

At Würzburg, an emotional farewell after more than five decades of education

By [Mark St.Clair](#), Stars and Stripes

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WÜRZBURG, Germany — On the final day of classes, students, faculty and alumni came together to celebrate a bittersweet end to decades of teaching and learning on Leighton Barracks.

A joint ceremony was held Friday between Würzburg high, middle and elementary schools, bringing 54 years of classes to an end.

"It's a sad time, but also a happy one because we can celebrate decades of successes," said high school principal Walt Seely during a short ceremony on the street separating the schools.

"We will never be saddened to have been here in such a fine community supporting our military," said Seely, who saw two of his sons walk Würzburg High's halls.

"These schools have been a part of a world-class, worldwide school system that doesn't need to hang its head for anyone," said Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe Superintendent Diana Ohman.

Among the alumni present was Greg Manwaring, who attended both schools and graduated in 1980. "This is home," he said of the school and community.

"It's a bittersweet event; it's totally wiping out a piece of my childhood ... to have this event happen tears me up," said Manwaring, whose father, Bob, has been a math and physics teacher in Würzburg for 36 years.

Now that the school is closing, Manwaring said that the best way for alumni and friends to stay in touch is online at www.wuerzburgwolves.com, which has information on reunions that occur every three years.

Though the students have finished, the faculty will continue working another week to clear out classrooms while movers come to pick up equipment.

The elementary and middle schools had been combined for just one



Mark St.Clair / S&S
Würzburg American High School hosted a joint high/elementary/middle school closing ceremony Friday on Leighton Barracks.



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Members of the 11th Jr. ROTC Battalion and students from Würzburg American High School retire the colors one final time.



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Students from Würzburg American Elementary / Middle School sing "When It's Time To Say Goodbye" during the school's closing ceremony Friday on Leighton Barracks.

year, as the separate middle school was shut last June.

The DODDS-Europe community was the last major presence on Leighton Barracks, which is scheduled to revert to German control in September.

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