

Commemoration of the "Cap Arcona" Disaster in West German

After the ships had been bombed, thousands of bodies washed up on the beaches of the Baltic Sea and were buried in mass graves. The first commemorative ceremony for these victims took place on 7 May 1945 in Neustadt-Pelzerhaken and was attended by British soldiers, survivors of the camp and citizens of Neustadt.

Neustadt-Pelzerhaken became the central place of remembrance for the "Cap Arcona" victims in West Germany and Western Europe. On each anniversary of the catastrophe, commemorative ceremonies were organised there by survivors' associations, the Neustadt Council and the government of Schleswig-Holstein. In the post-war years, these functions were strongly influenced by the cultural climate of the Cold War. They were also of special significance because, since there was no other commemorative site, they were dedicated to the memory of all Neuengamme prisoners.