

Recent (fairly) news releases and published articles give an interesting overview of the latest, and recent, AFRTS activities” The internet can give you a treasure chest of more.



AFN has Growing Pains During Upgrades

October 8, 2004

By Defense Media Center

RIVERSIDE, Calif.- Armed Forces Network (AFN) TV recently used server-based technology to improve its broadcasts and give more programming choices to AFN viewers worldwide. The improvements however, have caused some notable on-air problems with programming during the past few weeks.

Since the launch of AFN Family and AFN Movie Sept. 3, AFN viewers have seen discrepancies between advertised schedules and what was being shown. They have also watched helplessly as their favorite program was cut off by another show without warning.

“The past three weeks have kept our engineers pretty busy,” said Bruce Zieminski, AFN’s director of engineering. “The new equipment and automation procedures we’re using to play out our additional TV channels have caused us some technical issues that caught our system experts by surprise.”

To provide viewers with the two new services, as well as more programming on AFN Spectrum, 64 more hours of programs are being digitized every day into the AFN Broadcast Automation System (BAS). In addition to the 100-plus hours already needed to air the other channels, BAS engineers are finding their system is having unexpected difficulty in processing this substantial increase in file management tasks.

“We’ve found a few corrupt configuration files and repaired some equipment that failed to do what it was supposed to,” said Jerry Shorter, AFN’s chief broadcasting engineer. “As with any new system, it takes time to become proficient in troubleshooting and repairing new technology.”

AFN also recently installed new equipment to split its services between the two major regions of the world. All the AFN services are fed in real time to Asia. For the Atlantic region, however, AFN feeds a seven-hour delayed version of AFN Family, AFN Movie and AFN Spectrum, in addition to the other five TV services. Problems affected these regional feeds, as well.

"We've tested our back-up transmission paths and established better procedures to ensure problems like what occurred last week are invisible to the audience," said Shorter.

The AFN programming staff and engineers are working vigorously to correct these problems, and said viewers will not have to wait much longer until they are once again enjoying the uninterrupted programming they are accustomed to.

"I think we're turning the corner now," said Shorter. "We've had technical growing pains that can and will be resolved."



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE **NEWS ARTICLES**

AFN's New 'Niche' Programming Begins Sept. 3

By Samantha L. Quigley

American Force Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2, 2004 – TV junkies overseas, rejoice!

In the planning for a couple of years, American Forces Network is set to launch more than 400 hours of programming at 7 a.m. local time Friday in Europe and the Pacific, said Mel Russell, director of the American Forces Radio and Television Service.

Two channels will be added to the existing lineup, and one will be tweaked. But have no fear of having to surf to find your favorites, Russell said. The existing channel numbers will stay the same, while two will be added.

The two new channels, AFN Family and AFN Movie will be added in response to a reader survey indicating an interest in that type of programming.

"We do surveys on a regular basis, and our last big worldwide survey we did identified these two types of programming that the audience wanted most," Russell said. "A full-time movie channel and a full-time channel that was family-friendly, if you will, that you could turn to anytime and you were comfortable with your family watching it."

AFN Family will pull programming from multiple sources, such as Nickelodeon and other sources that have family-friendly programming. The lineup will target the pre-school set in the morning and early afternoon, teens in late afternoon and switch to offerings for the entire family in the evening.

AFN promises a wide variety of feature films and specials with fewer interruptions. Also, there will be programs that give viewers insight into the entertainment industry.

"The movie channel fills that void for people who just like wall-to-wall movies," Russell said. "Each night in primetime we will air two full-run movies. On Saturday we will premiere a blockbuster movie."

AFN Spectrum is not a new channel, but might seem that way to viewers. Spectrum's old eight-hour format is history and will be replaced by 24-hour programming appropriate for regional time zones, Russell said. New technology and equipment has allowed the split feed to accommodate the continuous programming in both theaters.

"We will split the feed so that the European audience and the Pacific audience will have their own time-shifted programming on Family, Movie and Spectrum, so that if you expect to see five nights a week Law & Order at 7 p.m., you will see that in our theaters."

With the additions and the changes, AFN viewers will be receiving more than 1,100 hours of programming per week. The additions and changes account for more than 400 of those hours, Russell said adding that viewers will now have seven unique programming products to choose from: AFN Family, Movie, Spectrum, Prime, Sports, News and the Pentagon Channel.

The Defense Media Center is located on March Air Reserve Base near Riverside, Calif. AFN is available in 177 countries where U.S. forces are stationed, and will include Iraq and Afghanistan.

News Release

21 Dec 03

AFN extends Freedom Radio throughout Iraq

Baghdad, Iraq American Forces Network-Iraq extends its life radio service to major U.S. troop locations throughout Iraq at 3 p.m. Tuesday (Dec. 23). In addition to AFN -Iraq's 107.7 FM signal in Baghdad, the station will be available in the following locations.

Balad (Anacanda)	107.3 FM
Sinjar	107.9 FM
Kirkuk	107.3 FM
Tallil AB	107.3 FM
Mosul	105.1 FM
Tikrit	93.3 FM

Qayyarah West 93.3 FM
(Ar Ramadi expected Feb. 1 at 107.3 PM)

Since Dec. 10, AFN-Iraq has been airing locally-generated programs from its studios in Baghdad. AFN-Iraq, an affiliate of the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), operates 24-hours a day featuring live shows, news and command information throughout its broadcast day. The station's music format is Bright Adult Contemporary, a mix of today's most popular songs and the hits of the past.

"We're excited about being able to deliver AFN-Iraq radio programs to coalition forces located throughout the country," said Lt. Col. Perry Nouis, AFN-Iraq's commander. "It was our hope that we could get this service in place before the end of the year, and the fact that we were able to get it in place before the holiday season is the result of a lot of hard work on the part of many people. We look forward to serving our expanding audience.

Command information material, song requests and dedications can be sent to Freedom Radio at afn@baghdadform.com.

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AFN to air news throughout the day

Released: Dec. 1, 2000

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (USAFENS) -- American Forces Network television viewers will be seeing more news, more often, beginning Dec. 11. AFN-Europe will replace its 6 and 10 p.m. Central European Time (CET) week-day "News 90" newscast with a collection of shorter news breaks that will run throughout the broadcast day. "The format change means that our audience gets their European and local news segments in smaller, more easily appreciated segments instead of one long program," said Milt Fitzwater, who heads up AFN's European Broadcast Center. The shorter news segments will air during commercial breaks in entertainment programs and will be targeted to the interests of that show's audience, Fitzwater said. For example, AFN will feature lifestyle news, medical tips, financial news and family information during two breaks in "the Oprah Winfrey Show" which airs weekdays at 9 a.m. CET. Five minutes of news from around the U.S. European Command will air at 5:55 p.m. CET weekdays during CNN Headline News and again at 10:23 p.m. AFN affiliate stations will air local news or news from the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service at 6:55 p.m. and at 10:28 p.m. CET.

Other news breaks will appear during prime-time programming commercial breaks. Viewers can catch the first exchange rate update of the day at 5:05 p.m. CET weekdays. For more information, check out AFN-Europe's web site at <http://www.afneurope.army.mil/>.

Troops head out to record holiday greetings

by 2nd Lt. Adrienne Traxinger
Air Force Print News

9/2/2003 - **SAN ANTONIO** -- Broadcasters from the Army and Air Force Hometown News Service will begin collecting holiday greetings from troops overseas Sept. 8.

Three teams of military broadcasters are expected to return here with more than 13,000 individual messages to be sent to local television and radio stations in the United States. The videotaped greetings will be edited and sent to servicemembers' hometown TV stations. Airmen, soldiers, sailors and Marines are invited to participate.

"We like to think visiting with troops truly separated from their families and spread out across the world provides a morale boost not only for the servicemembers, but also their families back home," said Tom Taylor, the service's chief of broadcast news. He added that it is also important to show the American public the sacrifices military people are making in unaccompanied assignments like Iraq and Korea.

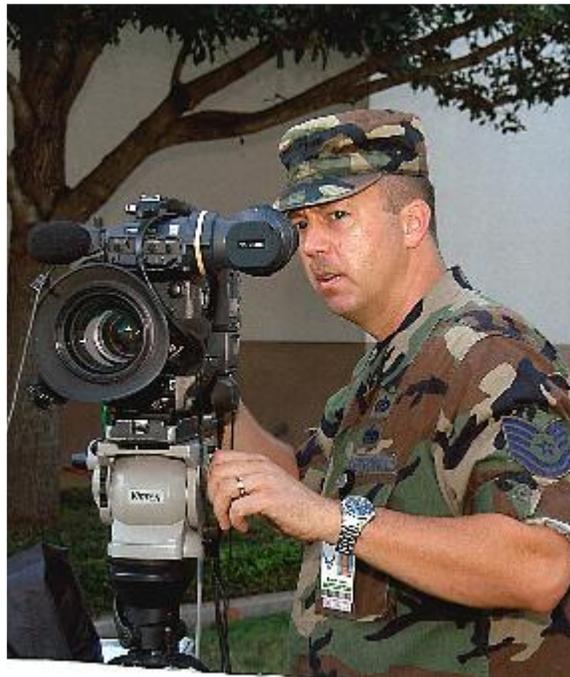
Teams will make stops in Europe, the Pacific and Southwest Asia. They will visit about 75 installations in less than six weeks.

"As we plan this mission each year, the list of installations wanting to participate grows," Taylor said. "We've adjusted our schedules this year so that we'll have longer stays in the most forward-deployed regions. Some of the traditional stops in Europe have been cut back to allow our (Southwest Asia) team to concentrate in ... Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait and others."

The teams began training in August.

"The better everyone understands the process, the faster it will go in the field. If we're all on the same sheet of music, we will be able to do a higher volume of quality (greetings)," said Army Sgt. 1st Class James Posten, the service's non-commissioned officer in charge of broadcast operations. "And that's what the mission is about: Giving as many people as possible the opportunity to send a message to their families back home."

While some greetings will be posted on the Hometown News Web site, Taylor said some radio and TV



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[SAN ANTONIO -- Tech. Sgt. Erich Schwab tapes a mock holiday greeting during training here Aug. 27. Three teams of broadcasters from the Army and Air Force Hometown News Service will travel the globe to tape airmen, soldiers, sailors and Marines who want to send a video message home for the holidays. The teams will visit more than 75 bases in less than six weeks. \(U.S. Air Force photo by Bobby Mathis\)](#)

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While some greetings will be posted on the Hometown News Web site, Taylor said some radio and TV stations are also posting local servicemembers' greetings on their Web sites.

Below is a list of scheduled visits for the European and Pacific theaters. The schedule is subject to change. The schedule for Southwest Asia is not being released. Servicemembers can contact their public affairs office and watch for local advertisements for specific information about their location.

Sept. 8: Andersen Air Force Base, Guam; Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England.

Sept. 9: Andersen AFB; RAF Lakenheath, England.

Sept. 11: Kadena Air Base, Japan; Heidelberg, Germany.

Sept. 12: Kadena AB; Hanau, Germany.

Sept. 13: Friedburg, Germany.

Sept. 15: Misawa AB, Japan; Gielbelstadt, Germany.

Sept. 16: Misawa AB; Wuerzburg, Germany.

Sept. 17: Schweinfurt, Germany.

Sept. 18: Yokota AB, Japan; Kitzingen, Germany.

Sept. 19: Zama, Japan; Ansbach/Illesheim, Germany.

Sept. 22: Camp Greaves, South Korea; Camp Bonifas, South Korea; Darmstadt, Germany.

Sept. 23: Camp Stanley, South Korea; Camp Red Cloud, South Korea; Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Sept. 24: Camp Casey, South Korea; Ramstein AB, Germany.

Sept. 25: Kunsan AB, South Korea; Ramstein AB.

Sept. 26: Kunsan AB; Spangdahlem AB, Germany.

Sept. 27: Camp Hialeah, South Korea; Camp Walker, South Korea; Spangdahlem AB.

Sept. 29: Camp Henry, South Korea; Vicenza, Italy.

Sept. 30: Camp Humphries, South Korea; Vicenza.

Oct. 1: Osan AB, South Korea; Aviano AB, Italy.

Oct. 2: Osan AB; Dragon Hill Lodge, Korea; Aviano AB.

Oct. 3: Camp Eagle, South Korea.

Oct. 4: Yongsan Compound, South Korea.

Oct. 6: Yongsan Compound; Kosovo.

Oct. 7: Kosovo.

Oct. 9: Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

Oct. 10: Fort Richardson, Alaska; Bosnia.

Oct. 11: Bosnia.

Oct. 13: Eielson AFB, Alaska; Bosnia.

Oct. 14: Fort Wainwright, Alaska.