

Wir  
leben  
Neu

Neu|Ulm

Stadt Neu-Ulm  
Stadtarchiv



51 **US**  
91 **ARMY**  
21 **★ NU**

# Occupation Daily life Friendship

**Withdrawal of the US-Army  
30 years ago**





**51 US**  
**91 ARMY**  
**21 ★ NU**

It has now been 30 years since the last base commander, John C. Heim, furled the base flag to the accompaniment of the national anthems of Germany and the USA in a moving ceremony officially marking the end of assignments for the US-Army in Neu-Ulm. During the forty years in which US Americans lived amongst the citizens of Neu-Ulm, the relationship between the two nations underwent some changes. A special relationship developed as their daily lives intermingled and the occupiers gradually became friends. This coexistence has left its mark with many people; it has brought about friendships and marriages and has changed peoples' lives in unexpected ways. Today, Neu-Ulm's residents affectionately remember that time, which had a lasting effect on the region and its politics.

Every ending holds a new beginning, and this was true for the town of Neu-Ulm, which transformed the vacant plot into a vibrant new district in which the new inhabitants live closely side by side with students of the University of Applied Sciences. The name Wiley has remained and is a symbol of both past times and a vibrant present and future.

Katrin Albsteiger,  
Senior Mayor

[stadtdgeschichte.neu-ulm.de](http://stadtdgeschichte.neu-ulm.de)



## History up to 1951

Before it became a US-American base, the area known today as "Wiley" had already been used militarily for almost 150 years. Following the battle of Elchingen, the so-called Ulanen linden tree was planted here after 1805 (Neu-Ulm was not founded until 1811). In about 1873 a double row of chestnut trees was planted around the new parade ground, many of which are still standing today. Military exercises took place here and during WWII it was used as an airfield. To the north, closer to the town, the Ludendorf Barracks was built in the 1930's. After the war this became US military territory.



**01**

**Aerial photo 1945:** The row of chestnut trees bordering the site of the parade ground laid out in 1873 can be seen clearly  
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**02**

The Ulanen linden tree planted after the Battle of Elchingen (1805) stood on the site of the barracks until the 1960's – cf. 01 and large picture on left, around 1910  
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**03**

In April 1945 the first US-American battalion stepped onto Neu-Ulm soil over a pontoon bridge.

StANU, Behe

**04**

The water tower ensured a water supply to the base independent of the Germans, 1951  
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**05**

Former canteen for construction workers building the base, later a service station on Memminger Straße, 1960's

Prasser

**06**

View from Memminger Straße to the guard house and church, 1950's  
Greißing



## Robert C. Wiley



Initially, the US-Army called its new base simply "New Ludendorff". In 1953, it was decided to rename the base after Captain Robert C. Wiley, who had landed in Normandy with his unit in July 1944, about one month after D-Day. Despite being wounded, he led his regiment under fire to shortly before a German position, where he was fatally shot by a German sniper.



## Life at the base

Wiley barracks was not only used for military purposes. Recreational facilities were also provided here for the soldiers. These included the EM-Club (Wiley-Club) in which music, dancing and sporting events took place. It also had a bar and restaurant and well as a cinema, the Dietrich-Theater, which is still in use today. A multipurpose building, the Arts and Crafts-Center, offered space for larger events, bazars and exhibitions. The Donau-Casino built in 1936, which had originally been the officers club for the German army, was used by the Americans for the same purpose. Shopping facilities were available at the so-called PX-Supermarket at the Allgäuer Ring.



**07**

**Bazar in the Arts and Crafts-Center, undated**

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**08**

**Wiley-EM-Club before redevelopment 1991** StANU

**09**

**Wiley-Club after redevelopment, after 1991**

StANU, Trudel

**10**

**From dishwasher to bartender: Life behind the bar and in part with German personnel**

StANU, Rued

**11**

**Dietrich-Theater, exterior view 1994** StANU

**12**

**Dietrich-Theater in the 1950's**  
StANU

**11**



**12**

**13**

**A place of longing for some German citizens: the PX Supermarket of the US-Army in Neu-Ulm, really only accessible to American service personnel and their families** StANU

**14**

**A view into the place of longing: Coca-Cola and exotic foods in the commissary**  
StANU

**15**

**Separated from home and family, traumatised by war: many servicemen called on the services of the center**  
StANU

**10**



**16**

13



14



15

**16 / 17**

Built by German armed forces as early as 1936, the Donau Casino became the officers club for the US Army. When it was renovated in the 1980's, hotel rooms were newly furnished in typical German style. StANU



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## Social coexistence

Over the years, a lively cultural exchange took place between the two communities. German citizens were curious to know what lay beyond the fences, and took a liking to hot dogs, Coca Cola and hamburgers, especially at the festivals. At the same time, the up to 10,000 US Americans were enthusiastic about German culture. There were many daily points of contact: It was a German family who ran the souvenir and photo kiosk in the Wiley Club, also taking responsibility for the group photos of the various units. Some 500 German citizens were also employed by the US Army in various capacities.



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In the Wiley-Club, a German family ran a sales kiosk with photo studio for many years; both were permanent fixtures at the Wiley. Kulitz

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German thoroughness: The laundry and shoe-repair service was leased to German operators on a regular rota.

Bechtle



20

18

Cultural exchange in the 1950's:  
US-American housewives at a  
Swabian cookery course

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21 / 22

The German-American Friendship  
Week and other open days attrac-  
ted visitors from far and wide, who  
otherwise had no opportunity to  
look beyond the barbed wire and  
see what was happening at the  
base.

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## Protests

In 1983, protests against the stationing of Pershing II atomic missiles in Germany culminated in the most spectacular action of the peace movement. On October 22, some 250,000 to 400,000 people joined together in a human chain stretching from Neu-Ulm to Stuttgart/Vaihingen. 48 special trains and almost 2000 buses were commissioned to distribute the protesters along the route which ran the whole way along the B10 trunk road. The event finished with a rally and concert held on the festival ground in front of the Wiley and featuring performers such as Ton Steine Scherben, Konstantin Wecker, Bettina Wegener and also Peter Maffay. Despite the huge protests, Pershing II missiles were stationed in Neu-Ulm. A gradual withdrawal did not take place until 1988 in the course of general disarmament.





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**24**  
Group photo of a unit, taken before the backdrop of Ulm's historic city. Otherwise active in the sales kiosk at the Wiley-Club, the German proprietor also took responsibility for almost all the group photos.

Kulitz

**23**  
In 1983, the campaign against the stationing of Pershing II atomic missiles in Neu-Ulm and other places culminated in the formation of a human chain stretching from Neu-Ulm to Stuttgart involving between 250,000 and 400,000 people.

Ranft, Zell





## Withdrawal and conversion

As disarmament progressed on both sides of the iron curtain, and with the subsequent fall of the Berlin wall and reunification of Germany, the US Government decided in 1990 to close the US base at Neu-Ulm completely and, above all, at short notice. On July 26 1991, the last American base flag was furled at the Wiley Sports Hall. A total of 345 acres of ground became vacant and reverted back to municipal ownership. Until a general concept had been developed, the area was given over to temporary use as studios and workshops etc. A development concept was finalised with the State Flower Show held in 2008. This included provision of generous green spaces and the conversion of the military site into a new quarter in which residential and innovative working models were to be combined. This has been achieved, among other things, with the settlement of the Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences (HNU) in the quarter.

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**A photomontage from 1991 clearly shows the extent of the US territory needing redevelopment. StANU**

**26 / 27**

**Temporary use as studios at the beginning of the 1990's Bilger**



**28**

Last roll call at Wiley Sports Hall on July 26

**29**

View from the water tower towards the west. In the foreground the US hospital, behind it the Burger-King, Arts-and-Crafts building, gatehouse and church. StANU, Patrich

**30**

State Flower Show 2008

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**31**

Demolition of the barracks buildings, apart from a few that are still in existence today.

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[stadtgeschichte.neu-ulm.de](http://stadtgeschichte.neu-ulm.de)

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Donau  
Gänstorbrücke

**16**  
Donau-Casino

Supply Center →  
Offenhausen

Rathaus  
St. Johann Baptist

Bahnhofstraße  
Glacisgalerie

Industriestraße

Bahnhof  
Meiningen Allee

Im Starkfeld

Glacis

Ringstraße  
28

Finninger Straße

Nelson-Barracks

Allgäuer Ring

Steubenstraße

Vorfeld-Housing

Bradleystraße

Zeppelinstraße

Memminger Straße

Wiley-Nord

Europastraße B10

**11**  
Dietrich-Kino

Flugplatz →  
Schwaighofen

Ratiopharm-Arena

Wiley-Kiosk

Wiley-Club  
**08**

Hochschule  
NU

**04**  
Wasserturm

Albert-Schweitzer-Straße

Wegenerstraße

**06**  
Wiley-Süd

↓ Ludwigsfeld