



Amicale Internationale
KZ Neuengamme (AIN)



Stadt Neustadt
in Holstein

KZ-Gedenkstätte
Neuengamme

Ausstellungen
Begegnungen
Studienzentrum

arbeitsgemeinschaft
neuengamme eV
mitglied der amicale internationale kz neuengamme
und der internationalen föderation der widerstandskämpfer



May 3, 2017, 10:00 AM

Commemorative Ceremony for the Victims of the Bombing Attacks on the Ships on May 3, 1945

Location: Cap Arcona Memorial, Neustadt/Pelzerhaken, Stutthofweg

Wreath laying ceremony at the Cap Arcona Memorial

Opening speech Dr. Tordis Batscheider, Mayor of the City of Neustadt in Holstein

Opening speech Christine Eckel, General Secretary of the
Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme

Speech Jewgenij Malychin (Ukraine), survivor of Cap Arcona

Speech Jean-Michel Gaussoit, President of the
Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme

Reading Küstengymnasium Neustadt and the Working Group
Neuengamme

Kaddish Jewish Community Lübeck

Music: Ostholstein Parish Wind Ensemble

The commemorative ceremony is organized in cooperation with the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme, Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Neuengamme and the City of Neustadt in Holstein, supported by the Schleswig-Holstein Memorials Community Foundation



Dr. Tordis Batscheider
Mayor of the City of Neustadt in Holstein, May 3, 2017
Neustadt-Pelzerhaken

War and violence, terror and appalling human rights violations are subjects of almost every piece of news nowadays. Civil wars in Sudan and Ukraine, gas attacks on helpless civilians in Syria, press freedom violations and arbitrary arrests of political dissidents in North Korea, Russia and Turkey – to name just a few. In terms of geography, some of these occurrences are taking place far away from us, others on our doorstep. We are confronted with them daily, but hardly anyone manages to deal with them constantly. Most of us tend to suppress or forget them in order to be able to live with them.

Some historical events, however, must never be forgotten! One of them is the Cap Arcona disaster. The incident which took place on May 3, 1945 is something we have to keep reminding ourselves of forever. Only then will we be able to assume our responsibility which is to make sure such a tragedy never happens again.

Today, it is not possible for us to truly understand what Jewgenij Malychin and the other 7000 concentration camp prisoners suffered through... but nonetheless: meeting the survivors at the commemorative ceremony on May 3 every year is important, it urges us to face our inglorious past time and again and to remind ourselves that freedom, democracy, state of law and the respect for human rights are not to be taken for granted.

Ladies and gentlemen, having given us the account of their fate, the survivors have trusted us with their stories, so that we can preserve them for the future, entrench them in our minds and hearts.

Soon there will be no witnesses left. There will be no first-hand accounts, no living memory. All the more reason to ask ourselves how remembrance works without witnesses, without survivors who can give an authentic account of their experiences.

The responsibility for the remembrance will then lie completely with survivors' relatives and associations, historians and institutions for political education. This is a great responsibility we need to handle carefully.

Today, decades after the end of the war, opening of archives and processing of various sources still shed new light on the past events, the structure of prisoners' communities and the biographies of the previously nameless victims. In this regard, it is of great importance to have a central place for research and education, a starting point for questions and requests of former prisoners and their relatives from all over the world. There is a need for extensive

records of the lives and suffering of the concentration camp prisoners and victims of the Cap Arcona disaster, which can be used at schools, museums, in the media – all over the country and all over the world.

For the children and grandchildren of the victims, the City of Neustadt in Holstein will remain a place of commemoration. The city accepts the responsibility for keeping the memory of the atrocities that happened in it or in its vicinity alive. Apart from this commemoration day, there is the Cap Arcona Museum, among others, which has existed relatively unchanged since 1990 and is now in need of a new concept. Having in mind the demands of young people today, we intend to start making use of new media technologies. In addition to this, we need to reconsider what the museum has to offer in terms of its content.

To keep memory alive means to include recent developments, to challenge the existing forms of remembrance and change them when the need arises. We want to introduce a new approach to the topic, reflect on it from a new point of view. Aside from the new concept of the Cap Arcona Museum, we are also thinking about the honorary cemetery and how today, decades later, we can create an interesting approach to remembrance, especially for young people, which pedagogical concepts are most suitable, how we can make our archival material dealing with Cap Arcona even more accessible for further processing and research, etc.

Experts from all over the country are supporting us with ideas and urging us to keep challenging ourselves and the way we deal with the past. What we always realize is it is very important that commemoration does not turn into a mere ritual. It has to remain alive and keep changing itself – depending on new insights, new requirements, learning habits and the demands of younger generations. I am excited to see where our path will take us and what discussions will arise in the process.

The City of Neustadt in Holstein – just like all the other institutions supporting the Cap Arcona memorials – will certainly do its part when it comes to preserving the culture of remembrance. Given the extent and significance of the Cap Arcona disaster, it is too heavy a burden for these small towns, associations and unions to carry on their shoulders. We are hoping to see the whole country and other federal states joining in the effort to build a lasting future for the field of political education. In the light of the alarming resurgence of right-wing nationalism throughout Europe, we must all draw lessons from the National Socialist barbarism and resolutely stand up against such inhumane policies so as not to allow them to ever emerge again.

We owe it to the survivors and to those who did not survive the disaster!

Christine Eckel
General Secretary of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme (AIN)
May 3, 2017
Neustadt-Pelzerhaken

Survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp and their relatives,
Ms. Mayor, representatives of the city of Neustadt and the state of Schleswig-Holstein,
representatives of the Jewish Community Lübeck,
ladies and gentlemen,

I am addressing you on behalf of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme, the international survivors' association of the prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camp and their relatives.

I am happy to see so many of us gathered here today, on the occasion of the 72. anniversary of the bombing attacks on the ships in the Bay of Lübeck, remembering the 6600 people who had survived the horrors of concentration camps as well as death marches and who had to die when their liberation was within reach.

I am very pleased that two survivors of the catastrophe as well as other former prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camp and its satellite camps are with us today. They have come from many different countries – 72 years after the incident this is by no means something to be taken for granted and I would like to thank them for being here from the bottom of my heart.

To many of us, especially younger generations, the Second World War, concentration camps and the incident in the Bay of Lübeck might seem like things from a distant past. In the families of the deportees, however, this is not the case: the suffering or death of their fathers, mothers or other family members continue to shape their lives to this very day. All the daughters, sons and grandchildren present here today want to help us make sure that the crimes committed under the National Socialist regime all over Europe will never sink into oblivion.

I am pleased that members of different generations will address us today:

Firstly, I would like to welcome Jewgenij Malychin. As a boy, he was deported from Ukraine to Germany for forced labor. After attempting to escape, he was transferred to the Neuengamme concentration camp. He is one of the few survivors of the ship disaster that took place on May 3, 1945.

Jean-Michel Gausso, President of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme, will be the next to address the audience. He is the son of a former French prisoner of the Neuengamme

concentration camp who died in the Wöbbelin reception camp few weeks before the liberation. Just like many other children and grandchildren of former prisoners, Jean-Michel Gaussois too is committed to keeping the memory of their destinies alive.

Jacques Sarête is the son of another former French prisoner who did not survive the deportation. His father died on May 2, 1945, only a day before Cap Arcona sank. Jacques Sarête will tell us about the life of his family, how he as an eight-year-old dealt with his father's disappearance and all the years of uncertainty surrounding the circumstances of his death.

I am very pleased that the students of the Küstengymnasium in Neustadt have taken an active part in the organization of the commemorative ceremony. Together with the Working Group Neuengamme, they prepared a reading of survivors' reports. In the end, the representatives of the Jewish Community Lübeck will say the Kaddish.

I would also like to thank the Ostholstein Parish Wind Ensemble who will provide musical accompaniment for the ceremony.

I yield the floor to Jewgenij Malychin.

Thank you.

Jewgenij Malychin
Survivor of Cap Arcona
May 3, 2017
Neustadt-Pelzerhaken

Organizers of the meeting for the former prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camp,

I, Jewgenij Zacharovich Malychin, would first like to tell you a bit about myself. I was deported to Germany for forced labor in February 1942. I was sent to a labor camp in Bremen. Three months later, a friend of mine and I managed to escape. We were caught in October and sent to the Neuengamme concentration camp in Hamburg. After that, I was transferred to a camp in the city of Wittenberg. In early 1945 I was transferred back to Hamburg. In late April, the transportation of prisoners to Lübeck started. That is how I wound up on Cap Arcona.

Seventy-two years ago, on the day we were liberated, we, prisoners of Neuengamme, could not even imagine that we would one day have the possibility to commemorate the tens of thousands of our fellow prisoners.

Nazi Germany built a network of concentration camps which became places where prisoners faced systematic violence and death.

Today we bow to the courage of those who managed to make it through this infernal machine of war and remember those who did not survive it.

We, former prisoners, survived all the bitterness of war, the cold, the hunger, the imminent peril of death. But the worst of all was the psychological humiliation we were exposed to every step of the way. That is why I would like younger generations to know the whole truth about this horrible time. So that equality and brotherhood remain the norm in their lives so that every human life and its value are respected. Only a society of free and brave people can fight for peace and preserve the peace in the world.

The organization Friends of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial does everything in their power to keep the memory of the former prisoners alive so that this tragic aspect of the Second World War never happens again. I am very thankful to all the organizers and employees of the Memorial for organizing this meeting and for the attention we have been given.

A new century has begun, the 21st century, and the world is filled with turmoil. Terrorism is emerging all over the world. Terrorist attacks in the US, Germany, the war in Syria, Ukraine, explosions and victims in Europe – Paris, Brussels... Terror has become the universal evil.

To quench the flame of another world war, we must do everything we can; all the countries of the world have to stand united against this evil. For a happy future, for a peaceful life for our children, for new generations of free people.

Thank you for your attention.

Jean-Michel Gausso
President of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme (AIN)
May 3, 2017
Neustadt-Pelzerhaken

Survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp,
Ms. Mayor,
ladies and gentlemen,

As in the previous year, I am addressing you today as the president of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme on the occasion of the 72. anniversary of the tragedy which took place on May 3, 1945.

On that day, the war was almost over and the prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camp, who succeeded in surviving the *univers concentrationnaire* dared hope to find their freedom and their loved ones again. However, Nazis forced 7000 of them onto ships in the Bay of Lübeck and left them to die in atrocious conditions – they were either burned alive or shot trying to reach the shore.

Every year we gather here in Neustadt to commemorate these men and to remember the abominable torture which cost them their lives. Today, 72 years later, we are here again to commemorate thousands of victims. Only few of those who survived this catastrophe are still alive today. It was without a doubt one of the greatest ship disasters of all time and it took four or five times as many lives as the sinking of the Titanic in April 1912.

I am very sorry that no survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp will address you today on behalf of the Amicale Internationale. Sadly, there are no former prisoners left among the delegates of the national associations represented by the AIN. After my predecessor, Victor Malbecq, died in 2015, Janusz Kahl, the vice-president of the Amicale Internationale, also left us last year. I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation for their engagement in the field of the culture of remembrance. Both dedicated their lives and all their strength and energy to the peaceful fight against the oblivion.

We, the representatives of the second generation, must continue this struggle and we must continue it together with future generations. We must carry on the survivors' legacy first and foremost because the people who died in the tragedy in the Bay of Lübeck deserve to be remembered. To forget them would be like leaving them to die for the second time.

We should remember their fate also because it is important to keep in mind what people did to people so that such atrocities never happen again.

Each and every one of us can list all the things that pose a threat to our societies and the international understanding today. The resurgence of nationalism, racism, antisemitism, as well as the rise of political and religious fanaticism, proliferation of populist or demagogic rhetoric, irresponsible actions of unscrupulous politicians, whose goal is to marginalize certain groups and turn them against one another instead of bringing them together – all of these represent a threat both to the peace among nations and the unity within them. In the light of these threats, we have to remind ourselves of the unspeakable horrors the murderous ideologies led to in the past century.

This is why we have gathered here today, 72 years after the tragedy we are commemorating. This is why we will be here next year and in the years to come. And I hope that our children and grandchildren will gather here every year to remember this sad day – May 3, 1945.

Thank you very much.

Jacques Sarête
Son of a former prisoner of the Neuengamme concentration camp
May 3, 2017
Neustadt-Pelzerhaken

During the war, my father Jean Sarête, who was 34 at the time, worked for the railroad. That is how he got the access to a large transport hub in the Tours area. In 1943 he joined the resistance. Although he worked under the control of German managers, he succeeded in informing the Allies about every German cattle car transport in this area. For safety reasons, I was sent to my mother's parents at the beginning of the school year in 1943. Christmas 1943 was the last time I saw my father. I was eight years old.

In the night of May 20-21, 1944 our house was completely destroyed during air raids. Despite this catastrophe, my father stayed true to his mission, even more determined to keep fighting. On July 7, 1944, due to a weak point in the resistance group, my father was arrested by two Gestapo men and two French collaborators. After being detained and tortured in the Tours prison, he and approximately 140 other prisoners were forced onto a train heading for an unknown destination... Under the despicable Vichy regime my father's wages were withheld and my mother was expelled from the apartment allotted to us after we had lost our home. With the help of some people she knew, she managed to find accommodation on loan and had to look for work. For over a year we lived in perpetual fear without any news.

After the liberation, my father's status changed from "terrorist" to "deported resistance fighter" and he was officially declared missing. The long wait continued. The end of the year was marked with deep sorrow and after May 8, 1945 we were unable to share everyone's joy.

As the deportees were coming home after the German capitulation, my mother succeeded in finding four of them who had known my father. We found out then that he was deported to the Wilhelmshaven concentration camp where he was forced to work as a lathe operator at the navy shipyards. Several days after the camp was evacuated on April 5 and prisoners marched off on foot, they saw him together with other unfortunate people getting on a train utterly exhausted and in poor health. After that they lost track of him and did not see him again. That was all we learned. But they expressed their admiration of my father's dignified demeanor in that hell: his sincerity, his courage, optimism and sense of humor constantly lifted other prisoners' spirits. What weighed heavily on his mind, however, was the thought of what fate had befallen us.

Months passed and we heard nothing about him. It was unbearable, I was even advised to pray... The sad news reached us in late October 1945, shortly before All Saints' Day. We received a telegram from the Red Cross which informed us that Jean Sarête died from enterocolitis

on May 2, 1945 on board Cap Arcona. Everything collapsed that day. The ten-year-old boy I was at that time asked himself where God was while all that was happening. I shut myself off, caught up in the memories of my beloved father, wondering what happened to him after his deportation.

Yet again we learned nothing more. What happened to his dead body? Did he go down with the ship? The thoughts and questions started all over again...

Our hopes to learn more through the Mission Française in the British zone – it was established in Göttingen in 1946/47 – were not fulfilled. We were asked to fill in an “identification document”, just in case... In 1950 my mother succeeded in retrieving my father’s wedding ring and his gold seal ring.

In September 1954, together with the Amicale Française de Neuengamme, we undertook our first trip to Germany. At the foot of an unmarked monument, which at that time looked out to sea, the tide finally turned in our favor. We met Mrs. Hay, whose son Maurice died on Cap Arcona on May 1 and whose body was buried in the Neustadt cemetery. A few weeks later, thanks to the information she provided us with, we were able to find my father’s body: He was one of the 150 people laid to rest there together with Maurice Hay and 16 more Frenchmen. How happy we were! What was inexplicable in this case was the fact that in 1950 Mrs. Hay obtained a list from the Mission, which contained both names! That meant that we had been kept in ignorance for four years! Moreover, we learned that all the bodies were going to be taken out of this mass grave starting with 1955. My mother was yet again asked to fill in an “identification document” and was told that the results of the research cannot be 100 percent certain. There was another important decision to be made: the transport of my father’s body to France. Due to all the uncertainty, we decided against it and left my father with his unfortunate comrades. In 1960 we only received short information that Jean Sarête’s remains were buried in the honorary cemetery in Haffkrug under a ceramic block No. 350, North Block, third row.

It was already in July 1945 that the Forces Françaises Combattantes promoted my father to *Unterleutnant* (under-lieutenant). He received the following decorations: Médaille de la Résistance, Croix de Guerre avec Palme, the US Medal of Freedom as well as Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

Years passed by and I kept asking myself how it was possible that my father who died on Cap Arcona on May 2 and whose cause of death had been determined was buried in the Neustadt cemetery whereas Cap Arcona sank a day later. Moreover, I knew almost nothing about his deportation. I knew nothing about what he had gone through during his seven-month imprisonment in Wilhelmshaven, nothing about the conditions during the evacuation, the march to Neuengamme or in the Bay of Lübeck. These questions kept haunting me. In 1991 my mother died, shortly after I had retired. I started doing research, on my own at first until my son Jean joined me. I contacted the Amicale of Neuengamme again and they dedicated a lot of time to my inquiries. During a nine-day trip to Germany in May 2013, we had the opportunity to make contact with some of the former deportees as well as the employees of the Neuengamme Concentration

Camp Memorial. I would like to thank all those wonderful people, all my German and French friends who helped me in the course of my research. I am truly grateful.

I can only say that I managed to trace back all the parts that had been missing from my father's life, everything that happened to him, what he lived through starting with his arrest on July 7, 1944 until May 2, 1945. As fate would have it, the Allies liberated Tours only 19 days after his deportation. The English reached Neustadt a day after his death. I have no choice but to accept it. I have found my father again and the Pelzerhaken Memorial and Haffkrug honorary cemetery have a special place in my life.

On May 4, 2015, together with the Amicale of Neuengamme, my son and I took part in commemorative ceremony for the children of Bullenhuser Damm. My son came out of the building, pale with fear, and told me: "In a few years, soon, I will bring my three children here. I want them to know...". I was very touched, because my son had understood that the only way to freedom is passing on the memories to younger generations. We returned to our hotel in silence. We thought of these poor children, of all the children in the world, not only ours. The ambivalence of human existence haunted us.

A French paleoanthropologist, Pascal Picq, teaches us that among great apes only chimpanzees and humans are capable of consciously tormenting and killing members of their own kind. Given the stage of development of chimpanzees, one can tolerate such a behavior. But not when it comes to people! People are, on the other hand, capable of doing the opposite: they can risk their own lives to save others. Proof? We are here to remember thousands of them! We know that people do not lose hope as long as they manage to suppress their dark side, as those we are commemorating today had done. But we have to be able to say NO! NO to totalitarian ideologies, to fascism, racism, all those dangerous "isms" which keep emerging in the world, trying to determine who has the right to freedom. NO to all the pseudo-religious, who use God's name as an excuse to take us centuries back into the past. NO to the enlightened of all kinds and NO to barbarity!

The night of life will soon fall upon me. I will go peacefully knowing I have found my father, whose absence has brought so much pain. I will be happy about the time I have spent with my loved ones. But first, I would like to use this opportunity to address young people: Cherish and pass this precious memory on, it is our pledge of freedom. And one more thing: help each other. Love each other. If not love, respect each other. If not respect, tolerate each other. Or even better: do it all at the same time and together!

Thank you.