

Remembrance of the "Cap Arcona" in the Two German States



On 7 February 1950, the salvaged wreck of the "Thielbek" was towed into Lübeck harbour. Former political prisoners greet the ship with lowered flags. (ANg)

On 3 May 1945, just before the end of the war, the ships "Cap Arcona" and "Thielbek" were bombed by British planes in Lübeck Bay. The SS had taken around 7,400 prisoners from Neuengamme concentration camp aboard these ships. Only 450 of them survived.

The dead were washed ashore and buried on the beaches of the Baltic Sea on both sides of what was to become the demarcation line between the British and the Soviet zone. After the war, a very distinct form of commemorative culture developed on either side of the border between East and West Germany, each strongly influenced by the respective political system.