

History of the Dependents School Service (DSS), Germany Those First Six Years (1946-1952)



Source:

Excerpts from Erinnerungen 1952 (Europe High School Combined Yearbooks), Dependents School Service, Report of Operations

The Dependents School Service was formally established on May 4, 1946. Its purpose was two-fold: (1) to organize and maintain schools on both the elementary and secondary levels in military communities in Germany, and (2) to supply German educators with a model American school system in action, from which to draw inspiration for the reorganization and democratization of the German educational program.

The first headquarters until was opened in the Elizabethan School in Frankfurt and included initially Messrs. Richard R. Meyering, George W. Orford, and Wilfred G. Clelland. Later the first Chief of the Division, Colonel James P. Murphy, and Lauren S. Buel, Imogene Talcott, Marion Hoch, Anne Smith, and Alfred W. Beerbaum were assigned. Major commands and community commanders were informed of their responsibilities in establishing the schools; finding adequate plants and appointing school officers who would serve as a link between the central office and the local military. Funds were made available from non-appropriated funds and from limited tuition fees.

Between August and October teachers arrived from the States, all of whom had been carefully selected by Mr. Meyering and WAC Major Mary S. Bell. On October 14, 1946, 38 elementary and 5 high schools opened their doors to more than 2000 children from all 48 of the United States. The schools were as American as could be, except that the locale was that of a German community, some of the teaching staff were German nationals, and most of the children elected to study German as a regular school subject. By the end of the school year, kindergartens had been established in five communities and the total enrollment in all schools - kindergarten 103, elementary 2353, and high school 26 - reached 3087.

The North Central Association accredited high schools at Berlin, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Munich, and Nuremberg, and impressive graduation exercises were held for high school seniors in historic halls and German civic auditoriums.

The second year of operations, 1947-48, showed many changes. Colonel Joseph C. Haw came to Headquarters as Chief of the Dependents School Division replacing Colonel Murphy, who retired. The physical appearance of school plants was greatly improved, better school furniture replaced the make-shift items in classrooms. and newly adopted textbooks and workbooks had arrived from the States in large quantities.

The peak enrollment during this year was 4200 in all schools. High schools established in Wiesbaden and in the Bremen Enclave were fully accredited. The DSD program was now financed for the most part from appropriated funds and the teachers were employed under Civil Service contracts.

During the third year, 1948-49, DSD continued to improve and to grow. Peak total enrollment ~f 5146 was reached. Considerable difficulty was encountered in getting enough teachers from the States to take care of the steadily increasing enrollment. It is significant that nearly half of the total enrollment was concentrated in kindergarten and the first two grades. However, by the time it was possible to plan more adequately for each succeeding school year on the basis of past experience and Army forecasts on the number of families coming to EUCOM.

The fourth year of operations, 1949-50, was marked by many changes, brought about chiefly by a large increase in enrollment. Now there were 39 kindergartens with a total enrollment of 1 274, 57 elementary schools with 5582, and 7 high schools with 891 - a grand total of 7747.

In February, Colonel Russell F. Albert was announced as the Chief, Dependents School Division, replacing Colonel Joseph C. Haw, who returned to the Z1. Courses of study, developed through the cooperation of the teachers and comparing favorably with the best offered in the States, were published and put into use in all schools. Classroom and office furniture, textbooks, teaching supplies, and playground equipment were becoming modern and up to date. High school athletic teams were contending for - conference honors in football, basketball, and baseball just like their contemporaries in the States. Many other normal extra-curricular activities were finding their way into school life. At the close of the school year, 145 high school seniors received diplomas and 337 pupils graduated from the elementary schools. Ten of the high school graduates had completed all of their high school education in EUCOM.

During the fifth year, 1950-51, the enrollment grew to kindergarten 1072, elementary 7176 and high school 1009 - a grand total of 9257. New elementary schools were opened in Bonn, in the British Zone, and in Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Orleans, Paris, and Verdun, in 'France. The teaching staff in the DSD schools numbered 400 American teachers and 265 German teachers and assistants. Diplomas were awarded at the close of the school year to 183 high school seniors and 363 graduates of the elementary schools. On 3 July 1951, the headquarters was reorganized into three services: Educational Services, Supply Services, and Manpower and Budget Services. A summer "Opportunity School" was introduced and proved to be a great success.

This brings us to the present school year, 1951-52, and we are proud of the progress of DSO during these past six years. This year's enrollment - kindergarten 1929, elementary 7634, and high school 1083 - shows a grand total of 10,646 (1 January 1952). New elementary schools have been opened at Amberg, Bad Kreuznach, Baumholder, Berchtesgaden, Heilbronn, Kaiserslautern, Leipheim, Pirmasens,

Schwaebisch-Gmuend and Wildflecken, in Germany. New elementary schools were established Caplleux, Metz and Perigueux, in France and the Paris High School was opened. It seems likely that more elementary schools will open in Germany and France before the end of the school year. DSD schools are staffed by 493 American teachers and administrators, 265 German teachers, assistant teachers and clerks, and seven French teachers. Dormitory facilities have been provided at Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Munich and Nuremberg to serve students living in areas too distant to commute daily to the high schools.

Many and colorful are the incidents that have marked the life and growth of DSO. Six years ago, we started from nothing and with our rapid turnover *very few* students and teachers are able to look back to our beginning. Soon graduation will be here for 186 seniors who will take with them happy memories of school life in Germany.

This Annual, our fourth, is a glowing testimony to the vigor and spirit of the American schools in EUCOM. Truly the two-fold purpose for establishing DSD is being achieved.