

Threat of isolation (Englische Version des Artikels: Es droht die Isolationsfalle)

Are the British families from Pied Piper Town going to be sent off to lonely Royal Air Force airfields in the British Isles?



by Veronica Maguire MA

London/Hameln (wbn). The premature drawing down of British troops from Germany has been met with surprise in the garrison towns involved, like Paderborn and Hameln – by the soldiers, their families and the mayors of the towns alike.

The same goes for Hameln. But weserbergland-nachrichten.de, who reported extensively on 19 October, have also heard that the concrete plans for the move from Germany to the UK are expected to be announced in March 2011. This will mean a lot of stress and adapting for the individual families, especially if it's true that the majority will be accommodated on former RAF bases. For the Britons from Hameln it would be a real "culture shock" to be uprooted from a lively, urban life and be despatched to places out in "the back of beyond". The British soldiers and their families are particularly well integrated into public life in Hameln. With their willingness to support charitable projects run by Germans by implementing their equipment, the English Pioneers have won a great deal of sympathy.

(Photo: With Hameln as their base, the British Pioneers frequently take part in operations abroad. Photo: Ministry of Defence)

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Geschrieben von: Lorenz

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The Anglo-German Club is very popular, too. Thomas Wahmes, press spokesman for the Town of Hameln, pointed out to [weserbergland-nachrichten](#) today the additional aspect of negative economic consequences which will result from the departure of the British Army from Pied Piper Town. Going by about 800 soldiers stationed here, the real figure of people involved is at least 1,500 if you include families. David Cameron, the British Prime Minister had announced the key figures of drawing down the troops in the House of Commons the day before yesterday, surprising his listeners with the news that half of the troops will have been withdrawn from Germany by 2015, and the remainder by 2020.

Originally, it had been assumed that 2035 was the deadline for complete withdrawal, but the sudden haste is due to the extremely difficult financial state of the UK at present. Observers in the House of Commons concluded from the way David Cameron conducted his speech that the PM had improvised quite a bit, and that the real drawing down plan will now be set up – after the key data have been announced. When 20,000 soldiers leave North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony, they will leave a huge gap in the regions with British garrisons. But the budget will cause drastic situations in the UK, too, leaving 25,000 civil servants on all levels out of work. And that at a time when the unemployed figures are worsening daily. Unlike in Germany, the economic upturn in the UK hasn't yet kicked in.