

1AD bids Bad Kreuznach auf wiedersehen



1951-2001

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BAD KREUZNACH, Germany — The United States Army established its community here in 1951. So began 50 years of partnership and friendship between the U.S. forces and members of the community that came to an end during a weekend of ceremonies, parades and celebrations, May 25 – 27.

“This marks a decisive turning point for the division, which is moving, but also a historical one for the city of Bad Kreuznach,” said Rolf Ebbeke, lord mayor of Bad Kreuznach. “The Army has become throughout these [past 50] years a part of the city. Now we lose this part. On behalf of the Bad Kreuznach citizens, I would like to thank all of the soldiers who have served for peace and accomplished their mission here over the past five decades.”

Maj. Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of the 1st Armored Division discussed the differences between the Bad Kreuznach of today and that of 50 years ago.

“I personally, as well as the members of my division, are gathered here today, to say farewell to a city which has become a second home for us,” said Casey. “When I attended the opening of the exhibition at the Sparkasse [Bank] about our 50-year



Maj. Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of the 1st Armored Division, presents Rolf Ebbeke, lord mayor of Bad Kreuznach, an American flag on behalf of the three division headquarters that have been stationed in Bad Kreuznach over the last 50 years, during the Closure Ceremony at Moebus Stadium in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, May 25. The ceremony was followed by a parade through the city and a weekend full of German-American events.

presence here in Bad Kreuznach, I was impressed and amazed how much has changed in 50 years. In March 1945, American tanks rolled in and occupied the city. Then after the war ended, we were no longer the enemy, but we still had a long way to go to get to know and trust one another.”

Over the last 50 years three different units have called Bad Kreuznach home. The 2nd Armored Division was stationed in Bad Kreuznach in 1951. The 8th Infantry Division arrived in 1957 and stayed until 1992. Finally, the 1st Armored Division took over Jan. 17, 1992.

“All those years, Americans and Germans built a strong partnership and many strong friendships,” said Casey. “We came as strangers and are leaving as friends. Bad Kreuznachers opened their homes and their hearts for nearly 100,000 American soldiers who have been stationed here over the years.”

Ebbeke remarked on the impact the American soldiers have had on Bad Kreuznach.

“Today, when the soldiers leave, because of global political changes that also influence the stationing issues in Germany, the sol-



Brig. Gen. Dennis Hardy leads Iron Soldiers who carry the colors of the three divisions that were headquartered in Bad Kreuznach, cross over the Nabe River during the parade that took them from Moebus Stadium all the way to Rose Barracks in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, following the Closure Ceremony, May 25.

diers and their families leave as friends, friends who have become a part of the city, during their 50-year presence. Friends, [who] we don't see leave easily,” said Ebbeke. “Soldiers from three different divisions have served in Bad Kreuznach and because of their tremendous contribution, democracy, peace and prosperity have developed throughout Central Europe.”

Both Germans and Americans

joined together to celebrate those 50 years of accomplishments during a weekend full of activities that included everything from a parade by the 1st Armored Division through Bad Kreuznach, to a German-American half-marathon race, to a German-American basketball game.

“It is a difficult farewell because we must say good bye to friends,” said Casey. “Thank you to all

of you for making Bad Kreuznach a special place to live. We may part geographically, but the friendship will remain. So after all, this is not good bye, but Auf Wiedersehen. We will be back to visit. Thank you Bad Kreuznach for 50 wonderful years.”

Auf Wiedersehen!