



Media information

May 8, 2020

Volkswagen remembers end of war 75 years ago: a day of liberation and warning

Wolfsburg – With a minute’s silence at its Wolfsburg plant, Volkswagen is today remembering the end of the Second World War in Europe on May 8, 1945. On behalf of the company and its workforce, Arne Meiswinkel, Head of Group HR Policy and Steering, Bernd Osterloh, Group Works Council Chairman, and Plant Manager Dr. Stefan Loth laid white roses on the stone of remembrance for the victims of forced labor at the former Volkswagenwerk GmbH.



Remembering the end of the war in Europe 75 years ago (from left) Dieter Landenberger, Head of Heritage, Arne Meiswinkel (in front), Bernd Osterloh and Dr. Stefan Loth.



Large parts of the Volkswagen plant were destroyed by air raids in 1944.

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Osterloh said: "For me, May 8, 1945 not only marks the end of the unjust National Socialist regime but also the beginning of a new mindset with aspirations for durable peace and a united Europe." Osterloh warned: "75 years later, it is just as worthwhile to stand up for these values. We cannot take European unity and peaceful coexistence for granted to the extent that we had long thought possible."

Meiswinkel emphasized: "The employees of Volkswagen are putting united, tolerant Europe into practice at the many Volkswagen plants. They succeed in these efforts because this culture of remembrance is a key element in Volkswagen's corporate culture."

Slightly less than five weeks before the end of the Second World War in Europe, US troops had liberated the Volkswagen plant and the "Stadt des KdF-Wagens", which later became Wolfsburg, from Nazi rule on April 11, 1945. At the time, there were about 7,700 forced laborers at the plant. From 1942 to 1945, about 20,000 women and men, including around 5,000 concentration camp inmates, had been forced to produce armaments at Volkswagenwerk GmbH.



About the Volkswagen brand:

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2019, Volkswagen delivered 6.3 million vehicles including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta or Passat. Currently, 195,878 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has over 10,000 dealerships with 86,000 employees.

Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. E-mobility, smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand are the key strategic topics for the future.
