

# DoDDS partnership advances projects

Problems, amendments, modifications, and interpretations. Each element can tax a relationship to the point of collapse. And on many design and engineering projects, these elements can arise. But through strong project management plans, aggressive flexibility, and, above all, a human touch, partnerships in this arena can flourish. With that goal in mind, DoDDS-Europe and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, have found a way to make it work.

Story by Justin Ward

Sixty years ago, when the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) was established, school-aged dependents of American DoD employees living in Europe had it rough. Some "schools" were in requisitioned houses, barracks, or unused utility buildings. Empty shell cases were made into lamps. The teachers only had red chalk, which was said to turn into tempura paint when mixed with water.

Thankfully, DoDDS has evolved.

Today, DoDDS-Europe has 98 schools and about 40,000 students. All schools are fully accredited and produce some of the smartest students in the American pool, with test scores consistently higher than national averages.

Some of the most technologically advanced classes include video production, robotics, CADD, and the Cisco Learning Institute.

Many of these high-tech classrooms owe their existence to the employees of the Corps of Engineers, Europe District, who have been responsible for their design and construction.

"The support that the project managers give us – and everybody behind the scenes as well – I don't think we could ask for too much more," said Tim Krause, DoDDS Europe security program manager. "Even when we do run into bumps in the road, we

can sit down and work it out. You can't ask for more from the Corps."

Currently, the District is working on more than \$85 million in projects for DoDDS, said Mark Brideweser, the District's DoDDS program manager.

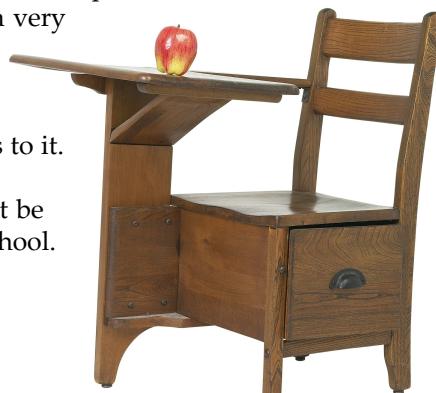
One large and complex project the District is currently managing is the design of a renovation and addition for Gen. H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden. The project, estimated at about \$15 million, is very complex, said Dana Luedtke, the project manager, involving the construction of a new gym and new specialty classrooms, such as art, music, cosmetology, and JROTC.

The relationships Luedtke has built with both DoDDS and construction personnel over the years has made her projects successful, she said.

"It's always helpful if you work with people from previous projects," she said. "Whatever problems we have, we can always solve it quickly."

On the DoDDS side, Wayne Hartmann, the chief of facilities and security branch for DoDDS Europe, said the Wiesbaden project is large and complex, but added that the District has been very flexible in dealing with the constraints of the site.

"It's a big project," said Hartmann, "with a lot of pieces to it. And it's a tough site due to the topography and because it must be built adjacent to our existing school.



It's been difficult, but we're continuing to work to find the best solution."

The largest program the District is managing is the \$36 million Netzaberg complex, currently under construction at Grafenwöhr.

"That is the highlight of our program," said Brideweser. "It's interesting and challenging, but I think we have built the relationships there to make it work."

The man on the ground at Grafenwöhr, Walter Bogdanow, the deputy resident engineer, agreed that Netzaberg is a difficult project with significant challenges in both design and construction, but he added that the relationship with both the DoDDS representatives as well as the construction agent has made the project run more smoothly.

One of the many great people Bogdanow has worked with in the last two-and-a-half years has been Michael Lueb of the local *Baudienststelle*, said Bogdanow. "He's a real hard charger. Totally dedicated."

Bogdanow said that, because of Lueb, many difficult challenges are being resolved. "He's not concerned with purely architectural aspects, but also

mechanical, electrical and civil works. It's great to have one person to be able to go to on the project and get things done. We've been blessed to be working with him on this difficult project."

Hartmann said that, although the project is not problem free, it has been progressing well and he is optimistic.

"The Corps worked with us well to come up with a good team," Hartmann said. "We were able to get an A-E that we had worked with successfully before, and we were happy about that."

In addition to traditional military construction projects, the District also helps DoDDS stay current on force protection measures.

The program, currently being implemented at 13 schools, analyzes the security risk at each DoDDS school on a rotating basis, completing the cycle in about three years, said Hartmann. Any security vulnerability found during the analysis is addressed, said Hartmann, and protected against.

Hartmann inspects these schools personally with the help of District force protection representative Carrol Harris.

"Working with those guys is my favorite part of the job," said Harris of the DoDDS personnel involved with the project. "We have a project management plan that's pretty well done and we have the right contracting vehicles. The whole team just works really well."

Hartmann said he deliberately chose the Corps for this project because of its broad expertise.

"It's purely voluntary for us," he said of the decision to hire the District to assess and fix security vulnerabilities. "There aren't many places that have the interdisciplinary piece that covers the entire gamut of military force protection. I think it's been a really good program. And we're particularly pleased with Carroll Harris."

Brideweser said that, although the relationship between DoDDS and the District has been ongoing for many years, the decision to use the Corps is still a choice.

"They choose to work with us because they know our knowledge base and they know our services," Brideweser said. "We just hope to provide the flexibility they require when issues and challenges arise."



Photo by Seth Robson

An aerial view of Grafenwöhr's Netzaberg school complex shows the state of construction as of October 2006. When complete, the \$36 million project, consisting of an elementary school and a middle school, will accommodate about 1,400 students.