



A Farewell to Arms: The Nuremberg U.S. Military Community 1945 to 1995 / Our book *transit nürnberg* #4: USA!



Main entrance of Merrell Barracks
(original photo: Tom Spahr / graphics: *rijo*)

For almost as long as our website exists we featured at this address a chronicle of the Nuremberg U.S. garrison. As time went by we continued our research including additional aspects such as the role of forced emigrants and got connected to people who shared with us their expertise or their personal experience. The result of this process is the publication of our bilingual book *transit nürnberg* #4: USA! which more than substitutes the initial online text.

A total of 15 million U.S. servicemen and civilian employees together with their families have passed through Germany since 1945. Probably the most prominent among them was Elvis Presley, who served here with the 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 3rd Armored Division for two years from March 1958 until March 1960. During maneuvers of his unit on the training grounds, he honored nearby Grafenwöhr with an improvised private performance.

More than for the rest of West Germany, the outcome of World War II created special relationships between Nuremberg and the USA. Undeniably, the choice of the city as the location for the International Military Tribunal was a symbolic act after Nuremberg had hosted the Nazi party rallies and attached its name indelibly to the most infamous racial laws ever written. Consequently, for almost 50 years Americans belonged to Nuremberg's everyday life as troopers or staff of the military court and the local military government. Even in the final phase of the U.S. Army's presence in Nuremberg (1991), 2,400 military and civilian personnel lived within the city limits.

Another living bond between Nuremberg and the USA is the Jewish families who had to leave the city because of the Nazi persecution, and their offspring. Of 2,539 refugees officially registered by 1940, 1,030 immigrated to the United States.

With the 4th issue of our publication series *transit nürnberg*, the most ambitious not only because of its bilingualism, we try to trace and save what remained of these points of contact, on both sides, beyond the official brouhaha.

For all who participated in this project, and maybe also for the reader of the book, it was an exploratory journey into the past and present, raising questions about individual experiences and stereotypes. For instance, though Germans allegedly live in a “post-American era,” the three letters “USA” still elicit special emotions and associations, even with a generation who, for the most part, had little firsthand experience with the American influence.

The book *transit nürnberg* #4 presents the stories of Americans and Germans whose professional, incidental, romantic, transient or enduring encounters with each other left impressions on their lives, plus information about the common history of the two countries and the current state of their mutual relations.

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Details on how to order *transit nürnberg* #4 (300 pages, hardcover, numerous illustrations, ISBN 978-3-00-031503-9) can be obtained from Verlag testimon, P.O.B. 11 91 45, 90101 Nürnberg, Germany (Email: [info\[at\]testimon.de](mailto:info[at]testimon.de)).

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