



Photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

## TCA takes off for the last time

The last remaining Trainer Cargo Aircraft takes off from Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base Dec. 22, 2011, for the final time. TCA #20199 served the E-3A Component for 22 years, the longest tenure of any aircraft at Geilenkirchen. Local television and radio media from the Netherlands and Germany attended the very last flight from Geilenkirchen to Maastricht-Aachen Airport and covered the entire ceremony including the final handover at the School for Aviation at Maastricht-Aachen Airport. The local and national media used their footage on television, radio, newspaper and internet.

## Flying Squadron 4 stands down, TCA dismissed

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Flying Squadron 4 was officially dismissed by Col. John Backstrom, Operations Wing commander, during a stand-down ceremony at the E-3A Club on Dec. 9, 2011.

Squadron 4 operated the E-3A Component's Trainer Cargo Aircraft, which was selected for retirement in 2008. The more than 60 people in attendance at the ceremony listened as the TCA's impressive history was read aloud.

"Although in the early days the TCAs were tasked to fly both training and cargo sorties, world events and the needs of the Component dictated new emphases on TCA operations. The aircraft flew more and more cargo and passenger sorties in support of operations and exercises around the world," said Lt. Col. Andrés Gamboa, the squadron's last commander.

Since 1988, the TCA has conducted thousands of training and cargo mission with a success rate of close to 100 percent.

"Transport and cargo mission are not easy," Gamboa explained. "On the contrary, they are special and challenging. Behind every mission is a tough job to get it all in place at the proper time."

Gamboa added that the squadron's success was due to the hard work of all the air crewmembers, cargo movers, flight booking and administrative personnel as well as the people from SABENA and IAMCO that have been a part of the unit during the past 23 years.

"You have heard the legacy of the TCA squadron," said Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt, NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force commander. "They have faithfully



Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

Lt. Col. Andrés Gamboa, Flying Squadron Four commander, hands the unit's flag to Col. John Backstrom, Operations Wing commander, during the squadron's stand-down ceremony Dec. 9, 2011, at the E-3A Club on Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base.

served as the workhorse of the E-3A Component and NAEW&C Force. I have never seen such a small operational unit go so far, do so much or deliver for so many."

General Schmidt continued to explain that no AWACS operation was

ever flown without the TCA leading the way.

"It's all over now, this is a sad moment for all of us," expressed Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototzky, Component commander. "Thank you very much for a job very well done."

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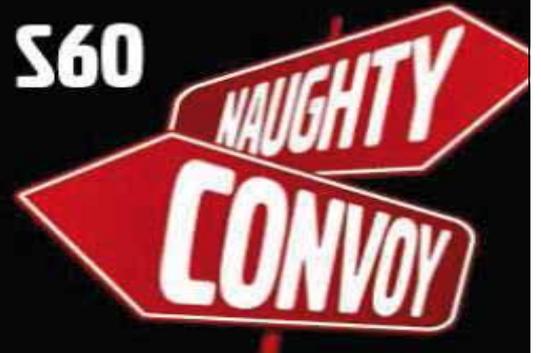


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# Commander recognizes Component's hard work



Photo by Andre Joosten

Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototzky, E-3A Component commander, thanks civilian and military personnel for their hard work during a Commander's Call Dec. 21, 2011, at Hanger II on base.

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

With the aromatic smell of Glühwein filling the air of Hangar II, Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototzky held a Commander's Call Dec. 21, 2011, on Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base.

General Pototzky, E-3A Component commander, met with civilian and military personnel to thank them for their hard work over the past year.

"It's not too often we have the opportunity to gather," the general

said. "But it is important for me to address you as your commander."

The commander took a moment to highlight some of the Component's accomplishments in 2011 including its support of Operation Afghan Assist and Operation Unified Protector.

"The world was watching and you performed magnificently," he expressed addressing the crowd of several hundred. "It gives me great pride to say, we have accomplished our missions. You represented the Component, NATO, your country and yourselves with honor and courage."

The general added that everyone in attendance had reason to be just as proud as he was.

"You continually went about and beyond the call of duty," he explained. "This has shown the world, once again, that NATO AWACS is up to any challenge and will accomplish it with flying colors."

While the general stated the Component's success was a complete team effort, he also identified a few key people in attendance for their specific contributions to the mission.

"At this time I would like to recognize some individuals for their extraordinary work during the last year," the commander added.

"These individuals displayed tremendous dedication and truly lived up to the Component's core values."

As the Commander's Call ended, General Pototzky took another opportunity to express his gratitude for all Component personnel and invited everyone to enjoy the refreshments.

"I would like to thank you all again," the commander said. "You have shown to everyone what can be achieved through hard work, professionalism and dedication. Now relax and enjoy some Glühwein!"

## 30 Years Jubilee Event Team preps for successful celebration

From E-3A Component Public Affairs

In 1982, the first NATO E-3A aircraft landed on base and we are reaching the 30 year milestone this summer, which is probably worth a celebration.

The dates for the event have been set, June 15 to 17. Of course, there are still loads of planning work to be done.

Lt. Col. Raimond Schulz, chairman of the 30 Years Jubilee Event Team, started the preparations with a customized project management training session for the entire team.

This session was conducted by the Office of Transformation and covered a wide range of topics which could be directly or indirectly applied to the planning and execution of the event.

After the training session, Schulz summarized the team's feedback as "an excellent starting point to tackle this huge endeavor and definitely a very good first team building activity."



Photo by Andrea Hohenforst

Leon Koolen conducts project management training with the 30 Years Jubilee Event Team Nov. 21, 2011, in Building 203 on base.

During the session, the team identified three key factors for the success of the jubilee event:

- Availability of the planning team
- Participation of the Nations/ National Support Units
- Volunteer support

The importance of team work, involvement, cooperation and a good balance between supporting and enjoying the event was also acknowledged.

"Planning this event is serious

business and will require a tremendous effort," Schulz said. "However, if sufficient shoulders are available to support it, the workload can be reduced to manageable proportions and it can still be a fun event for all."



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## In memoriam



### Hans Wijnholds

It is with great sadness to announce the passing of one of our much respected colleagues employed in the Civil Guard - Hans Wijnholds.

Mr. Wijnholds passed away Dec. 4, 2011, after battling with a serious illness for the past few years.

Hans was a valuable member of the Civil Guard and has been with the E-3A Component since 1981. He has no doubt touched many lives during his time with us. Highly respected by his peers and supervisors, Hans consistently performed his duties with pride, and always to a very high standard. Even during the past few years as his health began to decline, Hans continued to serve at his post up until the time of his passing.

On behalf of the E-3A community, all members of the Security Branch extend their deepest sympathies to Hans' wife Jeannette Wijnholds-Monsewije and his children Erik, Tom, Luke and Jorrit.



### Claus Cohnen

It is with deep regret we announce the passing of one of our Component members. On 3 January 2012, Chief Master Sgt. Claus Cohnen passed away.

Chief Cohnen first arrived at the Component on 9 February 2004, assigned to the German Support Unit.

On 2 April 2007 he moved from the National Support Unit side to the Component's Public Affairs Office, where he was mainly responsible for the visitor tour groups on base.

He was the treasurer and one of the founding members of the on-base AWACS Runners Club. Also, as an active member of the Übach-Palenberg Swimming Club from childhood onwards, he was responsible for that Club's public relations.

His top sports achievements were a European Championship swimming title, gained in Blackpool, UK, and participating in the Kulmbach triathlon in 2002.

Claus was a great husband, father, friend and colleague. His infectious smile and warm attitude will be missed by the entire Component, but especially by his friends in PAO and the German NSU. Chief Cohnen served the Component honorably and with great distinction.

He is survived by his wife Iris and three children Jessica, Niclas and Marc.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Cohnen family during this time of sorrow. Chief, you will be missed but not forgotten.

## An expression of thanks

Several weeks ago the Component lost Wim van Renselaar, a longtime NATO civilian, another member of its family. His wife wrote the following:

*Dear colleagues of Wim,  
Words cannot express the feeling in our hearts. Thank you for the love and support you have shown to us during Wim's illness and after his passing. It meant so much to our family. We appreciated this very much.*

*Marjo van Renselaar, Milou, Robin and Sil*

# Interview with a dentist

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Soon one Component dentist will be saying goodbye to the military.

Maj. Sandra Nobis has seen nearly 200 patients a month at the Medical Branch for the past seven years. She took a few moments to sit down for an interview to discuss her time here.

*SKYWATCH: How would you describe your time here at GK?*

SN: It has been very, very nice here. It's been really busy at time with all the operations the Component has been involved in. For the most part it's like business as usual in a dental office.

*SKYWATCH: Tell us about your next job.*

SN: My time in the military is coming to an end and I'm going to open my own clinic in Geilenkirchen. I'll still help out here for a few months until they get a replacement.

*SKYWATCH: What will you miss most about working at the Component?*

SN: I'm going to miss the great relationships I've developed with the personnel here. I'm going to miss being apart of the military and ensuring everyone is qualified to complete the mission. Here I'm not just a dentist but a soldier too.

*SKYWATCH: What won't you miss?*

SN: All of the paperwork, even though, I'm sure I'll just get different paperwork in the civilian world ...

*SKYWATCH: What has been the most unique thing about working here?*

SN: Here, we must ensure that all flying personnel meet the higher dental standards required for flying. One important precondition is, for example, individual oral hygiene.

*SKYWATCH: Why is oral hygiene so important?*

SN: It should be a high priority because dental inflammations can lead to other problems in the body. For example, bacteria in the mouth can travel to your heart and cause problems.

*SKYWATCH: When it comes to dental hygiene, what should people be doing more of?*

SN: It's very simple. People should just be brushing twice a day as well as using floss and mouthwash. It is important to teach good oral healthcare to children at a very young age. Parents should teach them that going the dentist is okay and that taking care of their teeth should be a part of their everyday routine.

*SKYWATCH: Now some people don't like*

*the dentist, what can they do to make their visit easier?*

SN: Just talk with your dentist about your concerns so they can explain the work being done and help put you at ease but even if you don't like the dentist, everyone should come to the clinic at least once a year for a check up and cleaning.

*SKYWATCH: Thanks for taking the time to talk to us and good luck with the new job.*



Photos by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria  
Maj. Sandra Nobis poses for a photo in her office Nov. 28, 2011.



Maj. Sandra Nobis performs a routine exam on a patient Nov. 28, 2011, at the Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base Medical Branch.



Photo by Wiel Borghans

## Visitors from Caritas

Members of the Caritas talk with Capt. Peter Verlande during their visit Dec. 14, 2011, to Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base. "It was a bright idea to spend an afternoon on base" – this was the overall feedback of the Caritas representatives. The Component commander invited about 20 Heinsberg region volunteers from Caritas, a confederation of Catholic relief, development and social service organizations to tour the base and one of its aircraft. After the tour, the group watched a short film and had an open discussion about the E-3A's mission with Component personnel. Nicole Abels-Schell, who supervises for Caritas' so-called "round tables" for elderly people, refugees and disabled persons, summarized, "Our hosts did a great job to inform us about AWACS. All questions were answered. And to be inside an AWACS – really a unique experience."



Photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Capt. Sjoerd Bangma, Flying Squadron 1 surveillance controller, trains on a stationary bike at the New Gym Jan. 3, 2012, at Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base.

## Dutch captain preps for uphill battle in fight against cancer

By Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

One component member is already preparing for an uphill battle that is more than six months away.

Dutch Capt. Sjoerd Bangma, Squadron 1, will climb one of the most famous mountains in France six times to raise money for cancer research.

The surveillance controller, and former physical training instructor, is one of 8,000 participants that will bike or run up the Alpes d'Huez on 7-8 June, 2012.

"The event is a way to raise money for a cancer foundation in the Netherlands," Bangma said. "It's just for people who want to do something besides going door to door looking for handouts."

The gray-haired captain has his own personal motivation for completing the event. "One of my friends is really sick; he is trying to get better," Bangma said. "He was in the Army and was very physically fit but now he can barely run 100 meters."

He explained that his friend has recently completed chemo therapy

and is training to participate in the event alongside him.

The event was started six years ago by a private organization to help fight cancer. "It's an all volunteer event and 100 percent of the money raised goes to the cancer foundation," Bangma commented.

At its conception, the event raised about 30,000 euros a year. However, in 2011 the event raised nearly 20 million euros. The organization hopes to raise closer to 30 million euros in 2012. Each participant must raise a minimum of 2,500 euros to compete in the event.

"If you can't raise the money, there is a line of others willing to take your place in the event," the captain explained. "I'm doing anything I can do to raise the money. I'm looking for all the support I can get."

Bangma added that he will be holding a bunch of fundraisers including possible golf tournament to reach the goal amount. The captain has also set up boxes around base to collect donations.

To track Sjoerd's training and fundraising progress, log on to [www.deelnemers.alpe-dhuzes.nl/acties/sjoerdbangma/sjoerd-bangma](http://www.deelnemers.alpe-dhuzes.nl/acties/sjoerdbangma/sjoerd-bangma).



Photos by Wiel Borghans

The last remaining E-3A Component Trainer Cargo Aircraft, tail number 20199, lands at Maastricht-Aachen Airport Dec. 22, 2011.

## NATO donates TCA to Aviation Competence Centre

From E-3A Component Public Affairs

The NATO E-3A Component bid a final farewell to the last Trainer Cargo Aircraft after its 23 years of faithful service on Dec. 22, 2011, at Maastricht-Aachen Airport.

"Over the years, the TCA and the

squadron that flew it, served as the workhorse of the E-3A Component and NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force," said Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt, NAEW&C Force commander. "Today we are decommissioning the last of three NATO Trainer Cargo Aircraft with the handover of tail number 20199.

The TCA has flown its last mission for NATO."

The aircraft was handed over by the commander to Aircraft End of Life Solutions (AELS), a Dutch firm specialized in the environmentally friendly disassembly and dismantling of aircraft and the performance of related services.

AELS in turn handed over part of the airplane to the Aviation Competence Centre (ACC) for training purposes.

As the prime centre for multi-year professional training courses for trainee aircraft maintenance technicians, the arrival of the TCA is another major step forward for the ACC.

"This 707 aircraft strongly served NATO and it is good to know it will continue to serve others as a maintenance trainer for many in the years ahead," General Schmidt said.

The donation of the last TCA will better enable the centre to achieve its international ambition of training a sufficient number of professionally qualified staff for the European market. This involves aircraft maintenance companies working

together to provide a "one-stop shop" for aircraft maintenance training.

"This key part of NATO history is given to the Aviation Competence Centre, but it was made possible through the outstanding cooperation of NATO, the Dutch government, the Limburg Development and Investment Company and Aircraft End of Life Solutions," General Schmidt said.

The parts of the aircraft that do not go to the centre will be removed by AELS and re-used on other aircraft and the remainder will be recycled in an environmentally responsible manner.

NATO's TCAs were employed to provide operational transport to the various operational areas and to support humanitarian relief efforts in various locations, including Haiti and Pakistan.

"Today we enter into a new transport era for NATO," General Schmidt explained. "Our TCA fleet at Geilenkirchen is now retired."

To replace the functions performed by the TCAs, transport services will be provided under contract by modern airplanes with quieter engines.



Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Schmidt, NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force commander, hands over part of the last remaining E-3A Component Trainer Cargo Aircraft, tail number 20199, during a donation ceremony at Maastricht-Aachen Airport Dec. 22, 2011.

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# Component commander host movie showing for local schools

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. R. Michael Longoria

Children from three local schools lined up at the main gate Dec. 16, 2011, to attend a movie showing on Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base.

More than 365 children and their teachers packed the Mass Briefing Facility to watch the 1965 British comedy "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines," or as it is more commonly known in Germany "Die tollkühnen Männer in ihren fliegenden Kisten."

For the past three years the E-3A Component commander has held this event every December as a way to give back to the local community.

"This is just a little Christmas present for the children," said Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototzky. "It's a way for me to thank them for their support, plus it is just a nice thing to do."

The previous two movie showings featured classic Christmas films. This year the Component went with a slightly different selection.

"Most children are familiar with all the Christmas stories," said Capt. Lutz Paikert, Brigadier General Pototzky's aide. "This year we wanted to pick something unique but still suitable for children of all ages."

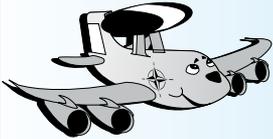
Captain Paikert explained that the "Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines" was a good choice because it highlights multiple nationalities and was "reflection of the Component."

Before the film started, everyone posed for a photo next to the lighted Christmas tree in front of the base's welcome sign.

The children were also provided a snack box containing popcorn or chips, a juice box and a Component sticker.



Brig. Gen. Burkhard Pototzky, E-3A Component commander, speaks to more than 365 children and their teachers Dec. 16, 2011, at the Mass Briefing Facility.



## PLANE SPOTTER

**This aircraft landed at Geilenkirchen Air Base.**

**Do you know what it is?**

SEE PAGE 10



Photo by Wiel Borghans



Alix Dinh-Phung poses for a photo Dec. 14, 2011, with her color contest entry. Alix won first place in her age group.

## IYA Coloring Contest winners

### Ages 3-5:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Nathan Arendse, 5, USA
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Amelia Eckert, 4, DEU
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Iliana Dillinger, 3, USA

### Ages 6-8:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Alix Dinh-Phung, 7, FRA
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Yasmin Adams, 6, USA, and Jolie Patten, 6, USA
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Annika Braun, 7, DEU, and Isyss Wood, 7, USA

### Ages 9-12:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Paula Marchena, 9, ESP, and Martime Redgwell, 12, DEU
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Annika Vossenkaul, 12, DEU
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Ana Del Valle Quijada, 9, ESP

# Component says good-bye to familiar face



Photo by Thomas Henrichs  
Hein Quaedvlieg, also known as the cheerful Dutchman, poses for a photo.

By Fritz Stelten and Thomas Henrichs

Hein Quaedvlieg - Quaedvlieg with an additional "e" - started his career at the E-3A Component as a lifeguard at the base swimming pool in 1983.

Shortly after that he joined the Sports Department and was responsible for the maintenance and repair of all outdoor and indoor sports facilities. He was the helping hand for party services like tents, tables, benches and more. In addition, he regularly volunteered as the driver for the NATO children's train.

A few years ago when the Sports

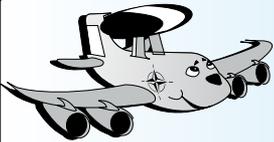
Department was restructured, Mr. Hein became janitor and, after attending a special class for the professional set-up of the large tents, he became a "Richtmeister" (topping out foreman).

Mr. Hein wasn't all work and no play either, Der lustige Holländer, or the cheerful Dutchman, as he was called by a former colleague, was also an accomplished painter who enjoyed the occasional practical joke. Even in a difficult or not so safe situation people would hear him say, "Remember that I can't swim."

After his 28 years of dedicated work for the Component, we wish Hein and his wife, Uschi, all the best for their future.



Photo by André Joosten  
Hein Quaedvlieg has completed numerous pieces of artwork including this one.



# PLANE SPOTTER

By Chief Master Sgt. Claus Cohnen - in memoriam

This aircraft landed at Geilenkirchen Air Base on Oct. 4, 2011. The Tupolev Tu-204 is a twin-engined medium-range jet airliner capable of carrying 210 passengers, designed by Tupolev and produced by Aviastar SP and Kazan Aircraft Production Association. First introduced in 1989, it is considered to be broadly equivalent to the Boeing 757 and has competitive performance and fuel efficiency in its class. It was developed for Aeroflot as a replacement for the medium-range Tupolev Tu-154 trijet. The latest version, with significant upgrades and improvements, is the Tu-204SM, which performed its first flight on 29 December 2010.

The Tu-204C on the photo is the basic freight or cargo model. It has a length of 46.14 meters and a height of 13.9 meters. Maximum take-off weight is 103,000 kg. Cruising speed is up to 850 km/h (528 mph), maximum fuel capacity 45,000 liters (9,900 imp gal / 12,000 US gal).



**Tupolev Tu-204**

## COMPONENT HOLIDAYS 2012

Please find below the official 2012 E-3A Component holiday schedule, including three E-3A Component Commander's Stand-Down Days.

Cdr's Stand-Down Day (Carnival Monday)	20 Feb	German Unity Day	3 Oct
Good Friday	6 April	All Saints Day	1 Nov
Easter Monday	9 April	Cdr's Stand Down Day ('Bridge Day' to Christmas Day)	24 Dec
Labour Day	1 May	Christmas Day	25 Dec
Ascension Day	17 May	Boxing Day	26 Dec
Whit Monday	28 May	Cdr's Stand Down Day ('Bridge Day' to New Year's Day)	31 Dec
Corpus Christi	7 June		

### Non-Flying Days 2012:

Monday, 2 Jan  
 Monday, 20 Feb  
 Monday, 30 April  
 Friday, 18 May  
 Friday, 8 June  
 Friday 2 Nov



# MBF renovated for first time since 1953

From E-3A Public Affairs

The Mass Briefing Facility was re-opened Nov. 23, 2011, after recent renovations.

The current MBF, building number 2, served as a cinema for troops from 1953 until 2005 when the service was discontinued. At that time the building was given an alternate purpose as a briefing facility.

"The dual functionality of this building enables E-3A commanders to communicate operational and other topics with a maximum audience of 462 persons at one time," said Theo Collijn, Base Administrative Services Section. "In the first decade of this century, the Component invested quite a lot of money in this facility."

Renovations over the past few years have included: new inflammable curtains in NATO blue, a new multimedia system, a professional lecture was made available, removable front row chairs were replaced, the non-removable back row chairs were upholstered, and the stage and front part of the carpet were replaced.

An inspection in 2009 revealed that more structural work was required within the MBF. The acoustic wall covers required repair, the ceiling needed to be re-painted, lights had to be replaced and the back part of the carpet required renewal. Funds were reserved and the



Workers remove carpet from the Mass Briefing Facility during renovations Oct. 27, 2011, on base.

work was executed in the October/November 2011 timeframe to make the interior ready to serve future audiences for the next decade.

Personnel from the Component's Infrastructure Division and the Bau- und Liegenschaftsbetrieb oversaw the work that was carried out by local contractors and the Component's Bundeswehr-Dienstleistungszentrum.

The Base Administrative Services Section, as the custodian for the facility, took the opportunity of this renovation to also enhance the appearance of the building. Visual Media Services Section created new designs for the façade and the foyer.

Mr. Collijn explained that the Force Command and E-3A Component emblems 1.7 meters tall are now prominently placed on the forefront and give an extra military character to the entire main entrance area of the base.

The ticket sales booth in the foyer, covered behind roller shutters, has now been given an open character. It has been transformed into an "E-3A illusion" with the characteristic NATO/OTAN insignia and NATO star from the E-3A aircraft fuselage on the sides and a large picture of the aircraft's mission crew area in the middle. Supply squadron contributed by making genuine Boeing aircraft carpet available to complete the setting.

Mr. Collijn added that the Administrative Services Section will continue to prepare for further improvements such as renovating the flagstone stairs in the front of the building and upgrading the analogue multimedia system to a digital solution.

For more information concerning the MBF, visit the E-3A Conference Center on the E-3A Portal under Component Links\Component Shortcuts.



Workers paint the ceiling of the Mass Briefing Facility during renovations on Geilenkirchen NATO Airbase. Photos by Andrea Hohenforst

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Visit us and get more information!  
 Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, 17.00 hrs

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