

## **May 3, 2019, 10:00 AM**

### **Commemorative Ceremony for the Victims of the Bombing Attack on the Ships on May 3, 1945**

**Location: Cap Arcona Memorial, Neustadt/Pelzerhaken, Stutthofweg**

Wreath laying ceremony at the Cap Arcona Memorial

Opening speech Martine Letterie, Vice President of Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme

Opening speech Mirko Spieckermann, Mayor of the City of Neustadt in Holstein

Speech Jewgenij Malychin (Ukraine), former prisoner and Cap Arcona survivor

Speech Nicole Duijkers (Netherlands), granddaughter of a former prisoner of the Neuengamme concentration camp

Reading School project by the students of the Küstengymnasium Neustadt and the Working Group Neuengamme: Excerpts from prisoners' biographies

Kaddish Jewish Community Lübeck

Musical accompaniment:  
School choir of Jacob-Lienau-Gemeinschaftsschule  
Ostholstein Parish Wind Ensemble

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



**Martine Letterie**  
**Vice-president of the Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme**  
**3. Mai 2019**  
**Neustadt-Pelzerhaken**

Mr. Malychin,  
Survivors of the Neuengamme concentration camp and relatives,  
representatives of the City of Neustadt and Schleswig-Holstein,  
ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you on behalf of Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme. We gathered here today to remember the great catastrophe which took place here only a few days before the end of the war. As Allied forces advanced on Germany, the Nazis started evacuating prisoners from concentration camps and their satellite camps to wipe off the traces of their crimes. From the third week of April on, transports carrying thousands of prisoners from the Neuengamme main camp were gradually heading north to Lübeck, some on foot and some by train. The prisoners came from Germany and all the countries the Nazis had either occupied or were at war with: the Baltic countries, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine and Russia.

Having arrived in Neustadt, prisoners were partly taken to the ships Thielbek and Athen and partly remained in boxcars on the quay. As of April 26 prisoners were being taken to Cap Arcona, a passenger ship anchored in Neustadt. Thielbek sailed out in order to drop anchor close to Cap Arcona. Prisoners were locked up in the ships' holds, where the conditions were even more horrible than in the camps they had come from – if that is even possible. There was hardly any light or air, some had to go without food for days.

Then May 3 came. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, English typhoons attacked the ships Cap Arcona and Thielbek, mistaking them for a German troop transport. There were 7000 prisoners on board Cap Arcona and 2500-3000 on Thielbek. Cap Arcona caught fire and Thielbek sank very quickly. The prisoners tried to save their lives but only a few succeeded. Most of them drowned or died in the fire. English pilots kept shooting the drowning prisoners while German SS men and young men from the Hitler Youth shot those who reached the coast. Seven thousand people died a horrible death.

A day later, on May 4, Montgomery accepted the unconditional surrender of German troops in Northwestern Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark. For most of the prisoners on board the ships it was already too late. Today we remember this tragedy. Mr. Malychin is one of the last witnesses who can still tell us about it.

Jewgeny Malychin was deported to Germany from Ukraine for forced labor at the age of 17. After an escape attempt he was transferred to the Neuengamme concentration camp and was eventually taken to Cap Arcona in Lübeck Bay. Thank you for coming all the way from Ukraine to join us in the attempt to keep the memory alive.

It is important to do it, today and in the future. By remembering what happened here 74 years ago, we are mourning the dead and we are campaigning for the protection of democracy and the state of law. Today we can see that far-right parties are gaining momentum all over Europe. In the last election in the Netherlands that took place in March, Forum for Democracy, for example, got 13 out of 75 seats in the Dutch parliament. Such parties are a threat to human rights and the state of law. This is very alarming.

That is why it is crucial that the Mayor of the City of Neustadt, Mr. Spieckermann and other representatives of the city and the state of Schleswig-Holstein are here today. On behalf of Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme I would like to thank you for the respect you are showing the survivors and their children and grandchildren in this way. It gives us strength to know that you are aware of the dangers of the rejection of democratic values and that you support the idea of a vibrant culture of remembrance.

It brings us joy and comfort to see young people involved in this commemorative ceremony. Students of Küstengymnasium Neustadt are participating in the event again this year. Together with the Working group Neuengamme they have prepared a part of this ceremony. The focus of their work were biographies of former prisoners of Neuengamme and their way to Neustadt. For the first time the school choir of Jacob-Lienau-Gemeinschaftsschule is also taking part in the ceremony. The involvement of young people gives us great pleasure and hope for the future. Ostholstein Parish Wind Ensemble and the Jewish community Lübeck have also contributed to the event as always.

I am addressing you today as vice president of Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme. It is the umbrella organization of national associations from different countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Poland. Our goal is to keep the memory of what happened in Neuengamme and its consequences alive.

Some survivors are still represented in our national associations and so are children and grandchildren of former prisoners who are no longer alive, who know better than anyone what kind of impact consequences of war, persecution and terror have on subsequent generations.

Backgrounds of our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, granduncles but also mothers, grandmothers, aunts and grandaunts were very different. Reasons they were imprisoned in Neuengamme or one of its satellite camps were different too. Many of them were members of the resistance, some refused to work for the occupier or were deported as a result of a raid, others were sent to camps after they had collaborated with the Nazis. Whatever the reason, they were imprisoned in a concentration camp, their human rights were violated in a most horrible way. Being imprisoned in a concentration camp was never justified.

We, their children, understand better than anyone else how important it is to protect the state of law. Former prisoners who survived the war founded our associations to be able to commemorate. And they did this with one goal in mind: they wanted to make sure that what they had to go through never happened again. After 1945 they fought for a united Europe where human rights would be protected. We continue this work on their behalf. That is why we came here today from all over Europe. We remember those who lost their lives here 74 years ago and keep the memory of that horrible part of history alive.

This event takes place every year. It is organized by Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme and the City of Neustadt in Holstein. It is supported by Schleswig-Holstein Memorials Community Foundation and the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. Memory of Cap Arcona has its firm place in the local and regional culture of remembrance. This has to be upheld and supported through, for example, school projects like the impressive film from last year or the reading of testimonies this year.

I am happy to hear Mr. Malychin, a survivor of Cap Arcona, and the Mayor of the City of Neustadt address us today. Nicole Dujikers will speak to us afterwards. She is the granddaughter of a Dutch prisoner who died in the air raids on May 3, 1945.

Thank you.

**Mirko Spieckermann**  
**Mayor of the City of Neustadt in Holstein**  
**May 3, 2019**  
**Neustadt-Pelzerhaken**

Ladies and gentlemen,

We gathered here today at the honorary cemetery to remember the victims and to express our condolences to their families.

*What happened must never be forgotten!*

There are days in our lives, which get deeply engraved in our memories due to certain events. This is true of the Cap Arcona disaster which happened on May 3, 1945 as a consequence of tragic circumstances and resulted in the death of more than 7000 people.

What a tragedy: it was the long-awaited liberators who brought death and destruction upon prisoners.

Since the honorary cemetery was opened, many people have visited it, taken part in a commemorative event like this one or simply stopped by to remember the victims.

Who were those people imprisoned on these ships under the Nazi dictatorship at the end of the war, fearfully facing the hours to come. They were people like us, whose hopes of liberation were never fulfilled.

Survivors suffered under these atrocious conditions and that is why it is necessary that they keep the memory of the Nazi horrors alive and together with us remember those who lost their lives in the air raids.

*What happened must never be forgotten!*

In order to cope with the past, it is vital to educate ourselves about Nazi crimes against humanity. As long as there are eyewitnesses, they can talk about their lives and testify to the inhumane system of the Third Reich. More than anything, it is necessary for young generations to know how the disastrous development in Germany came about and what its consequences were because they are the ones who will take over the political responsibility in the future.

This is why it is important to know the painful history of our people and to draw the right conclusions from it. Only then will it be possible to defend ourselves from demagoguery and political radicalism.

*What happened must never be forgotten!*

We, today's Germans, have to live with the fact that no other people in Europe have done such an injustice and brought so much suffering to their neighbors as ours.

And we, inhabitants of Neustadt, have to live with the fact that a particularly tragic chapter of the war took place in our town. The Cap Arcona disaster became a horrible part of this town's history 74 years ago.

Even though, contrary to our fathers and grandfathers, we bear no direct responsibility for what happened, we have to live with this past and make sure that such injustice never happens again.

Every three years, the City of Neustadt demonstrates its tolerance and openness through the European Folklore Festival.

This year Neustadt has been an "Europastadt" (City of Europe) for 50 years and was awarded the title of "Place of Diversity". We are very proud of that!

We owe it to the survivors, all the victims and their families whom we remember here today.

*What happened here must never be forgotten!*

An example of how this can be done well and consistently is students from Neustadt dealing with the topic "History Up Close – Sinking of Cap Arcona" in school. It was impressive to see how motivated the students were to work on the topic. A moving documentary about the events in May 1945 was made commissioned by the Network of Children and Youth of Neustadt in Holstein e.V., which received numerous awards.

*What happened must never be forgotten!*

In order to participate in the federal program "To Live Democracy", the City of Neustadt receives funding for projects dealing with social issues which promote tolerance and undermine xenophobia and racism.

Responsibility for remembrance lies in the hands of family members, prisoners' associations, historians and educational institutions. This is an immense responsibility which has to be dealt with carefully.

For children and grandchildren of the victims and subsequent generations, Neustadt in Holstein will remain a place of commemoration.

*What happened must not be forgotten!*

The City of Neustadt takes over the responsibility for atrocious events that took place in it or in its vicinity. Another part of this responsibility – aside from this commemorative event – is the Cap Arcona Museum which was founded in 1990 and has not really changed much since then. This museum urgently needs to be redesigned and modernized. Not only do new media tools have to be introduced, having in mind the needs of younger generations, but its content has to be reviewed too.

Because keeping remembrance alive implies introducing new information and developments, questioning and reflecting the forms of remembrance and changing them if necessary.

We want to devote our energy to redesigning the Cap Arcona Museum.

We are trying to think of ways to make remembrance interesting today, decades later – especially for young people – what pedagogical concepts are most suitable for it, how we can make our archive material on Cap Arcona more accessible for further scientific research.

As the Mayor of Neustadt in Holstein, I will use all all means available to me to support this project.

Given the extent and significance of the Cap Arcona catastrophe, this legacy cannot sit squarely on the shoulders of our town. The federation and republics will hopefully get involved in the development of viable forms of political education. In light of the alarming political developments all over Europe, with far-right nationalist parties on the rise, we are all required to learn a lesson from the National Socialist barbarianism and prevent such discriminatory policies in the future.

We owe it to the eyewitnesses, their families and those who did not survive the catastrophe.

*What happened must never be forgotten!*

We are here today to pay our respects to the victims of the Cap Arcona tragedy and to remember them. Their fate should be their legacy which urges us to fight for tolerance, freedom and humanity. Inhabitants of Neustadt are aware of this responsibility.

May there be no concentration camps, repression, torture and death for dissidents in the future. We all have to fight for the advancement of democracy and respect of human rights.

Thank you.



**Yevgeniy Malychin**  
**Survivor of Cap Arcona**  
**May 3, 2019**  
**Neustadt-Pelzerhaken**

Organizers and hosts of the commemorative ceremony for the former prisoners of the Neuengamme concentration camp,

On the day we were liberated 74 years ago, we, Neuengamme prisoners, could not have imagined we would get the chance to commemorate tens of thousands of our comrades one day.

We have to do everything to let younger generations learn about the crimes committed during the Second World War, so that they can remember them and make sure they protect peace.

We honor the memory of all of those who survived the hellish machinery of the Second World War and venerate their courage, their strength and their faith in the future.

We, former prisoners, survived many calamities – cold, hunger, death threat. But the worst of all was the dehumanization we experienced everywhere. That is why my wish is for younger generations to learn about those horrible times.

Equality and brotherhood should become normality for them because that is how they will learn to respect human life and dignity.

Only a community of free and strong people is able to fight for and preserve peace on Earth.

Thank you for your attention.

**Alexander Levin**  
**Grandson of Yevgeniy Malykhin**  
**May 3, 2019**

Good morning!

My name is Alexander Levin. Yevgeniy Malyikhin, whose speech you have just heard, is my grandfather. I am grateful that my grandfather managed to survive the concentration camp and the air raid on Cap Arcona, despite the ice-cold water he spent a rather long time in.

But he used a small chance to save himself and survived.

It is a great honor for me and for our whole family to have the opportunity to accompany Yevgeniy Tsackarovich to the commemorative ceremony on the occasion of the anniversary of the bombing of the ships Cap Arcona and Thielbek.

I would like to thank the employees and volunteers in memorials and Holocaust museums all over the world, for educating people and keeping the memory of the Nazi crimes alive in order to prevent genocide.

Thank you for your attention.

**Nicole Duijkers**  
**Granddaughter of a former prisoner of the Neuengamme concentration camp**  
**May 3, 2019**  
**Neustadt-Pelzerhaken**

We gathered here today to commemorate the victims of the air raids which took place in Lübeck Bay on May 3, 1945. I wanted to speak here last year, but this changed when Wim Alobery, a Dutch survivor of Cap Arcona died in Hamburg on May 2. He used to visit this memorial whenever it was possible. That is why I remember him today.

My grandfather Jan Duijkers was one of the victims of the air air raids. It is somewhat strange to stand here before strangers 74 years later and talk about the grandfather whom I have never met, but who has had such a big influence on his relatives.

My grandpa Jan Duijkers was a man whom I know only from stories. My father and my grandma told me that he was a charming, sophisticated man, who was always elegantly dressed and could speak many languages. He was born in 1900 and started studying at a nautical school at the age of 17. As a helmsman he made great journeys to the East and along the African coast. He was good at drawing. Later he changed careers and became a successful businessman. He founded a night security company in Amersfoort. This meant that he worked nights as a guard, keeping an eye on his customers' apartments.

Apart from his work, he started serving the Dutch army as a reserve officer in 1939 and they said that he was an active member of the resistance during the Second World War. He lived in the vicinity of the Amersfoort railway station where the trains headed to Neuengamme departed at the time. According to my grandma, the resistance thought it would be practical if my grandfather kept watch on the railway station, thus helping the members of the resistance in their sabotage activities. The fact that he married three times and had four children from different marriages was a slightly sensitive topic.

My father and my grandma told me that my grandpa was arrested in September 1944 on suspicion of being involved in resistance activities. Someone had allegedly betrayed him. At first he spent two weeks in the Amersfoort camp and on October 11, 1944 he was transported to the Neungamme concentration camp. In 1946, the Dutch Red Cross confirmed to my grandmother that my grandfather had been killed in the bombing attack in Lübeck Bay. Eyewitnesses reported seeing him on board the ship.

My father Rob Duijkers was only 9 months old when his father was arrested. Shortly after the Dutch Friends of Neuengamme was founded, he came into contact with the association. When he died in 2013, he was a board member with the longest time in office. During his last years, he was in charge of the trips to Neuengamme the Dutch Friends organized. I am happy that I had the opportunity to join him during his last two trips.

It was only after my father had died, that I got to know my grandpa Jan better. In 2014 I found a brown leather suitcase lying in a corner in the attic of my parents' house. His whole life was in it: textbooks, papers from the time when he attended the nautical school, enamel signs which used to hang on his customers' houses back when he worked as an overnight security officer, drawings and books of account. Even his reserve officer dress uniform had been kept. I found the love letters he wrote to my grandma, too, but what impressed me the most were the illegal letters he wrote in the Amersfoort camp and on the train to Hamburg as well as two legal ones from Neuengamme. The suitcase contained some peculiar things, too: a report of the investigation of my grandfather that my father's half-brother conducted in the nineties. It contradicted everything I had ever heard about him.

There was so much of it that I asked Martine Letterie, the president of the Dutch Friends of Neuengamme and a friend of mine and my parents', to help me study it. We found out that my grandpa had a very difficult childhood and that his professional and private life was very different from what I had heard.

He spent a large part of his youth with his sister in a house we still haven't been able to locate. His mother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital when he was seven. She died there at the age of fifty. My grandfather was 24 at the time. His family never spoke about it.

He then seem to have lived a pretty stable and happy life until he turned 36, which was when his father died and he got divorced from his first wife. He lost his job and lived alone somewhere in a small room. He married soon thereafter and dabbled in various fields and entrepreneurial activities. In October 1940 he established a security company in Amersfoort. It became successful overnight, partly due to the fact that he kept watch on buildings which belonged to the German Army from the beginning. There were a lot of German troops stationed in Amersfoort.

The documents found in the suitcase show that my grandfather was friends with a notorious member of NSB (Dutch Nazi organization) with whom he engaged in business activities as well. We also found records showing that he made arrangements with Christiansen, the commander of the German Army in the

Netherlands, Rauter, the Chief of the SS and Police of the Netherlands, as well as Seyß-Inquart, the Reichskommissar in the Netherlands.

His private life looked very different too. In 1943 he married my grandmother Germaine, only two days after his divorce from his second wife. My grandma was not the same person I had always believed her to be either. My father was born eight months later.

Now that I know all this, I find it difficult to place his arrest in the story. What role my grandmother played in it is not really clear either. According to the Amersfoort resistance, my father would have been arrested as a collaborator had he returned from Neuengamme.

This story still weighs on my mind and it has had a big impact on my life. Only after the death of my father have I come to realize what it had meant for him too. I learned from the documents I found in the suitcase that he certainly knew a part of the story since the nineties. I can see how he struggled with it.

As difficult as it is to tell this story, I believe it is very important to do it. Martine Letterie, who studied the documents with me, happens to be an author as well and we would like to write a book about this story. Nobody deserved to be imprisoned in a concentration camp, whatever they, in this case my grandfather, might have done. This is why it is so important to tell the story. It shows clearly how important *Rechtsstaat* (rule of law) is. It protects citizens from extremes, not only to prevent them from becoming victims, but also from becoming perpetrators. Maybe my grandfather would have made different choices had he lived in a country governed by law and maybe it would have made my father's life completely different too.

Let us pause for a moment of silence and remember the history so that we can learn from it.