



Remembrance Sunday was celebrated on November 15th, 2008 at the German Military Cemetery in the Polish village of Stare Czarnowo.

On November 15th, on the occasion of the Remembrance Sunday, a commemorative event chaired by the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund) took place at the German military cemetery in the Polish village of Stare Czarnowo. Among the guests in attendance were, besides Bundestag member Susanne Jaffke-Witt, also Bundeswehr soldiers of the Torgelow-based 41st Armored Infantry Brigade and representatives from the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE).

Collective Cemetery of Northwestern Poland

The military cemetery which covers a surface area of about three and a half hectares is located approx. 25 km to the southeast of Szczecin. In the fall of 2000, the site has been jointly developed by Polish and German soldiers, becoming accessible to the public as of 2006. It serves as a collective cemetery for German war dead in northwestern Poland. "Once a year, reburials of exhumed human remains of German soldiers from graves discovered in the the regions of Gdansk, Farther Pomerania, Western Prussia and the Wartheland take place. Thus, presently, 12,150 dead have found their final resting place here," explained Wolfgang Dietrich, who is working for the Volksbund as a reburial specialist. The cemetery would have room to

accommodate up to 32,500 graves.

Wars are the Problem

Bundestag member Jaffke-Witt underscored that all victims of wars and dictatorship were to be remembered. Beyond that, she was pleased to see that also young people were attending the event. "They are the shapers of the future. They must learn and understand that warlike conflicts do not bring anything but grief, suffering and hardship. "After a brief digression to present-day crisis areas, the lawmaker concluded her speech stating that "wars do not solve any problem, wars are the problem!".

Place of Mourning

Thereafter, Master Sergeant Michael Wiese read the prayer commemorating the dead. The 38-year old German Medical Corps Non-Commissioned Officer has served with the HQ MNC NE since October 2005 and also lives in the region with his family. One of his grandfathers had participated in the Polish Campaign in WW2, being subsequently also engaged in France and Norway. His other grandfather fought in the Russian Campaign. Both survived the war. Nevertheless, Wiese realizes the importance of a place like this military cemetery "so that the survivors will have a place of mourning". And – with a view to history – he still does not find it "customary at all that I, as a German soldier, am standing here at a German military cemetery in Poland".

During the subsequent wreath laying ceremony at the High Cross flanked by two Bundeswehr soldiers as honor guards the trumpet signal of the tune "I once had a comrade" was sounded. The hourlong solemn commemorative event at the cemetery was accompanied by the choir of the German minority in Szczecin.