



Wolfram Wolz, architect with Europe District's Engineering Team, has achieved a golden milestone of service to the United States – 50 years of government service. He retired Nov. 30 after serving more than 47 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Morocco, Italy, and Germany. More than two years with the U.S. Navy preceded his time with the Corps.

Wolz left for a new life in Long Beach, Calif., where he and his wife, Christiana Salvador Wolz, reside near family.

Wolz was born in Karlsruhe, Germany. He was the second child of non-denominational parents. His father, a German physician of Jewish ancestry, left Europe at Christmas 1935 for the United States. Wolz went to boarding school in Florence, Italy, at the age of 13, but joined his mother, who was also a physician, when she emigrated to the United States in 1937. The family resettled in New Rochelle, New York.

There, Wolz attended enough high school courses to gain entrance to Syracuse University where he earned a bachelor's degree in Chemistry in 1942. He met Mary Ninesling, an editor of the college literary magazine, who came from Great Neck, Long Island, N.Y. They married in 1943. He worked for a time in his sister's pottery studio, but was drafted and served as an "enemy alien" for two and a half years with the U.S. Navy as a Seabee. "I was sent to the Philippines in late 1944, waiting to participate in the invasion of Japan that never came," Wolz said.

After he was discharged, Wolz wanted to put his G.I. Bill benefits to use. "I asked a former professor about getting a master's degree in chemistry, but he advised against it," he said. However, a friend who knew his interests suggested he look into architecture.

Wolfram decided to attend Kansas State College and received his Architectural Engineering degree in 1952. He then gained experience in Topeka with the state architect and a commercial firm as a draftsman. There, a fellow employee suggested he apply for a position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Wolz's career with the Corps began in June 1955 when he packed up with his wife and four children for a GS-5 position in Morocco. "The big question for my wife was whether or not we could take the dog," Wolz said. They could, and off they went.

"I always wanted to get back to Italy," said Wolz, who remembered with fondness his days in Florence as a young teenager. "Morocco seemed about as close as I could get."

However, after only two years in North Africa, the Mediterranean Division relocated near Pisa, Italy, and Wolz went along. There, in Livorno, a fifth child came to the union.

In Italy, Wolz first started as a draftsman. After a five-year stint in Contract Administration he returned to Architecture and worked on a wide range of projects, including design review.

He also expanded his personal interest in the arts, creating hammered copper and silver jewelry and casting silver jewelry. He took the stage, first as an actor and later

expanded into direction of plays and musicals in the community theater.

Enjoying the cultural offerings in Italy, he and family often attended the *Festival dei Duo Mondi* in Spoleto, north of Rome, beginning in the early '60s and saw many notable stars perform before they became renown. Over the years, he has gone back as often as he can.

The Wolz children grew up and moved on. One daughter, though, still lives in Italy, staying with her mother after her parent's marriage split up in 1979. "We just developed separate interests," Wolz said, although they maintain an amiable relationship.

Wolz contributed his skills to the mission for 19 years at Camp Darby until the Mediterranean Division dissolved. "About half the division went to Winchester and half to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Wolz said. "Just a few went to Germany. I was one of the few."

Wolz headed over the Alps to Europe Division in Frankfurt.

"I arrived Feb. 29, 1976," he said. "That's not a hard date to remember."

After coming to Frankfurt, his work consisted mainly of architectural review of designs by the various *Bauämter*. A highlight at that time was design of fortified elevated guard towers, many of which remain part of today's force protection measures in Germany.

In Frankfurt, he also continued his interests in the arts, directing a community musical, and as an avid concertgoer, amateur photographer, and traveler.

He married Christina Salvador in Basel, Switzerland, in 1986, although they first made their acquaintance about eight years earlier.

"It is so important that I married Christina, because I meet all these wonderful people," Wolz said of his Filipino wife. Although Christina has never had children, Wolz said she is "... a mother to many and a Godmother to dozens."

Wolz said that because he has suffered hearing loss, he has become less outgoing because of concern he will not hear someone correctly and will respond wrong.

During his years with the Corps in Europe, Wolz has prepared and reviewed thousands of designs. Most recently he has served in preparation of Department of Defense Forms 1354 which are used to determine the residual value of facilities being returned to Germany.

"Wolz has brought great dedication to his work," said David Marquardt, Chief, Engineering Team. "Over the last few years, his health has often failed him, but his loyalty and deep sense of dedication has never left him. [In his last work days] he was still more concerned about leaving clear instructions on how to complete a DD Form 1354 Project Close Out form than he was his final retirement paperwork." Marquardt described Wolz as a true dedicated architectural design professional, a credit to himself and his country.

Wolz has completed his half-century career and is now on the West Coast. "If you're wondering why we don't move to the Philippines, it's because I've been there several times and it's simply too hot for me," he said.



five decades

18,262 days

5 half **century**
600 months
Years of Service

Wolfram Wolz' service to the Nation spans half the 20th Century - taking him from the Philippines and dungarees to Germany and design review.



Story by Grant Sattler