

# PRESS RELEASE

## Background information

### German War Graves Commission - Youth work

The German War Graves Commission maintains and cares for the graves of the victims of war and tyranny abroad. The Volksbund is the only war graves service in the world to run its own youth work as well as its own youth meeting and educational centers.

Although the Volksbund carries out war graves care on behalf of the federal government, it largely finances its work itself through the donations of its members and sponsors. Federal reimbursements only cover around 25 percent of the necessary funding.

War gravesites are cemeteries under special legal protection, established for an indefinite period of time, which serve as an urgent reminder of peace to the living.

They are places of individual mourning and collective remembrance, but also places of international encounters and learning about history.

In the spirit of this conviction, thousands of young people from all over Europe come together every year at the Volksbund's work camps, youth meeting and educational centers. The facilities are located in Ysselsteyn (NL), in Lommel (B), in Niederbronn (F) and on the island of Usedom (D). As all the meeting places are located in the immediate vicinity of German war cemeteries, they offer participants a unique way of learning about history.

The meetings of the young Europeans help to develop mutual understanding and break down prejudices through encounters with the population of the host country. In this way, they make an active contribution to international understanding.

The youth work groups offer opportunities for local participation. Together, the young people get involved in maintenance work at regional war gravesites, in discussion groups and discussions with contemporary witnesses, as well as at sporting events.

The motto of the youth work programme sums up its uniqueness: "Reconciliation over the graves - working for peace".