserne, aka "The Rock":*
the train ride in 1956 from the port in Bremerhaven to Ayers Kaserne took 11 hours. Via Autobahn, the trip is now about 5 ½ hours.]
Closed: Camp Grohn:
No taxpayer money left to burn
with nary a sigh or taxable groan.
Closed: Camp King:
Gone's the knight and bishop,
Not much of a bling thing.
Closed: Grenadier Kaserne:
This grenadier's no kin
to a Laird's sweet bairn.
Closed: Hohenstadt:
Gave low; gave high;
yeah, gave all it's got.

Closed: Lee Barracks:
No early morning rumble
of infantry tracks.
Closed: Ray Barracks:
Gone the floors, the doors,
and all those messy wash-racks.
Closed: Taylor Barracks:
Good riddance
to all those bivouac sacks.
Closed: Wallace Barracks:
Shut down
before any eastern army attacks.
Closed: Malmsheim Airfield:
The deck's been cut,
close 'er down; the deal's sealed.
Closed: McGraw Kaserne:
In the head-shed's shadow,
too dear to burn.
Closed: Nellingen Kaserne:
Old Nelly's gone astray;
no bygones to yearn.
Closed: Pattonville:
For this long-dead general
we bear no ill will.

Closed, saving thousands of
lives, even millions of dollars
What counts? And who doesn't?
The war that was once
hot, and could have
been hotter,
ever so
slowly
turned
down
the flame
of war
to off.
A slow simmer.

+ + + + +

Pyle's story was posted on January 10, 1944. The quote is from *Ernie's War: The Best of Ernie Pyle's World War II Dispatches*, edited by David Nichols, pp. 195–197.

"Anniversary Prayer For the founding of the US Army 14 June 1775." As printed in *Dry Heat: Life & Light on an Arizona Army Post*, by the Author, 2010.