



Federal Ministry
of Defence

The Bundeswehr Memorial In memory of those of the Bundeswehr who died for peace, right and freedom



Bundeswehr

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**The call for bravery
includes being prepared
to make the
ultimate sacrifice:
if need be, one's own life.**

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Identity disc: upon entry into military service, every soldier is issued with an identity disc which permits quick and reliable identification.

Why a Memorial?

The Memorial marks an important milestone in Bundeswehr history. For the first time, there is a central site for the commemoration of military and civilian Bundeswehr members who lost their lives in the course of their service to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Since the Bundeswehr was established in 1955, more than 3,100 of its members have been killed: our soldiers who were killed in conflict prevention and crisis management operations in the cause of peace as well as all the Bundeswehr members who lost their lives in or as a result of tragic accidents, whether during training, exercises, in traffic accidents or air crashes.

The Bundeswehr Memorial makes it clear that the defence of peace, right and freedom cannot be compared with any other profession. In no other career is the question of life and death of such existential importance as in military service.

The soldiers of the Bundeswehr are bound by their solemn pledge and their official oath to bravely defend the rights and freedom of the German people. Military service involves, if necessary, risking life and limb and, ultimately, the obligation to kill in battle. This all-embracing duty of loyalty constitutes the core of military service.



For their part, state and society, which demand this service, are under a special obligation to provide personal support and financial security to relatives of soldiers who died in the course of their service to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Moreover military and civilian personnel who have lost their lives for the protection of peace and freedom deserve public respect and commemoration.

That is why the Federal Institutions Flags draged over the mortal remains of soldiers who were killed while exercising their official duties.

This symbol is a visible token of the special ties of loyalty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the deceased soldier. In addition, the Bundeswehr holds a funeral service to pay its last respects to those who were killed in missions abroad or during their duty at home.

This is an important token of solidarity, which can provide helpful support for the bereaved in a situation that shakes their very existence. But in order to commemorate the dead it is necessary not only to adhere consistently to rituals but also to designate certain places for this and make them known.

Funeral service: comrades pay their last respects to fallen soldiers.



At the Bendler Block: the arrival of the bronze shell marks the beginning of the decisive construction phase.

Architecture – The Location

The site of the Memorial in Berlin, at the official seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence, is the expression of a political decision. All fundamental decisions by the Government and Parliament regarding the Bundeswehr are made in Berlin. At the Bendlerblock, the Berlin seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence, these decisions are then implemented for the Bundeswehr. The site of the Memorial in the immediate proximity of the legislative and executive powers indirectly highlights the fact that the Bundeswehr is bound by the Constitution and the democratic political will takes precedence.

The urban area in which the Memorial is situated is characterized by its structural diversity. Embassies, representations of the Laender, museums as well as office and service buildings make this a privileged location that is also easily accessible by public transport. As part of this ensemble, the Memorial is neither exposed on a prominent urban stage nor hidden in a backyard. It stands its ground with a certain matter-of-factness without being obtrusive. This also reflects the self-image of the Bundeswehr, which holds its position in state and society with confidence yet does not claim a special role for its members.

At the same time, the Memorial fits well into the architectural context of the capital's other memorials: several memorials from the time of the German Empire, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the New Guardhouse (Neue Wache) as the Central Memorial to Victims of War and Tyranny are in the vicinity of the Bundeswehr Memorial.

The German Resistance Memorial Centre, housed in a side wing of the Bendler Block, close to the Bundeswehr Memorial is of special significance.

This is one of the most important sites of remembrance of the revolt of conscience against the criminal national-socialist regime. Military resistance against Adolf Hitler is a cornerstone of the Bundeswehr's understanding of tradition.

Following the failed coup d'état, Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg and his aide-de-camp First Lieutenant Werner von Haefthen, Infantry General Friedrich Olbricht and Colonel Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim were executed in the courtyard of the Bendler Block during the night of 20 to 21 July 1944.

The Bundeswehr Memorial is quite separate from it and, whilst being nearby, the Bundeswehr Memorial is still appropriately far away from the German Resistance Memorial Centre. Its distance from the courtyard of the Bendler Block underlines the fact that the Bundeswehr Memorial neither affects nor qualifies the importance of 20 July for the Bundeswehr's understanding of tradition. On the contrary, the choice of its location again clearly demonstrates that the Memorial's lines of tradition connect with Bundeswehr history.

The location of the Memorial fits in well with the existing architecture. The centre one of the five flagpoles on the slightly raised forecourt marks the centre line of the parade ground. During the military ceremonies that take place here, movements are oriented towards the centre line and the flags. It is here that the Memorial creates a new visual boundary to the parade ground. At the same time, the Memorial is integrated into the spatial and spiritual context of the Federal Ministry of Defence.

A key aspect of the Memorial's architecture is its location at the interface of the public-civilian and the official-military area. It is situated right on the boundary between the site of the Bendler Block and the publicly accessible Hildebrandstrasse.

Therefore, the Memorial can be entered either from the premises of the Federal Ministry of Defence or from the public highway. Thus representing the interface between the Armed Forces and society, it constitutes another vital element of the Bundeswehr's self-image.

The open access to both sides provides for great flexibility in use, allowing for both public and private commemoration and mourning. Individual, private commemoration and public remembrance during military ceremonies are thus equally possible.

Finally, this simple yet flexible concept also finds its expression in the structure and the symbolic meaning of the Memorial's architecture.





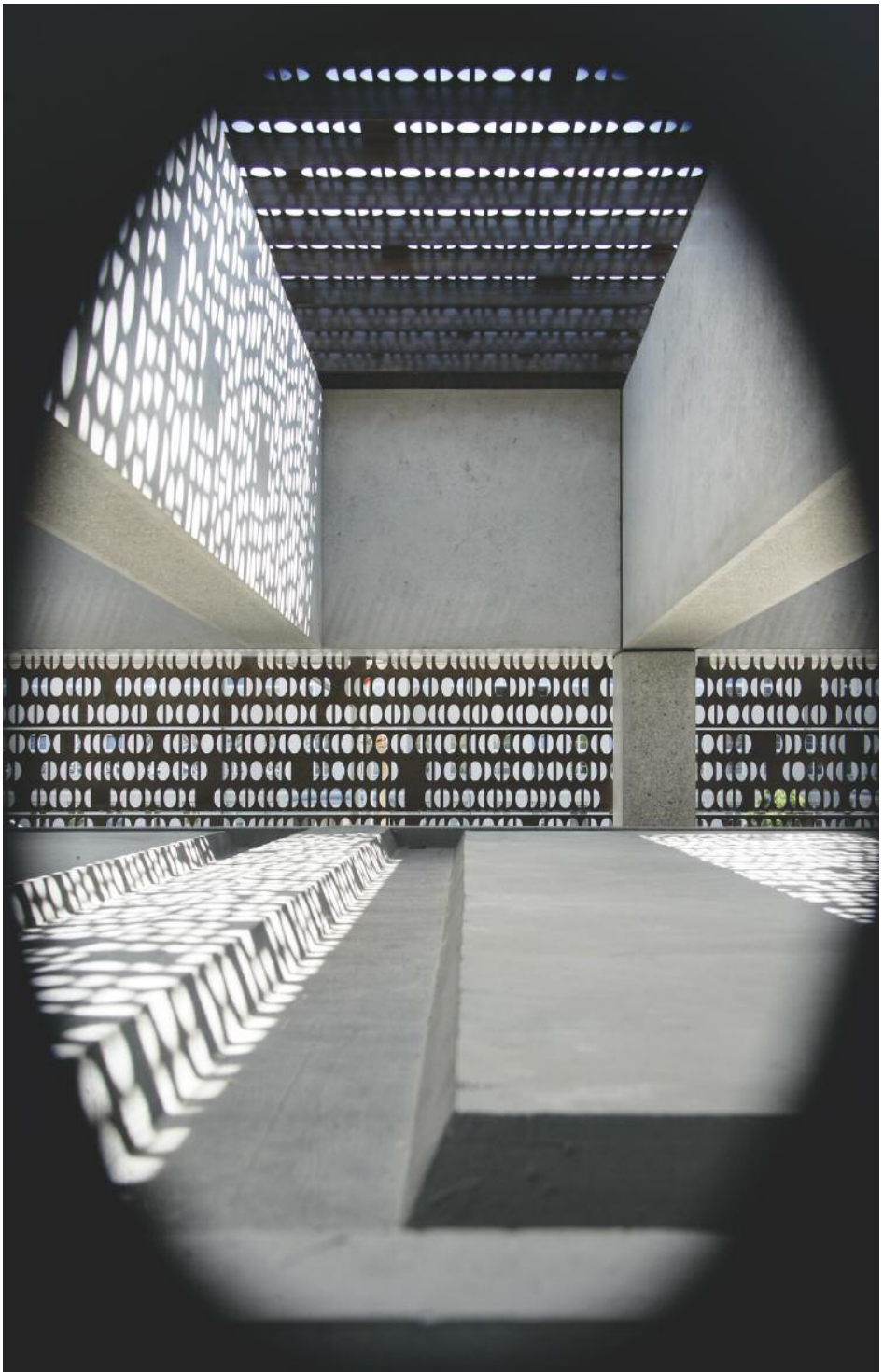


Architecture – The Aesthetic Language of the Construction

The appeal of the concept created by the renowned Munich architect Professor Andreas Meck, which was selected by a committee following a competition, lies in its plain and clear symbolism. It establishes a direct link between the Bundeswehr and society, symbolizing the particularity of military service and the risk of losing life and limb and emphasizes the fact that the Bundeswehr is irrevocably bound to respect the provisions of the German constitution.

The Bundeswehr Memorial is a rectangular building measuring 32 by 8 metres and 10 metres in height, and is made of reinforced concrete parts that are encased in perforated bronze sheets. Its shape and size fit in with the Bendler Block, which is opposite the Memorial, and the parade ground that lies between the two structures.

Anyone who takes a close look will immediately recognize the balanced proportions. Both the Memorial as a whole and the room of silence (cella) are based on the ideal proportions of the golden ratio, considered to be the epitome of aesthetics and harmony. The golden ratio is based on an ideal ratio between two segments of a line, with the ratio of the larger segment to the smaller one being equal to the ratio of the sum of the segments to the larger one. This simple and impressive structure makes the aesthetics of the Memorial easily perceptible.

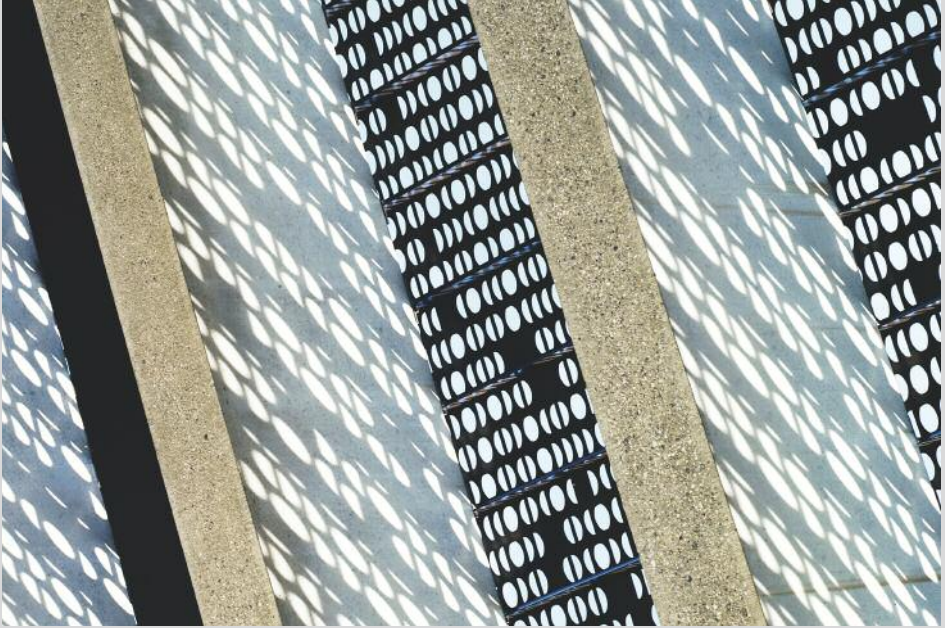


In its entirety, the Memorial is conceived as a synthesis of the arts which can be viewed from inside, too. The spartan and precise use of materials and effects creates a place that touches the hearts of the visitors and draws their attention to the basics.

The Memorial takes traditional building shapes, reinterprets them and creates a unique appearance by combining them with unusual materials. The wide opening of the building in both directions, i.e. to Hildebrandstrasse and to the parade ground, and its frequently perforated bronze shell symbolize transparency. They convey the self-image of a Bundeswehr that does not cut itself off from but opens up to society.

The flexibility of access that is provided for underlines this claim. An easily operated sliding wall element closes either the side of the building facing the street or the side facing the parade ground. The possibility to alter the entrance means that the Memorial can be used in a variety of ways.

Public remembrance as well as private mourning and commemoration are thus possible at the same site. The architecture of the Memorial speaks for itself as its shape largely reveals its function, a fact that is easily recognized and directly understood.



Architecture – The Materials

The use of modern materials reflects traditional forms of representation without copying them unimaginatively. Reinforced concrete elements differing in surface finish and bronze are the basic materials used. The top-grade materials, their appropriate use and the precision workmanship emphasize the quality of the architecture.

The use of colour on the Memorial is restrained, with shades of grey and, above all, bronze predominating, while sparing use has been made of gold, with its many symbolic connotations.

The Memorial dispenses with religious symbols, underlining the fact that it does not emphasize any particular religion or denomination or exclude others. On the contrary, it is open to all groups of society and persuasions. The consciously reduced use of form leaves room for concentration and interpretation.



Architecture – The Bronze Shell

The reinforced concrete structure is encased in a bronze shell with fine perforations which dominates the Memorial's outward appearance and gives it an unmistakable profile.

The bronze shell is coated with an antioxidant layer.

This prevents the formation of verdigris, which is typical for bronze, and preserves the bronze colour.

Bronze is often called "broken gold" as it comes very close to gold, which the symbolism of colours sees as the most precious colour of all. Being a copper and tin alloy, bronze lacks the purity of gold and silver. Nevertheless, bronze is considered to be something special and is one of the metals traditionally used for creating works of art.

Oval and semi-oval shapes have been cut into the bronze shell perforating it in parallel, horizontal lines. The semi-oval holes symbolize the form of the metal identity disc that all soldiers must wear on duty.

Every identity disc bears a different code with the most important personal data, thus underlining the individuality and unique character of every person, including those in uniform. At the same time, the motif of half an identity disc stands for the soldier who lost his life and who can be identified through his individual disc. The semi-oval form is thus an all-embracing metaphor of death and applies to both soldiers and civilian personnel.

The spacing between the perforations in the bronze shell corresponds to a code based on the morse alphabet and reproduces the pledge of the conscripts and voluntary service conscripts, the oath of the temporary-career volunteers and regulars as well as the oath of office of the Federal Defence Administration. The fact that Bundeswehr members are bound by the constitutional order and pledge to serve faithfully thus constitutes the implicit framework of the architecture as a whole.







Architecture – The Cella

Inside the Memorial is a room of silence: the cella. This room at the southern end of the Memorial has neither doors nor windows and can be entered either from the parade ground or from the road (Hildebrandstrasse). By lowering the ceiling an entrance has been created that leads the visitor into the cella. The cella is a monochrome, dark room in which the contours are blurred, so that it seems dematerialized. The total absence of pictures, ornaments, design elements and colour inside the cella helps the visitor to concentrate on the most important aspects.

At the end of the cella, the clean lines and symmetry are interrupted, giving the room an unexpected appearance. The farthest floor panel is raised at an angle so that its edge is fully visible, breaking the Memorial's strictly rectangular order. This tilted panel symbolizes the force and sheer magnitude of the violence and disaster which ended a life.

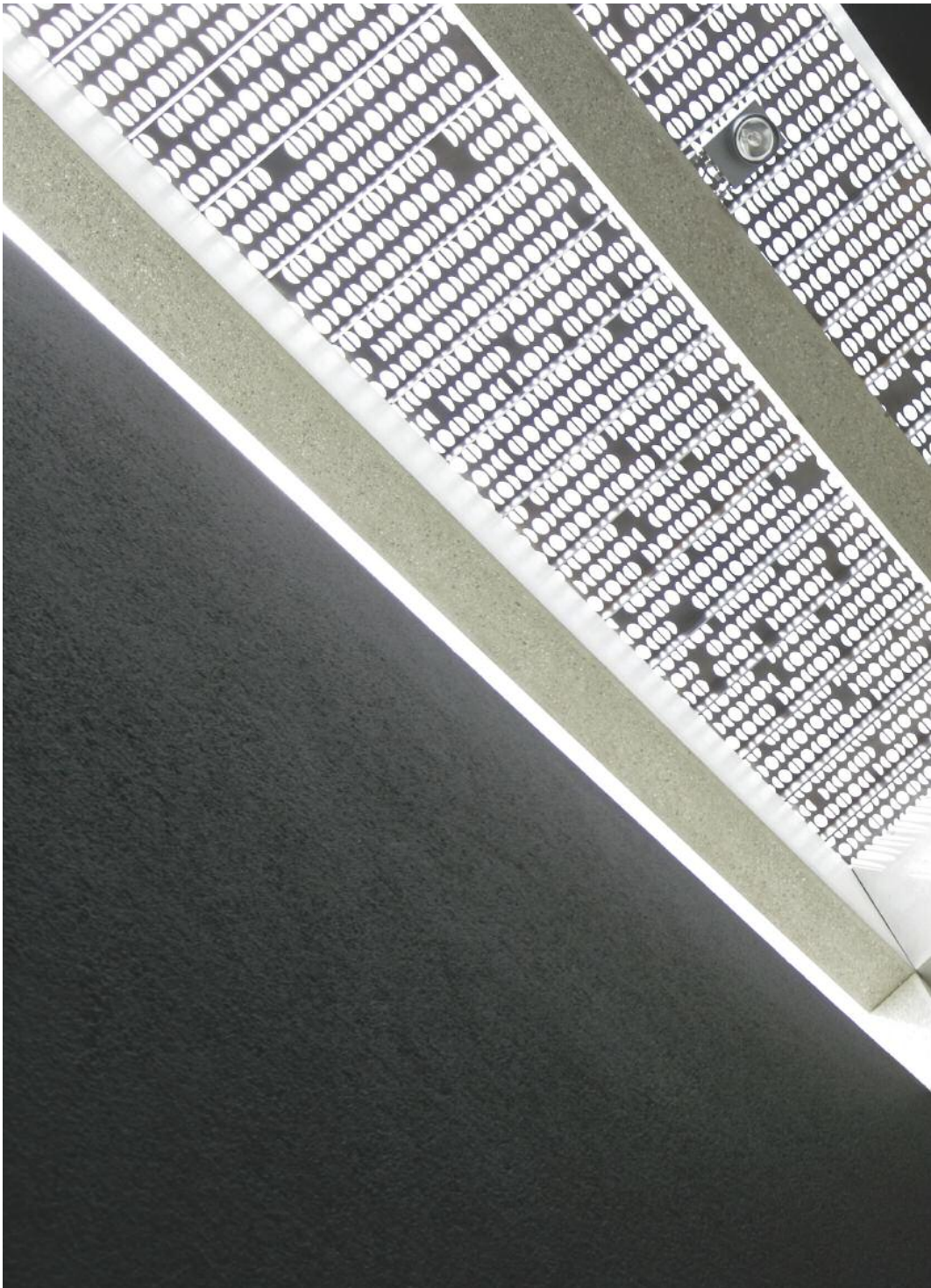
The fault is moreover a reminder that losing somebody has virtually thrown the lives of the bereaved, relatives, friends and comrades out of joint. The raised floor panel provides a suitable surface on which visitors can place wreaths, flowers, candles or other mementos.

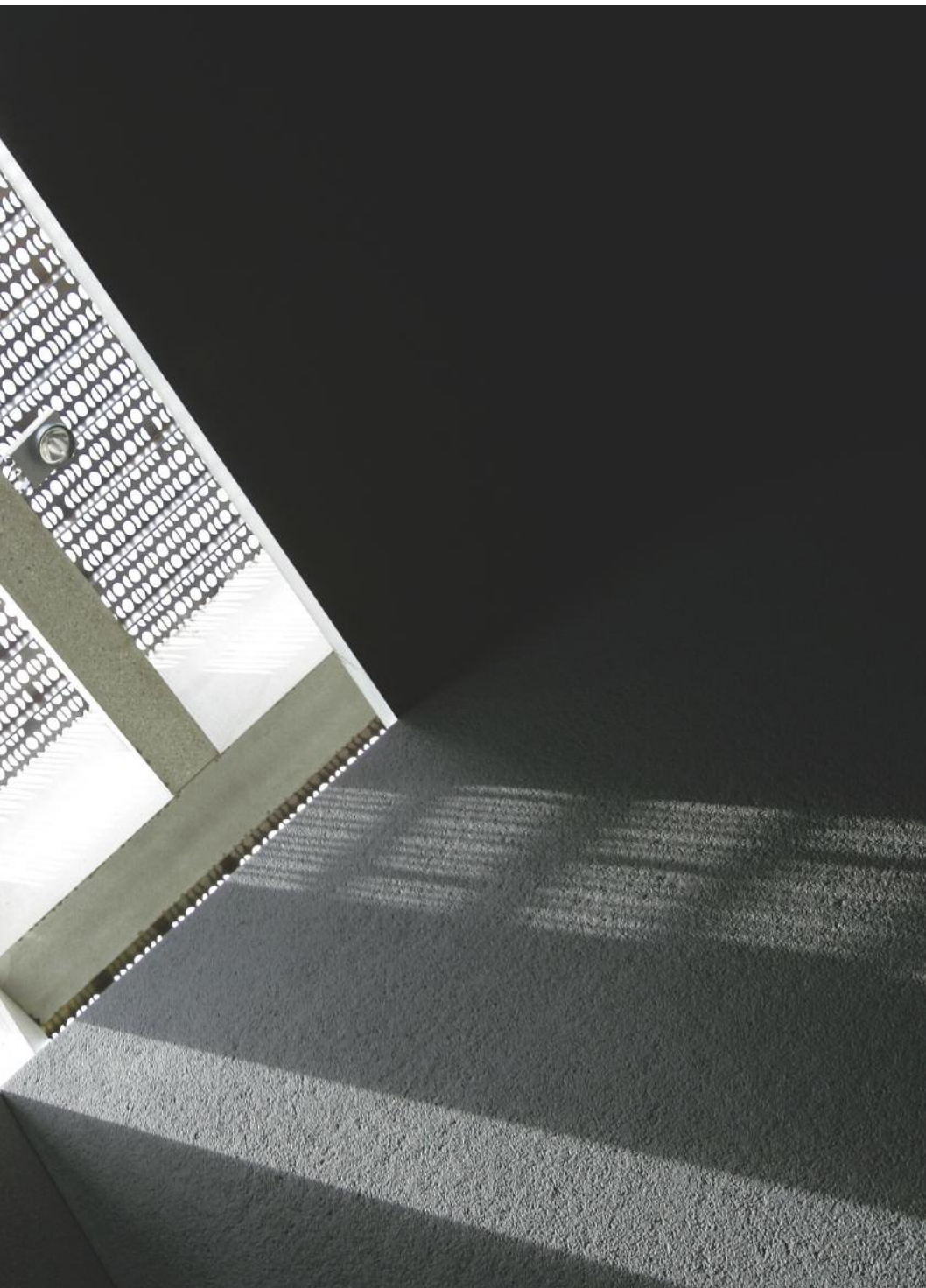
Daylight shines into the room through a skylight in the ceiling of the cella. This opens up the austere room to the heavens – a timeless symbol for the crossing of real borders and the world perceived by the senses.

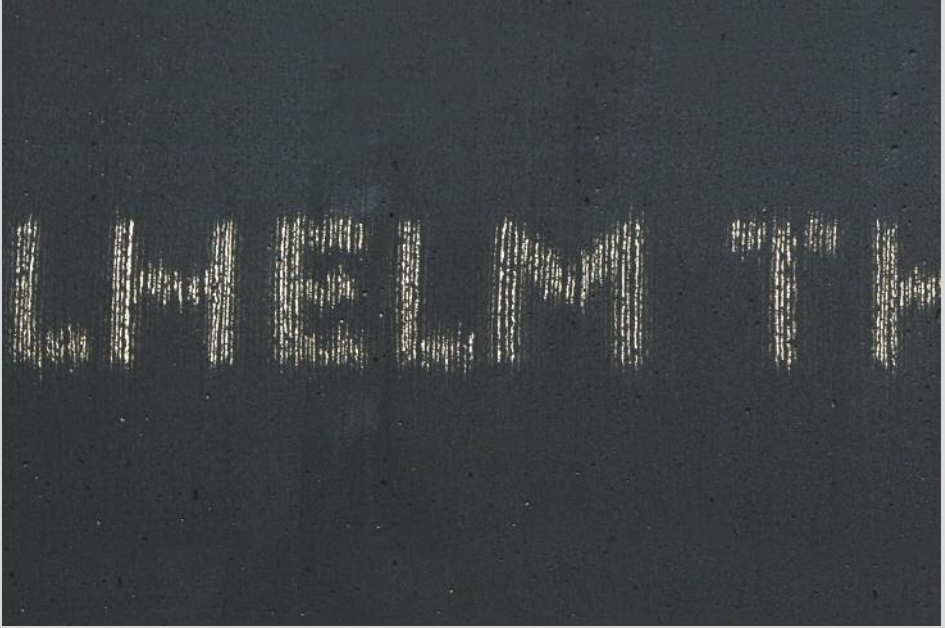
The daylight that enters the room from above shines through the semi-oval holes in the bronze shell. In favourable light conditions, the special play of light and shadows on the polished surface of the floor panel again provides the link with the pledge, the oath of office and the official oath.











In honour of the dead: the names of the soldiers who lost their lives are displayed in an ever-changing sequence at the exit of the cella.

Architecture – The Names of the Dead

Whilst the cella relies on abstract elements to achieve its effect, a materialized form of remembrance confronts the visitor as he leaves the room: above the entrance a luminous band displays the names of the dead to be commemorated on a horizontally mounted concrete slab in an ever-changing sequence. The letters shine through translucent concrete. This gives the impression that the names are floating in space.

The nammy of the dead is an important element of remembrance. This is a fitting way to pay over respect to those members of the Bundeswehr who have lost their lives.

At the same time, it is a reminder that behind the abstract design of the Memorial are the real tragedies of people who were killed in the course of their service to our society. The technical installation permits changes to be made. Thus it is possible for names not to appear should the relatives so wish.

RAINER



MÄDE





Architecture – The Dedication

On leaving the cella, the visitor faces a shimmering golden wall. Its radiance contrasts sharply with the sombre tones of the cella.

In all cultures, gold is a timeless symbol of the supernatural and the eternal and the hope that stems from this. Because gold is of lasting physical quality and a valuable material, the colour gold has positive connotations. The symbolic power of this colour emphasizes the significance of this part of the Memorial.

The inscription in raised letters on the golden wall reads:

**IN MEMORY OF THOSE OF OUR
BUNDESWEHR WHO DIED FOR
PEACE RIGHT AND FREEDOM**

Using capital letters only and dispensing with punctuation lend the inscription powerful expression and unity. The dedication recaptures the key idea of the Memorial: to honour the memory of all members of the Bundeswehr who died as a direct or indirect consequence of performing their duties to our country.

DEN TOTEN UNSERER BUNDESWEHR

FÜR FRIEDEN RECHT UND FREIHEIT



Tradition and the Culture of Remembrance

It is part of the cultural and military identity of all armed forces to honour the memory of their dead soldiers. This is an expression of the self-image of the military and how well it is integrated into politics and society. How the armed forces commemorate the dead reflects the public and private debate on the status of the military in state and society. It shows whether and to what extent the military is accepted and integrated, whether commemoration leaves more room for private mourning or only serves to legitimize state power by glorifying the death of soldiers as heroes.

For all our partners and Allies, it is a part of their cultural identity to honour the memory of soldiers who paid for their commitment with their lives. In France, for instance, a service is held at the central site of remembrance, Les Invalides Cathedral in Paris, for soldiers killed on operations abroad. Italian soldiers who lose their lives on operations are honoured every year at the Altare della Patria in Rome. In the United States, all soldiers who have lost their lives in the course of war are commemorated on Memorial Day.

The single services of the Bundeswehr have their own memorials to commemorate their dead: the Memorial of the German Army in the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress near Koblenz, the Air Force and Aviation Memorial in Fürstenfeldbruck and the Naval Memorial in Laboe.

The Air Force and the Navy also commemorate civilians who perished in accidents in the air or at sea as well as the soldiers who fell in both World Wars. In addition, memorial stones and commemorative plaques in the areas of operation honour the members of the Bundeswehr who died while serving in these places. All memorials have established a special culture of remembrance that will be maintained in the future, as well.

However until now there was no central commemorative site dedicated to members of the Bundeswehr, and including not only military but also civilian personnel.

This gap has been filled by the Bundeswehr Memorial. At the same time it gives our own tradition a joint Bundeswehr perspective.

The Memorial stands for today's Bundeswehr tradition. Over five decades after its establishment, the Bundeswehr is paying increasing attention to its own traditions. As the first conscript army in a parliamentary democracy, the Bundeswehr is bound by the norms and values of the constitution and entrenched in the guiding principle of the citizen in uniform.

The Bundeswehr has become an integral part of our state with its members firmly integrated in society. It is with confidence that the Bundeswehr can look back on a history of its own.

The Memorial is in keeping with the Bundeswehr's concept of tradition based on a selection of events from German history and values anchored in the constitution. The protection of human dignity, right and freedom are points of reference which the Bundeswehr steadfastly adheres to. A living tradition requires forms of expression, the ability to remember and the strength to be committed.

Those who lost their lives in service to Germany must therefore not be forgotten.

The following statement is made in the Bundeswehr directive on tradition:

"Tradition needs symbols, signs and ceremonies. These cannot replace the inner values of tradition, but they can serve as a reference to them and ensure that they are preserved in keeping with the times."

The principles of this understanding and cultivation of tradition lead directly to the idea and form of the Bundeswehr Memorial.



Laying of the foundation stone for the Bundeswehr Memorial on 27 November 2008

How the Memorial Evolved

During his first visit to the troops in Afghanistan in December 2005, the then Federal Minister of Defence Dr. Franz Josef Jung was extremely moved to find that Bundeswehr soldiers in Kabul had created their own memorial site to commemorate the fallen ISAF soldiers. This personal experience marked the beginning of an intense debate on commemorating all members of the Bundeswehr who lost their lives in the course of their service to the Federal Republic of Germany.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Bundeswehr, the Federal Minister of Defence was responsible for the process that was then set in motion. From the very beginning, this stressed the personal responsibility of the Federal Minister of Defence for the deployment of Bundeswehr personnel in Germany and abroad and the possible consequences thereof.

It was clear from the outset that the Memorial needed to take a completely new approach and dissociate itself from the classical type of war memorial which interprets the sacrifice of a soldier's death by glorifying it.

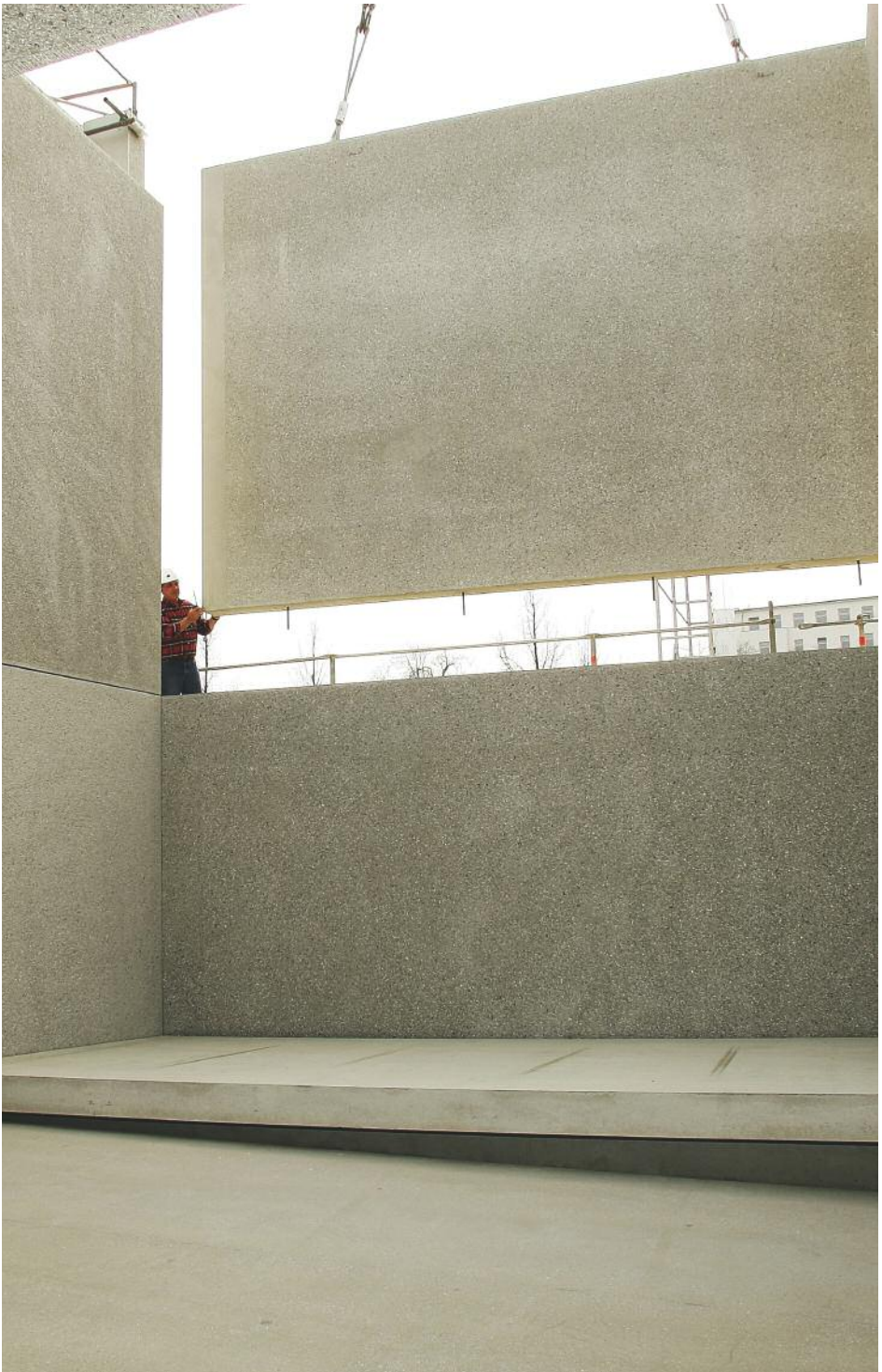
Instead, a suitable use of form was sought which would permit the inclusion of all members of the Bundeswehr and serve to provide visible expression of the Bundeswehr's integration in society.

The decision on the concept was taken in accordance with the general tendering and contract award procedures.



For the ensuing award procedure on the basis of competition guidelines and rules, a commission of experts was set up consisting of such renowned specialists as the architects Professor Stephan Braunfels and Christoph Sattler, Dr. Ulrich Schlie, Chief, Policy Planning Staff and head of the commission, Dr. Oscar Schneider, former Minister of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development, General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Chief of Staff, Bundeswehr and the historian and cultural scientist Professor Dr. Christoph Stölzl.

The commission thoroughly discussed all the designs submitted and acknowledged their high architectural standard before taking the decision at its meeting on 16 May 2007 in favour of the proposal of Munich architect Professor Andreas Meck. The written recommendation stated that his concept met "the purpose of the Bundeswehr Memorial outstandingly well. It has found a form of public commemoration that is in keeping with the times but also meets the need for personal mourning."











Dedication of the Memorial: Federal President Horst Köhler holding the formal address on the occasion of the dedication of the Bundeswehr Memorial on 8 September 2009

The Bundeswehr Memorial – Public Commemoration and Personal Mourning

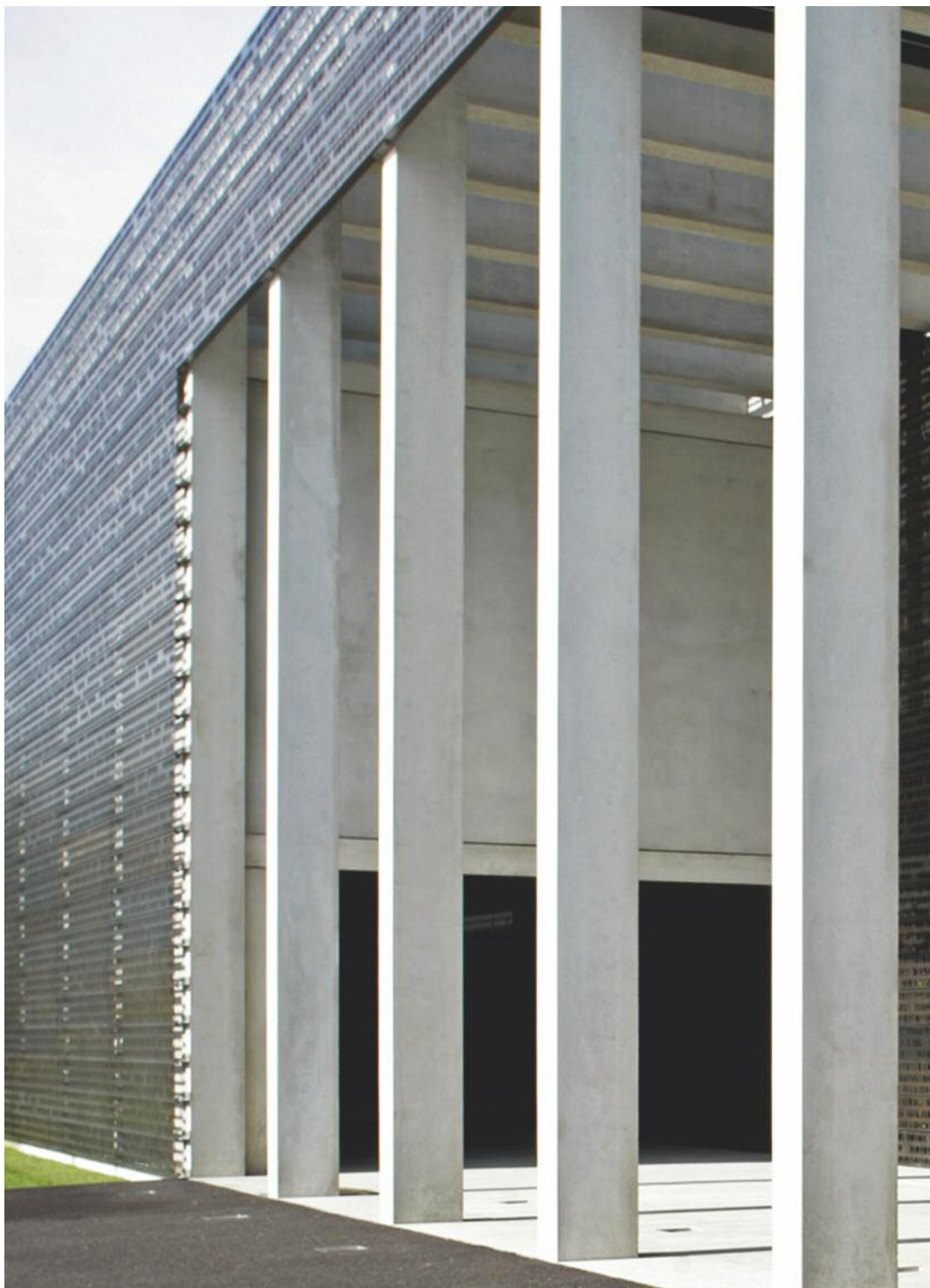
The Bundeswehr Memorial was dedicated on 8 September 2009 in the presence of Federal President Horst Köhler and many public and parliamentary dignitaries.

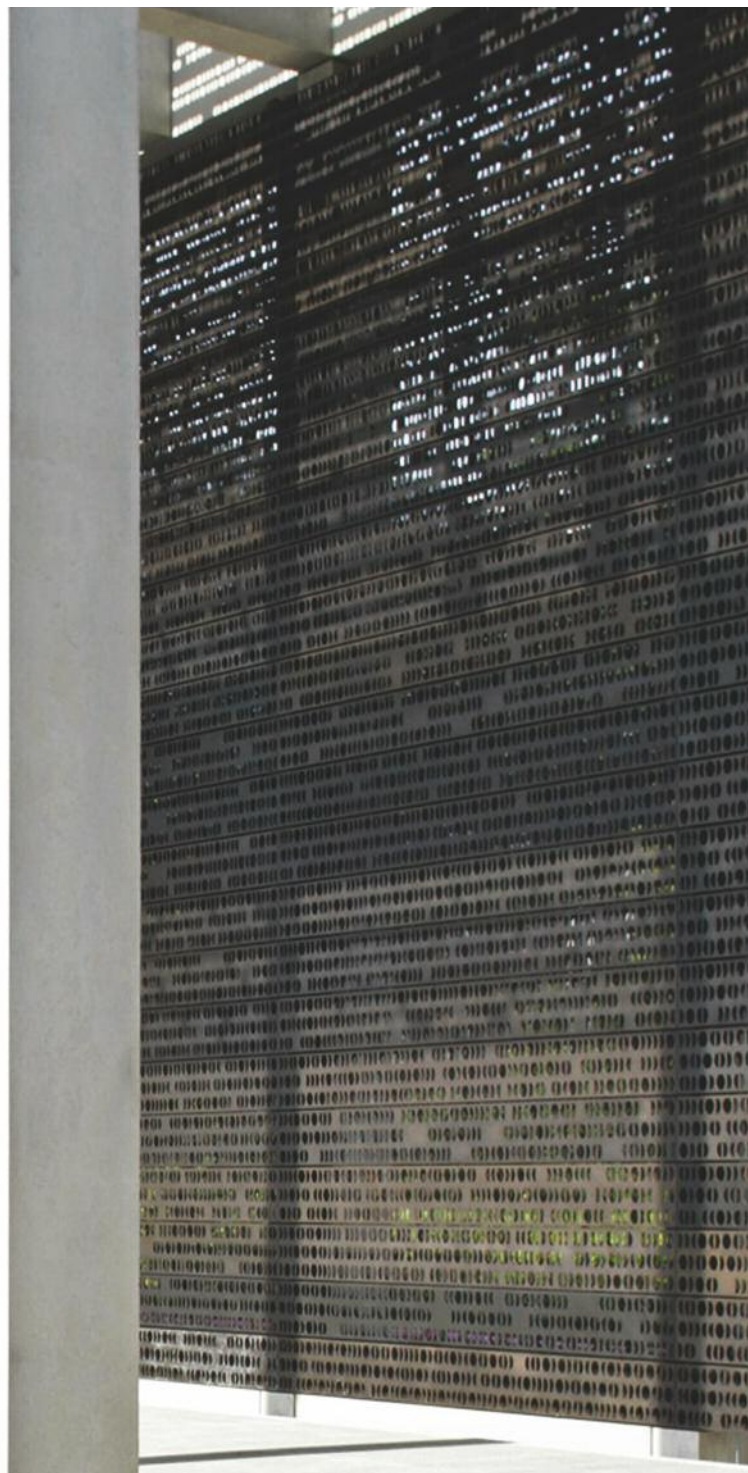
The Bundeswehr Memorial provides for the first time a site at which all servicemen and women and civilian members of the Bundeswehr who have died in the course of their service to the Federal Republic of Germany can be appropriately commemorated. This joint perception of the Bundeswehr makes it possible to pay tribute to the various forms of service.

The location, as well as the architecture of the Memorial, offer opportunities for both public and private commemoration and mourning.

The building thus permits various concepts for its use and at the same time serves as a reminder of the manifold connections between the Bundeswehr and society. Its key messages are openness and transparency.

This Memorial helps to increase public awareness of the mission of the Bundeswehr and to demonstrate that a high price may have to be paid in the service of peace and freedom. For their part, state and society have a duty to support the servicemen and women and the civilian personnel of the Bundeswehr in the accomplishment of their mission: for peace, right and freedom.









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