

## An Update from Germany

By Eric Perinovic

Hello CENFAD Community!

Greetings from the beautiful city of Freiburg-im-Breisgau! I am currently starting the fourth month of my stay here as a Fulbright scholar, and I've been asked to provide an ex-Davis Fellow in the field report. I arrived in Germany on September 15, and my first few weeks were spent in a whirlwind of bureaucratic hoops, jetlag, and the Fulbright Orientation in the historic university city of Marburg. The orientation was a wonderful opportunity to meet brilliant scholars from all over the United States that study disciplines and topics from across the spectrum. Marburg itself is a picturesque city dotted with statues and other homages to the Brothers Grimm, who began collecting folk tales when they attended the university. It took about a month of concerted effort, but my conversational German has gotten much better. I am approaching the level of fluidity I last had as an undergraduate when I lived in the Max Kade German House at Ohio State. Speaking German has been something of a rarity for me over the last 8 years, and it's been an empowering experience to reclaim these language skills.

I was cleared to start archival work on October 1, and I spend around 30-35 hours a week in the Federal Military Archive conducting primary source research in support of my dissertation on the long-term political, military, and economic ramifications of West Germany's decision to procure the Lockheed F-104 Starfighter in 1960. The Starfighter was an infamous widow-maker in West German service, and the high mortality rate of its pilots caused a widespread domestic political scandal in the late 1960s. While this will

play an important role in my research, I'm focusing more on how the Starfighter was leveraged by the Federal Republic to achieve normalized leadership within NATO by leading the NATO-Starfighter Management Office. To that end, I will be making a trip to Brussels this winter to spend time in the NATO Archive, which has been facilitated through the conferral of CENFAD's Jeffrey Bower Endowed Research Fellowship.

In contrast to my first visit in 2016, I was incredibly fortunate to be greeted on my arrival in the archive with around 50 pounds of new materials the archivists had pulled for me. This was especially welcome given that the archive's search and retrieval system is more than a bit byzantine and counter-intuitive. While archival work can sometimes feel interminable, I have found some great source materials. At the moment, I am reviewing East German intelligence reports and assessments of the Starfighter and West Germany's ambitions in pursuing it. Unfortunately, due to privacy laws, I'm prevented from photographing them, so it's been a prolonged adventure in translation. I'm examining the Starfighter's role in the complicated Intra-German relationship of the 1960s with the hope of turning it into an article and dissertation chapter.

Beyond my archival work, I've been very active in and around Freiburg. A key component of being a Fulbright scholar is serving as a cultural ambassador to one's host community. To that end, I have joined the Lehrstuhl für Neuere und Neueste Geschichte Westeuropas at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, where I am taking part in seminars and research colloquia with

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German historians and doctoral students. It's been a great opportunity to build both personal and professional bridges and has provided me with the chance to discuss my research and practice the pitch for my dissertation in German. I generally take an excursion a week in and around Baden-Württemberg, which is facilitated by my wonderful landlord, Anita, who has taken me to more festivals and wine tastings than I can count and "on tour" in Alsace, the Black Forest, and to many villages and towns throughout the Breisgau. Additionally, I learned on November 15 that I have been selected by the German-American Fulbright Commission to serve as a representative at the February 2019 EU-NATO Seminar hosted by the Fulbright-Schuman Program. It will be a five-day seminar that takes place in both Belgium and Luxembourg and will include tours and briefings at the EU Commission, European Court of Justice, NATO Headquarters, U.S. Mission to the EU, and Bastogne War Museum among other locations.

While the Fulbright has been a wonderful experience, it's also been difficult due to being separated from my wife Jenny and daughter Eleanor. Being apart from them has been full of heartache, but I can't wait to see them over the holidays. I returned to Philadelphia for Thanksgiving, and they will be joining me for two weeks in Germany over the holiday season. Jenny has shown an astonishing amount of strength and perseverance over the last several months, and I stand in awe of her.

That about does it for this check-in. I hope everyone is doing well, and that your semesters have been productive! As ever, feel free to drop me a line.

Best,

Eric