

Local lifter captures Lower Franconia record

by **Scott Rouch**
The Point

An American continues to make his mark on the German powerlifting scene.

Terry Butler, a civilian information assurance officer with 69th Signal Battalion, set a Lower Franconia record at a Jan. 21 meet, lifting a combined 712 kilograms (1,570 pounds). Fighting illness, Butler squatted 287 kg (633 lbs), bench pressed 187.5 kg (413 lbs), and deadlifted 242.5 kg (534 lbs).

Setting records isn't what drives Butler. That's a bonus. It's competition and the challenge of being the best he can be that keeps him going.

Butler played college football for Division II Gannon University from 1996-2000, and continued playing for the semi-professional Franken Knights of the German Football League from 2001 -2003 while serving on active duty with the 69th Signal Battalion.

He lifted competitively for a year in college but didn't resume lifting until 2001, after he was approached at Leighton Fitness Center and invited to lift at SG Randersacker. He lifted there for a few days and was then asked to compete for the SG Randersacker team in the Bundesliga. He joined, and has continued since leaving active duty in 2004.

"They both (football and powerlifting) challenge me," Butler said. "In football, you do things as a team and you accomplish things as a team. But it's the adrenaline-at 180 pounds can I take out this 220-pound fullback?"

"In powerlifting, you challenge yourself to a new level. It's



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Terry Butler trains on the deadlift at SG Randersacker. There's over 400 pounds on the bar.

you versus the weight," he said.

Butler meets those challenges in the 82.5 kg (181 lbs) class. He is a two-time Bavarian champion, and could potentially be a German national champion this year.

"I think I now qualify because I've lived here five years, so the only thing they're disputing now is my age," Butler said. "As long as it's not an issue, it looks like in April, if I'm allowed, I'll compete in the German finals. But, if not, I'll go along and coach a couple of guys."

Being the only American on the team and in the league has never been an issue.

"Everybody in the league pretty much speaks English and if they don't, I can still converse with them," Butler said, adding his German skills are improving. "We all get along pretty well."

His best friends, Germans who nicknamed him "the schinken" (The Ham) because of his huge legs, help Butler at the gym and during meets, lifting suits on and wrapping him up.

"He's a pretty good guy and a good friend," said Marco Kilian (The Rat), who, along with Christoph Schuster (the Playboy) and Tommy Fürsich, joined Butler on a trip to New York and Pennsylvania in 2003.

Also supporting him is girlfriend Tracy DeFeo, a registered nurse at Würzburg Hospital. Butler trains after work and usually doesn't get home until 9 p.m. or later most weeknights.

"She's been very good about it," Butler said. "She understands and supports me 100 percent. She says I'm good at it and to do what I love to do."

How much longer he will compete in Germany is debatable. DeFeo's job at the hospital ends in June and Butler doesn't know if his job will transfer to Grafenwoehr when 69th Signal moves there later this year. But that's only a consideration if they want to remain in Germany.

"We have to decide what's best for us, and go from there," Butler said. "Regardless whether I'm here or in the States, as long as I'm healthy, (powerlifting) is something I'll keep doing."

"It will be sad when he has to leave," Schuster said, adding that sooner or later everybody has to go.