

German plane fleet in shabby shape

by UPI

BERLIN -- Half of Germany's military transport planes are corroded or suffer wear and tear, the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle reported. Germany's 83 Transall planes are used to ferry some 3,000 soldiers serving in NATO-led forces in Afghanistan, but according to the business daily Handelsblatt, more than half aren't suited for such trips, some are more than 40 years old, and spare parts are getting harder to come by, Deutsche Welle said. Rust has grounded some of the planes. The German defense ministry said 70 percent of planes are at ready, in synch with NATO rules, and an "unknown number" are being repaired, Deutsche Welle said. The Transall planes are the country's only military transports to the Balkans and Afghanistan until 60 new models arrive. The new Airbus A400M planes, which will cost \$121.4 billion, were expected to arrive by 2014, but may be delayed.

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