

# Bonita hosts generals

## Europeans tout their effort in Afghanistan

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Four European military leaders told more than 75 people Tuesday about their countries' commitment to the conflict in Afghanistan.

The European American Network hosted the luncheon at the Bonita Bay Club in Bonita Springs.

Brig. Gen. Juergen A. Beyer of Germany, Brig. Gen. Rosario Sivestro Moschella of Italy, Rear Adm. Patrick Martin of France and Brig. Gen. Herman Oude Lohhuis of the Netherlands spoke about their efforts to train military and police and their desire to build schools and hospitals despite eroding support of citizens in their countries.

The four work with the U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa.

"We don't want to give something to the Afghans," said Beyer, whose country, Germany, has the third-most troops in Afghanistan — 4,831 — behind the United States and the United Kingdom. "We want that the Afghans take the initiative and we help them."

He said he expects the Afghan government to take over responsibility for security in 2014 and several districts are stable.

"There are some that we have a lot of problems, but that is in 10 percent of them," Beyer said. Since 2001, Germany has contributed \$1.5 billion to its effort in Afghanistan.

Local Realtor Monika DeBenedictis said she enjoyed hearing about positive results.

"The U.S. media (do) not show enough of the international effort that is so committed in Afghanistan," she said.

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**Gallery:** See photos of the generals' meeting in Bonita Springs