

Remembering the 3 ID's Cold War Legacy - Wildflecken Training Area Celebrates 75 years, Dedicates Plaque to Former US Army Europe Units Stationed on Installation

submitted by Tim Stoy



The market town of Wildflecken in northern Bavaria celebrated the 75th anniversary of the opening of the neighboring training area in 1938 with a 3 day festival 26-28 July 2013. Included in this commemoration was the dedication of a bronze tablet in the town's market square remembering the US Army Europe units which were stationed on the kaserne from 1951 to 1994, as well as commemorating the liberation of the installation on 6 April 1945 by the 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry! The maneuver area was the German Army's largest in WWII.

Several years ago I had broached the idea of dedicating a memorial plaque in the kaserne commemorating the service of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry there between 1963 and 1983. The idea expanded to include all the major US units which had been stationed in Wildflecken. Those of us who had been stationed there, especially those from the 3rd Infantry Division (there were elements from many different USAREUR major units on post), felt we were elite, as we were stationed the closest of all division elements to the Inter-German-Border and because it seemed our little mountain had the worst weather in all of Germany – the Top of the Rock!

This great event came to fruition thanks to the efforts of Colonel Hans Rohrmueller, German Army, retired, who is the President of the Reservist Association for the Rhoen area which has its museum and activities building on the post, and Mr. Heinz Leitsch, a native of Wildflecken, a very active member of the Rhoen Reservist Association, and a former local national employee of the US Army. With their active intercession, the Mayor of Wildflecken, Mayor Schrenck, decided to include the plaque dedication in the 75th anniversary commemoration, as well as fund the plaque and erecting the stone on which it is mounted. Colonel Rohrmueller, also the former Mayor of neighboring Bad Brueckenau, organized the ceremony. While on active duty his unit, part of the 12th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion from Ebern, was the partnership unit with 2-15 IN, so he has a very close connection to the 15th Infantry and 3rd Infantry Division. It is heartwarming to know the town of Wildflecken still remembers its American co-citizens almost 20 years since the last Americans departed the kaserne! Last year Bad Brueckenau dedicated a plaque honoring Americans who had lived there during the Cold war, a vastly underappreciated period in our Army's and our Division's proud history. This commemorative effort will continue throughout the Division's former footprint in Germany.

The US Consul General from Munich, Mr. Bill Moeller, was the senior American representative and speaker, with LTC, retired, Steve Steininger represented the veterans of the 3rd Infantry Division who had served in Wildflecken. Steve was my Deputy G-5 when I served as the Division G-5 in the mid-1990s, and had served in Wildflecken in the late 1980s. I myself had served with 2-15 IN its last year in Wildflecken, 1982-1983.



Left to right on the plaque are the unit patches for US Army Europe/7th Army, Vth Corps, 3rd ID, 15th Infantry Regiment, 8th ID, 18th Engineer Brigade, 32nd Air Defense Command, and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. The 54th Engineer Battalion belonged to the 18th ENG Bde, and the 8th ID had a tank battalion and its Military Intelligence battalion stationed at Wildflecken. The post itself fell under the command of either the 7th Army Training Command or Vth Corps at various times in its

history. With the scheduled departure of US units from nearby Schweinfurt, there will be no Americans left in Northern Bavaria where they have been since the end of WWII! With this plaque Wildflecken has made sure the memory of the Americans will remain.