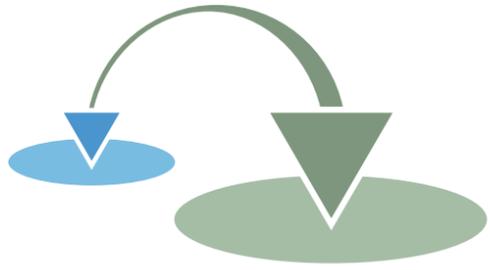


Landmarken Marques Paysagères

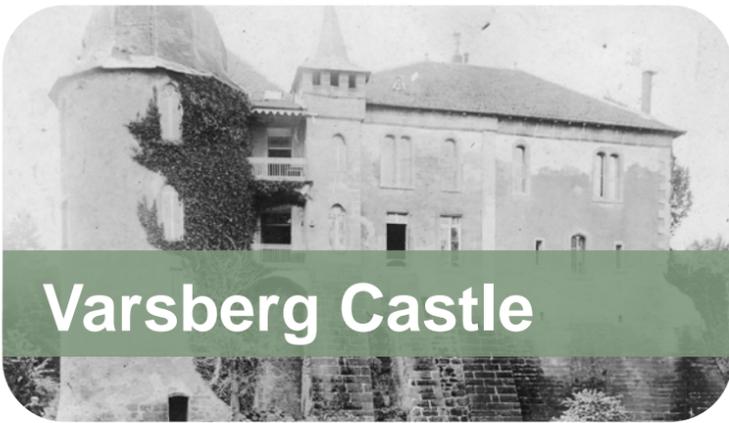
All around the Saar and Rossel rivers are a number of locations and structures which form a kind of 'top floor' of the region with their wide-ranging influence

The extensive visible ties between Germany and France form a cross-border network of architecture, history, culture and lifestyle. From quarries to historic castles and from industrial culture and landscape features, the 'Landmarks in the Eurodistrict SaarMoselle' project gathers together the beacons of the region, appreciates them, presents them and invites people to visit.





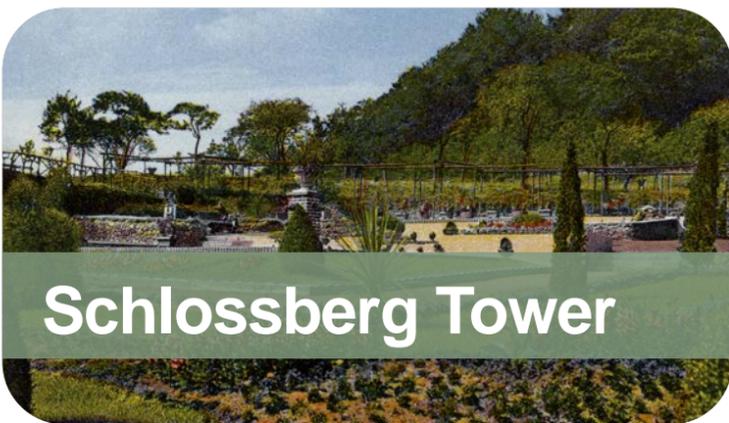
Landmarken
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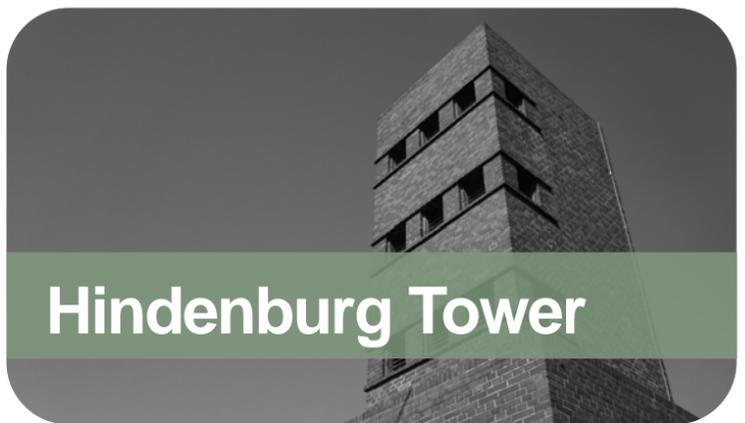
Varsberg Castle



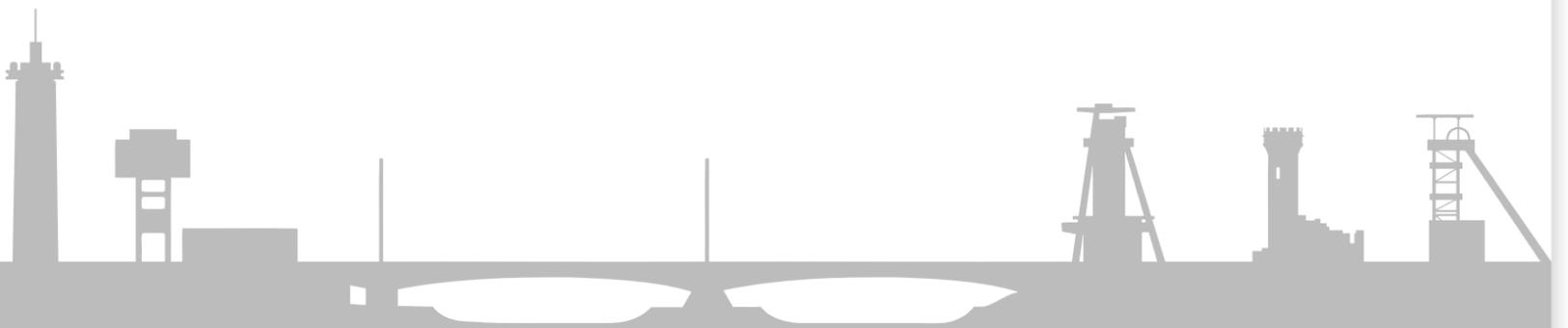
Schweizerberg

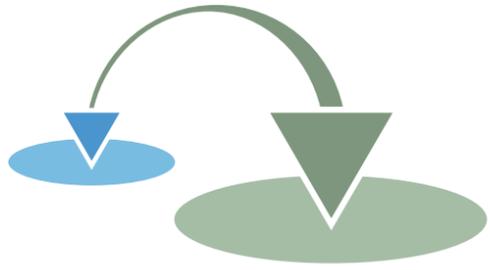


Schlossberg Tower



Hindenburg Tower

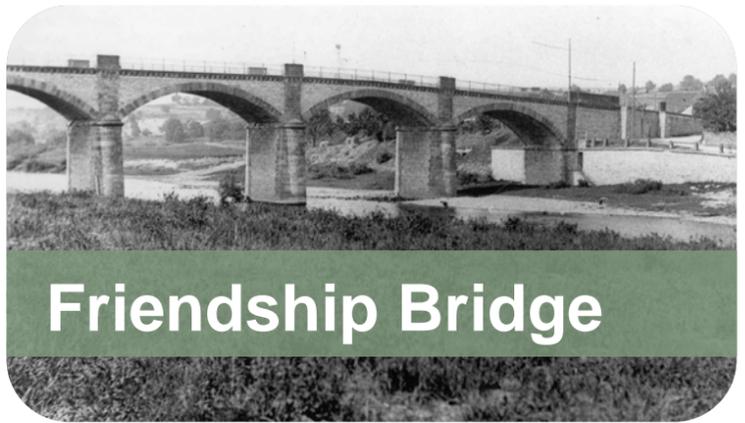




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Spicheren Heights



Friendship Bridge



Hoferkopf



Varsberg Castle

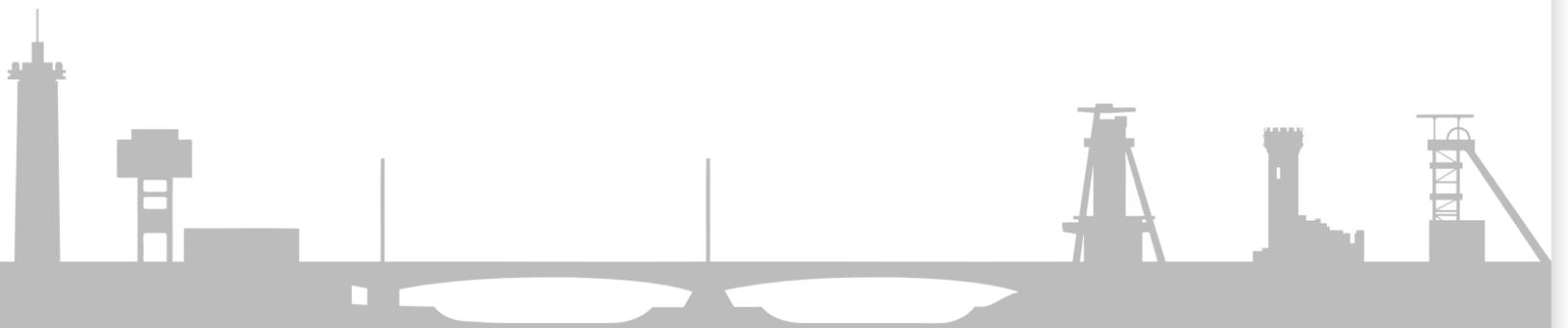


Varsberg Castle – Ham-sous-Varsberg

A castle has been watching over the main connecting road from Metz to Saarbrücken for 800 years. A remarkable water supply, the latest building techniques and perhaps a secret treasure: Varsberg Castle is a very special place.

Creating new from old

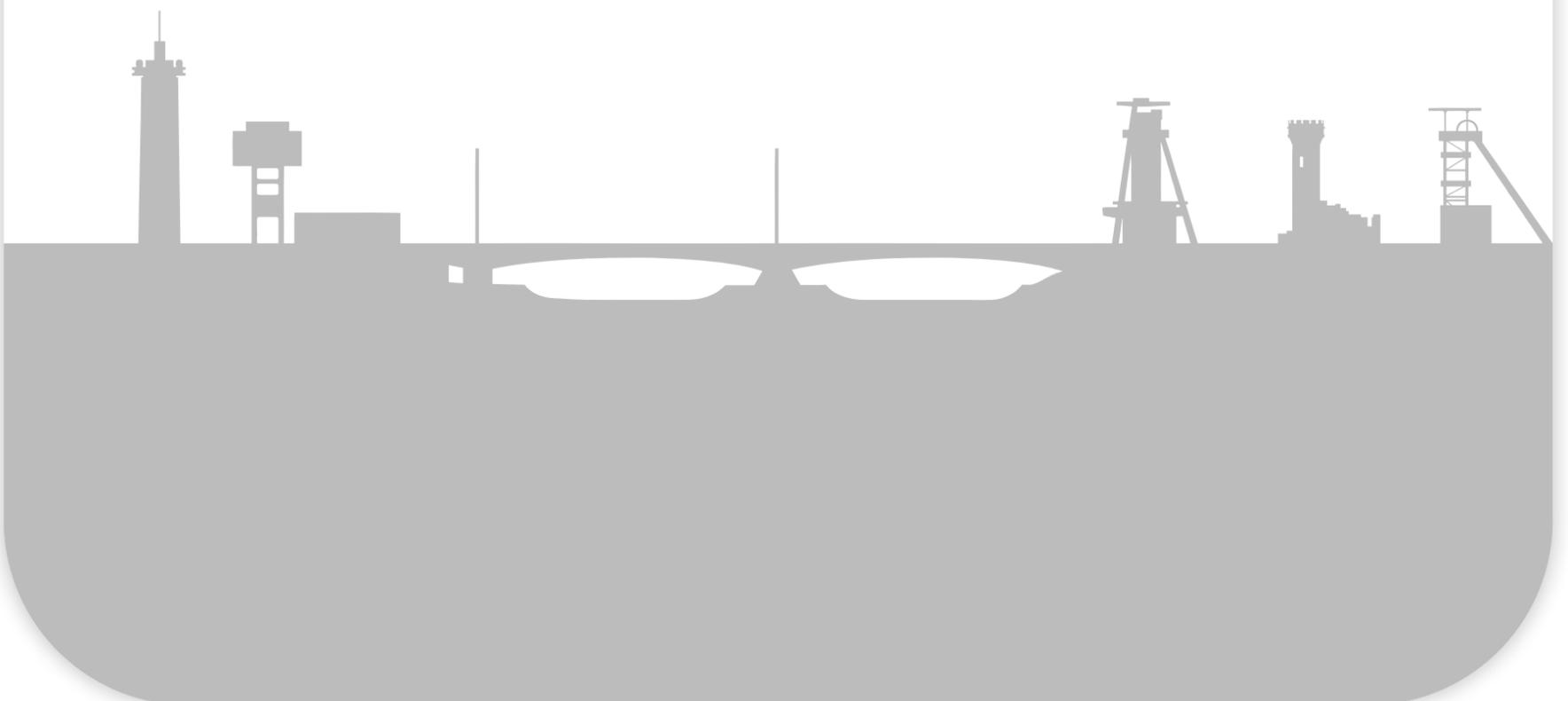
High above the fortress tower, the views extend far across over the hilly landscape of Lorraine and the Warndt. Varsberg is a place packed with German and French history: in the 12th century, the first castle was granted as a fief from the diocese of Metz to the Count of Saarbrücken. As was normal at that time, the castle was repeatedly destroyed – sometimes entirely and sometimes in part – only to be rebuilt by the new rulers again. The building as it stands today is a mix of various



styles: elements from the 13th and 15th centuries were preserved during renovation work which took place during the 19th century. The moat was uncovered, the round towers renovated and the fountain cut into the cliff secured. The Neo-Gothic burial chapel of the Stoffels family was also created at this time. Since the castle is not being operated as a monument, further renovation work rarely took account of such requirements. The rulers of the castle did not shun modern technology as shown by the remains of a central heating system in the roof trusses and the shotcrete ceilings in the coach houses.

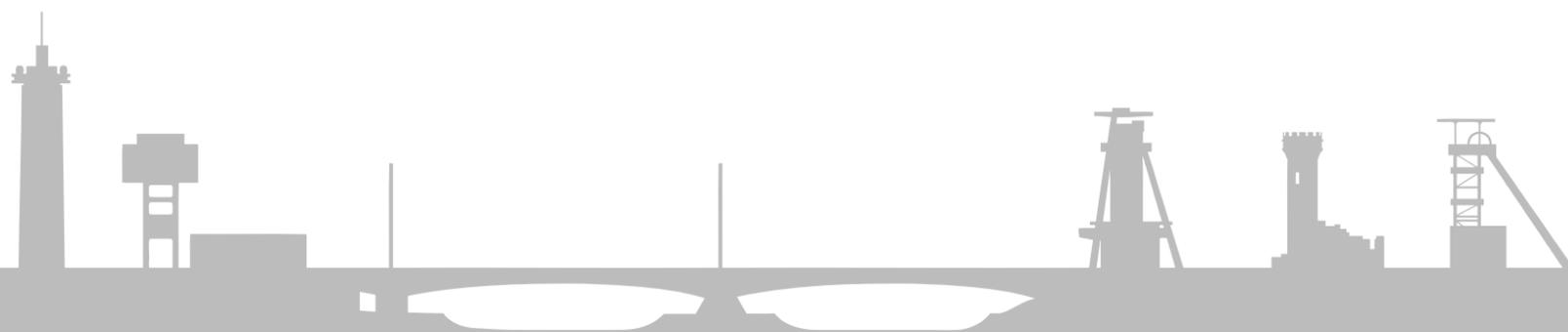
A mysterious place

From the outside, life within these old walls often appears romantic. In reality, it requires an ability to adapt, perseverance and handed-down knowledge. Daniel Schwartz, the former owner of Varsberg Castle, can talk about this for hours. The water supply, for example, is channelled from a spring in Boucheporn several kilometres away. He wonders: “How did they know that the water runs as far as the castle? In the forest when it is channelled up and down. How could they know that? Nobody knows. What use is it to me if I had a spring but the water didn’t come through?”



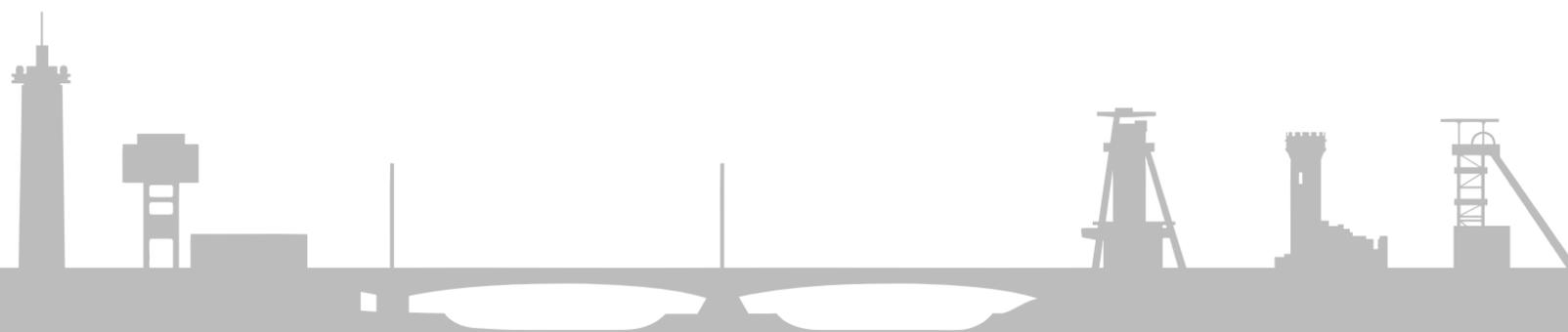
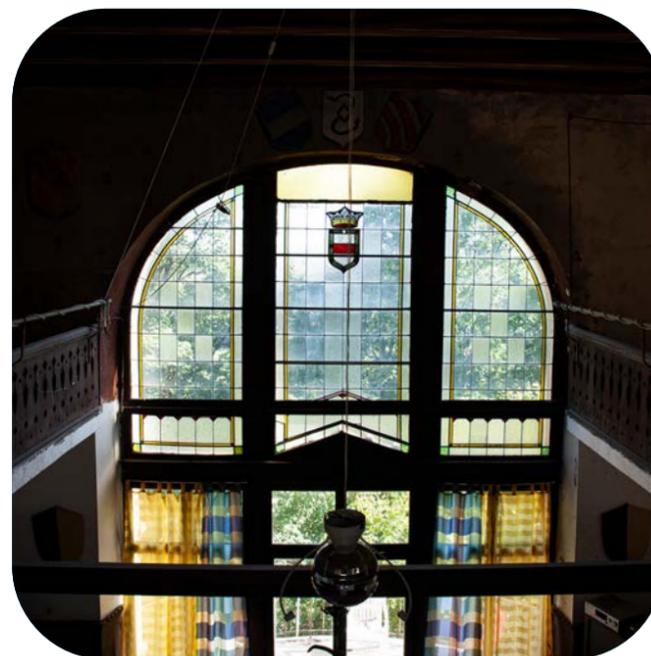
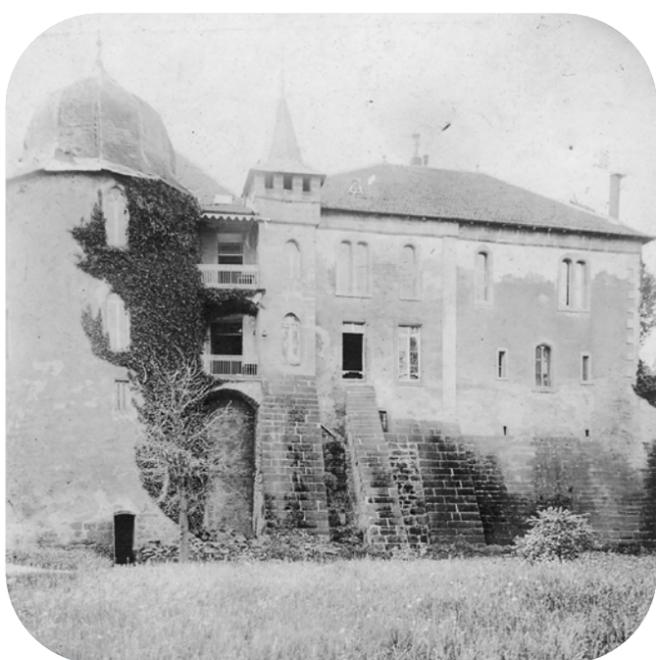
So as a youngster, he often had to head out into the forest to clear the carefully concealed pipe of any dirt, leaves and air bubbles. And only because the castle fountain was no longer a safe water supply. It was cut 100 m deep into the rock, a Herculean effort driven by the belief in accessing drinking water to make the castle self-sufficient. Legend has it that the cliff also harbours the treasures of Lorraine's branch of the Knights Templar. It remains unknown whether Varsberg Castle really belonged to the mysterious Christian order as very little has been passed down from this era.

No treasures have been found to date. Other traditions handed down should be preserved before they are forgotten: the days of Sunday dance sessions in the ballroom of the castle guesthouse and stories from the period of occupation.



Easy read

The road between Saarbrücken and Metz was an important one. That's why a castle was built here. It protected the route. The castle is very old. The residents rebuilt it over and over again. There are many old tales about the castle. Some of them are very mysterious. One tells of treasure being hidden here.



Schweizerberg



The Warndt monument on the Schweizerberg

A few stones scattered across the landscape is all that remains of this site, prominently located on a hill with wide-ranging views above the village. The once striking complex was bombed in 1947 and, over time, became covered over with grass. Until one group of school children began to reminisce about it.

An eye on France

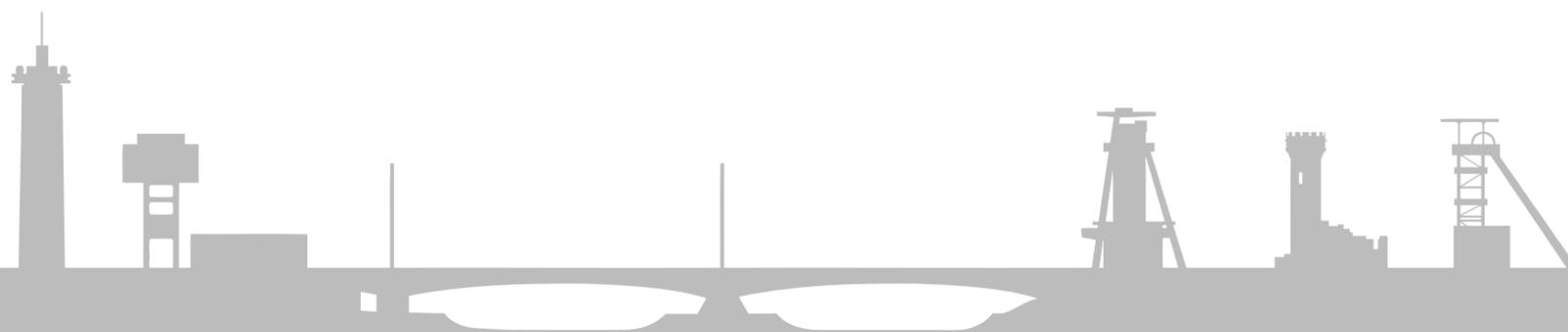
Following the defeat of the German Reich, the Saarland region fell under the rule of the League of Nations for 15 years from 1920. In 1934, just before this rule came to an end, the construction of the monument on the Schweizerberg began. It was dedicated to the 234 fallen soldiers from the seven Warndt communities who had lost their lives during the First World War.



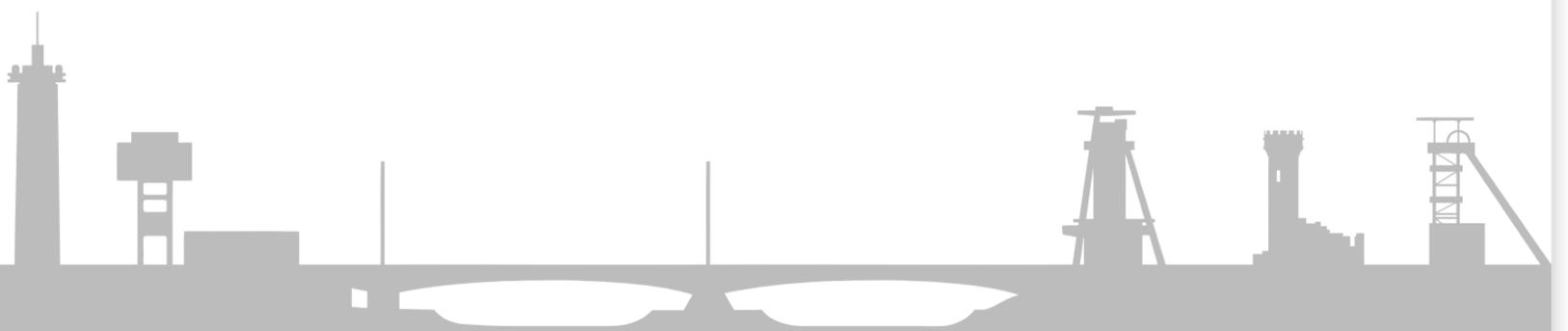
The construction was highly politicised: the design was intended to serve both as a memorial as well as a visible threatening gesture towards France. With its forecourt, bowls of flames and surrounding area, it was a classic parade ground and meeting place for the Nazis. Following the referendum and incorporation of Saarland into the German Reich, it fulfilled this purpose. Witness Gudrun Mörsdorf, born in 1936, recalls her early childhood: “When the bells chimed for High Mass on a Sunday, the Hitler Jugend were required to line up, boys and girls, and they trained there for the war. Anyone who didn’t show up was in trouble. My sisters and I didn’t go and it led to reprisals at school”.

Making the invisible visible

The significance of the location shifted with the breakdown of the Third Reich. In 1947, the memorial was removed by the French authorities as a visible sign of Nazi ideology. But the site was not quite forgotten. In the 1970s, the vantage point close to the ‘Naturfreundehaus’ (Friends of Nature) house was upgraded again. The small covered pavilion served as a refuge for hikers and a place for the local youth to meet. Only the base lasted beyond the turn of the century. The site became visibly more overgrown and

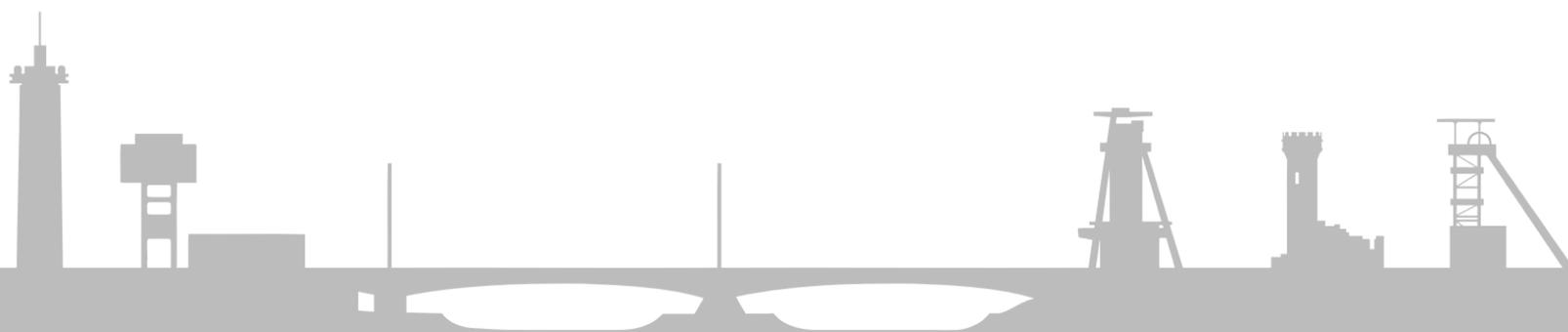
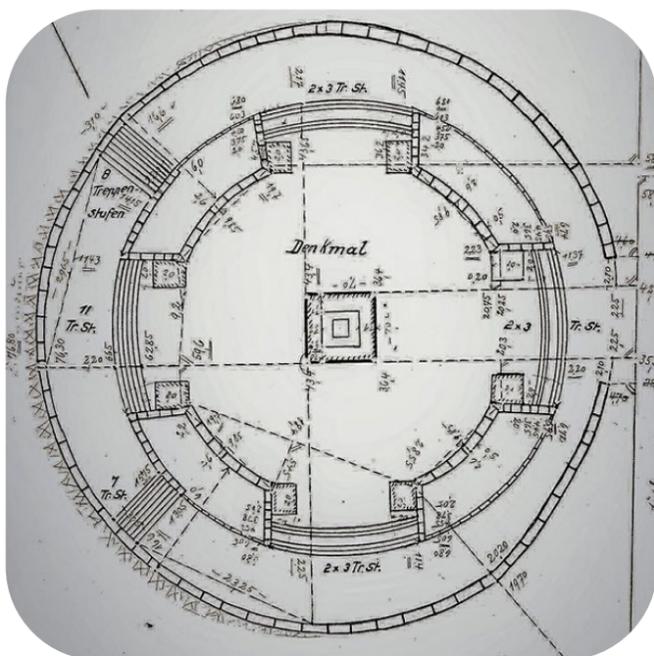


trees began to shoot up, leaving behind only a hint of the magnificent views of the area which can be found here. The uncovering of the landscape and its history brought new attention to the Schweizerberg again. As a meeting place, it should serve as a memorial to fostering understanding between nations in a united Europe.



Easy read

This was once the site of a monument. Above you can see an image of how it used to look. It was intended to honour dead soldiers. The Nazis used it as a location for events. The monument was destroyed after the Second World War. Now it should serve as a vantage point again. All people should be able to meet here in peace.



Schlossberg Tower



Schlossberg in Forbach

The Tricolour Flag can be seen blowing in the breeze above Forbach from afar. The current tower on the Schlossberg hill only reveals a mere hint of the striking castle complex which was once located here. It changed hands many times as well as being bombed, burnt down and undergoing constant change.

On the Kaiserstraße road

The Schlossberg hill is only the second-highest castle in Forbach. The Celts settled on its very slightly higher twin peak, the Kreuzberg, at an early stage. When it comes to the Roman period, remains of settlements can be identified within the current perimeters of the town. The first documented mention of a castle on the Schlossberg hill dates back to the year 1257. From here, it offered wide-ranging views over the Saar and Mosel valleys. This made it a significant waypoint



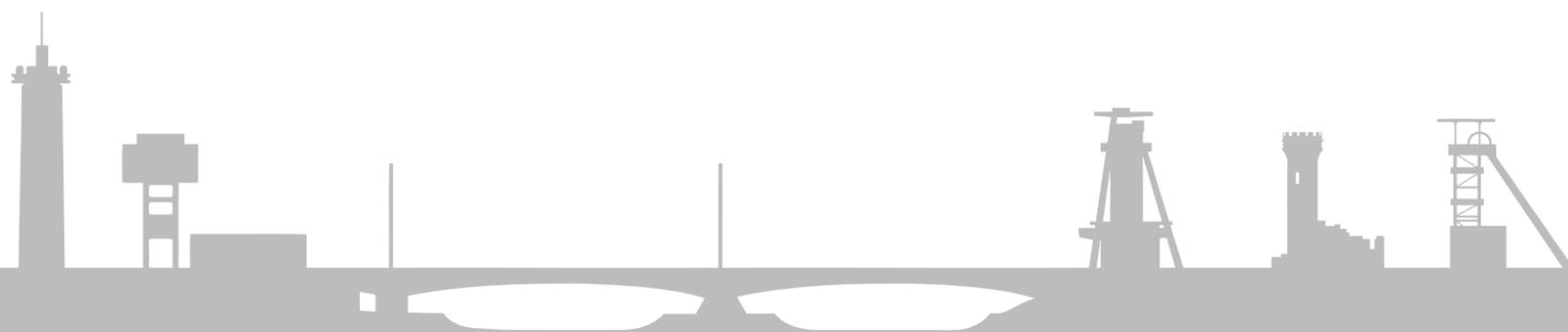
between Metz and Saarbrücken. The fortifications were heavily damaged during the Thirty Years War and in 1635 were finally demolished at the behest of Minister Richelieu. Only a few ruins remained and the stones from the castle were sold to a stone dealer. Many of the town's buildings were built or repaired with them. Even without its castle on the Schlossberg hill, Forbach remained a liege town. Its rulers included Christian IV von Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld, among others.

New rulers

The victory of the German troops in the war of 1870/71 led to Lorraine and therefore also Forbach being assimilated into the newly founded German empire. In 1886, affluent cardboard producer and businessman Gustav Jacob Adt purchased the ruins and had a beautiful park landscape installed on the Schlossberg hill. Paul Tornow, the master cathedral builder of Metz and monument conservationist of Lorraine, redesigned the former castle site in a harmonious style and created the central core of the structure. On the rounded foundation walls of the mediaeval tower, the eight-corner 'Saareck' viewing tower was built in a Neo-Gothic style along with the ballroom. Somewhat beneath, the industrialist had a castle courtyard added in a perfectly

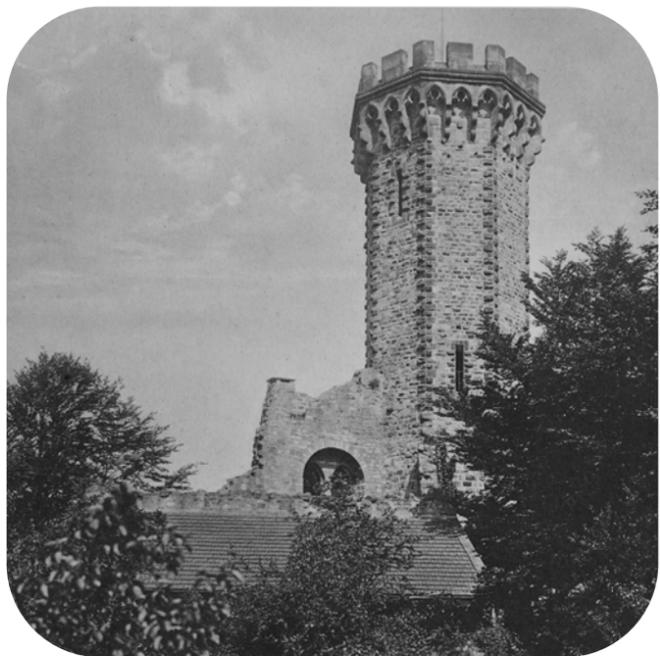


attuned mediaeval style which he used as his own estate. 90-year-old Lucien Honnert owns a script by Adt in which the tower construction is explained by the businessman. The local historian recalls the passage: “When I was standing up on the hill, there were lots of beautiful trees blocking my view. But I didn’t want to fell the beech trees so I commissioned the construction of a tower”. The bombing of the town towards the end of the Second World War hit the Schlossberg hard. Half of the tower was destroyed. The site was handed over to the town of Forbach. Parts were renovated, thereby retaining the landmark of this town.

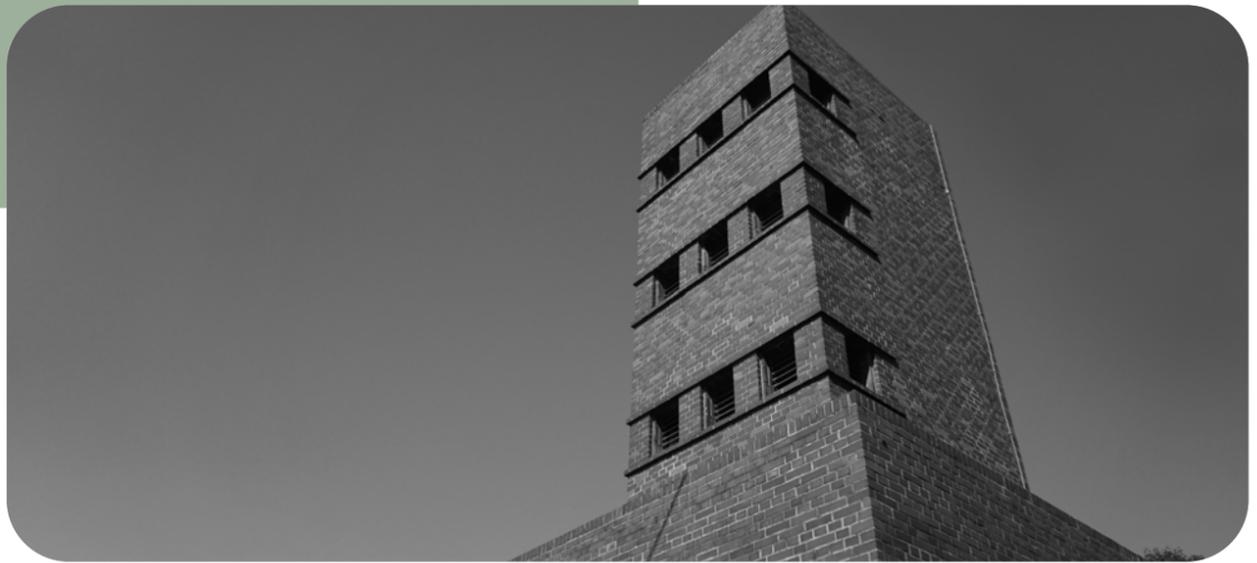


Easy read

In the past, the Schlossberg hill was home to a large castle. It was destroyed. A rich man purchased its ruins. He transformed the area into a large park and built a tall tower. From the top, you can enjoy views across to the Saar and Rossel rivers.



Hindenburg Tower

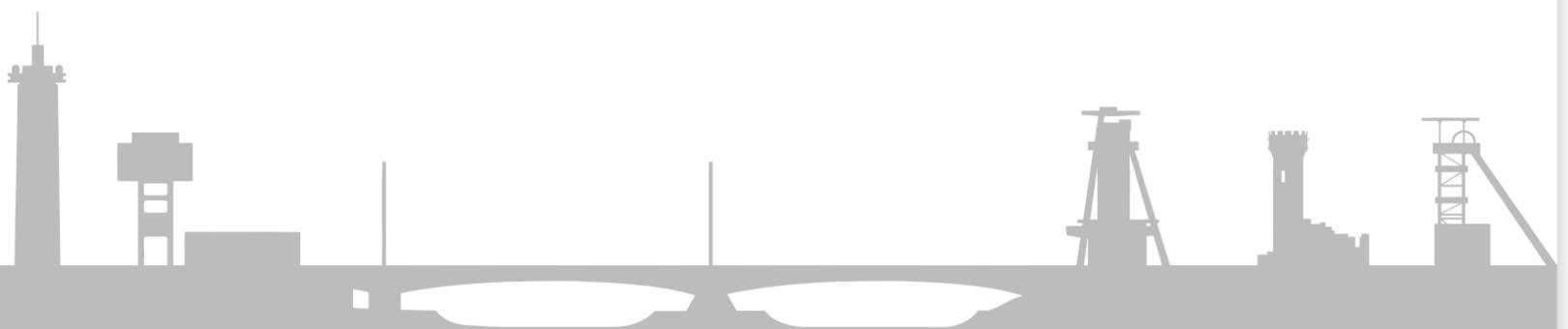


Hindenburg Tower in Riegelsberg

Some landmarks have a problematic history attached to them. This tower is one of them. The war memorial was dedicated to Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg in 1934. The Saarland region was facing a crossroads at this time.

A symbolic structure

Saarland was under the direction of the League of Nations from 1920 until 1935. The influence of France on political, economic and cultural life, paired with their de facto military occupation and new political boundaries, was regarded by many people in Saarland as a provocation. Many places expressed a feeling of belonging to Germany, as reflected in the construction of the tower. This was intended as a war memorial to the 222 fallen soldiers of the First World War from the



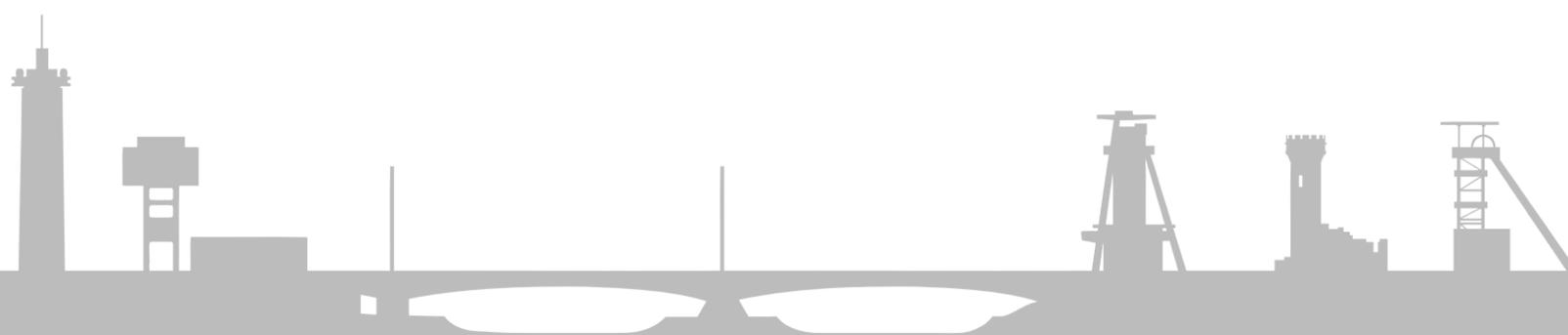
towns of Hilschbach-Güchenbach-Überhofen – now known as the community of Riegelsberg. But it also has a symbolic significance. In architectural terms, it was a copy of the Tannenberg monument which pays tribute to the victories of the German army against Tsarist Russia, under Hindenburg's direction. The tower was named after him on 2 December 1934, only a few weeks before a vote by the people of Saarland on the future of the Saarland region. They voted to return to Germany and so Saarland was incorporated into the German Reich. The Nazis took power in 1933. Hindenburg was elected as President of the German Reich in 1932 and appointed Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of the German Reich. The tower was named after Hindenburg. And the people were well aware of that.

A monument – but what for?

During the era of National Socialism, the tower was valued as a place of ideology. Following the end of the Second World War and during the French occupation, by contrast, it fell into the shadows and began to deteriorate in part. Following essential renovation works, it became accessible again from 1997. Within this context, the tower was then included in Saarland's register of monuments as representing a monument



structure typical of the era. Today, the Hindenburg Tower is defined by the community as a symbol of peace and a memorial against war. A definition which is not easy: there has been regional resistance to the use of the tower as the basis for a commemorative plaque to the fallen of the Second World War and as a location for events. It boils down to the tower's ties with its famous name and the associated question regarding the meaning of the tower: a tower is not a history book and a name honours not a monument but rather a person – in this case, a problematic one. The ambivalent yet historical role played by the tower in the region is undisputed. The dispute over the tower's name continues.



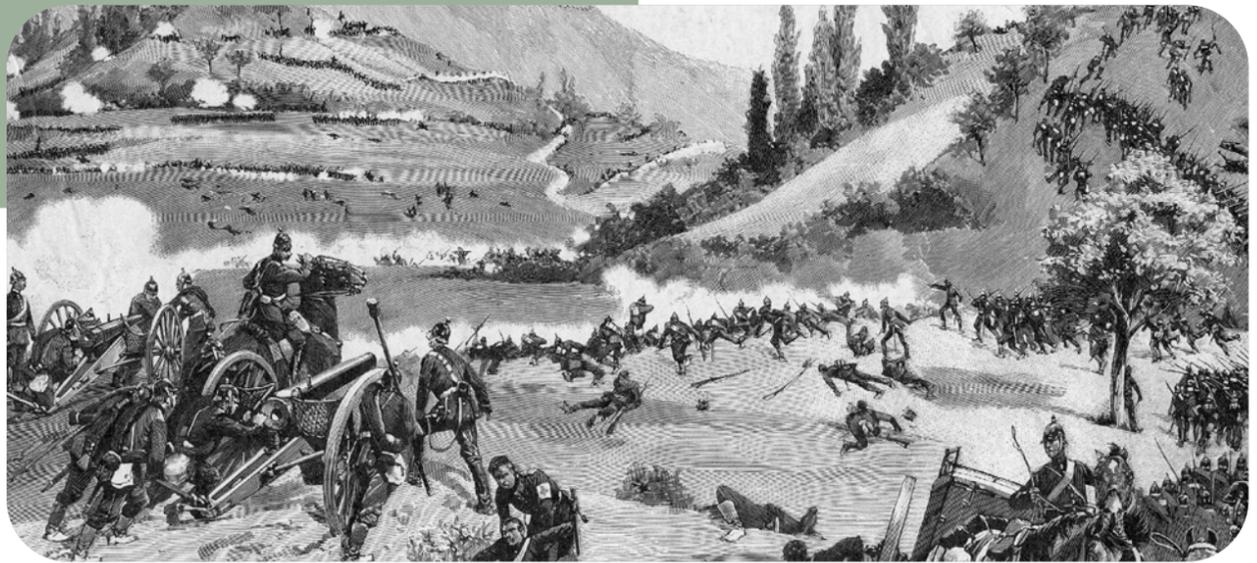
Easy read

This tower is called the Hindenburg-Tower. Paul von Hindenburg was a famous soldier. He later became president and crowned Adolf Hitler as chancellor.

The Tower was meant to remember dead German soldiers. The tower was also a memorial against France. Today, one argues what to do with this tower.



Spicheren Heights

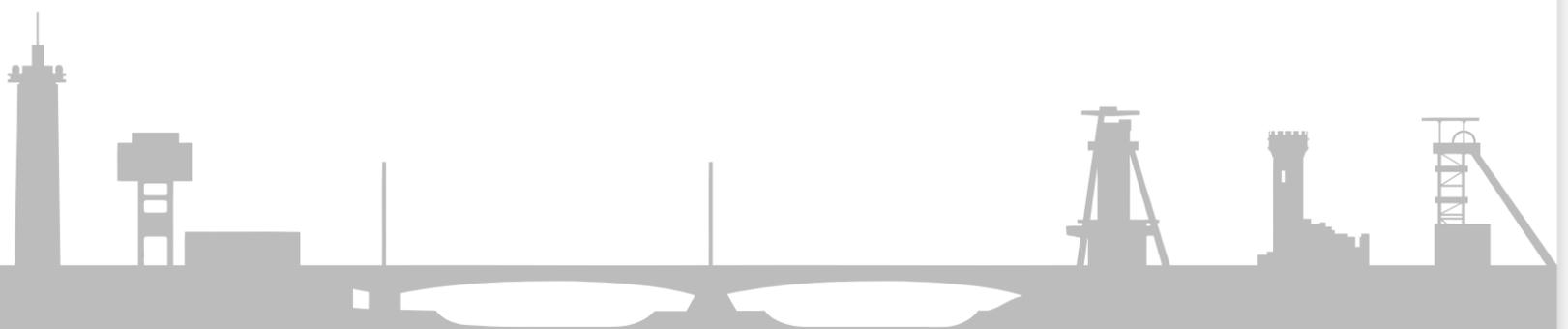


Spicherer Höhen (Spicheren Heights)

The large white cross pays tribute to the numerous victims of the wars between Germany and France and can be seen from afar. It was on the hills around Spicheren that hundreds of French and German soldiers lost their lives in 1870. And as if nothing were ever learnt from history, the area became a battlefield again during the Second World War.

War is inevitable

It is the fate of border regions for conflict to develop. The area around Spicheren, with its numerous monuments and military cemeteries, is haunting proof of this. When the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck pushed ahead with founding the German Reich using both diplomatic and military means, a dispute



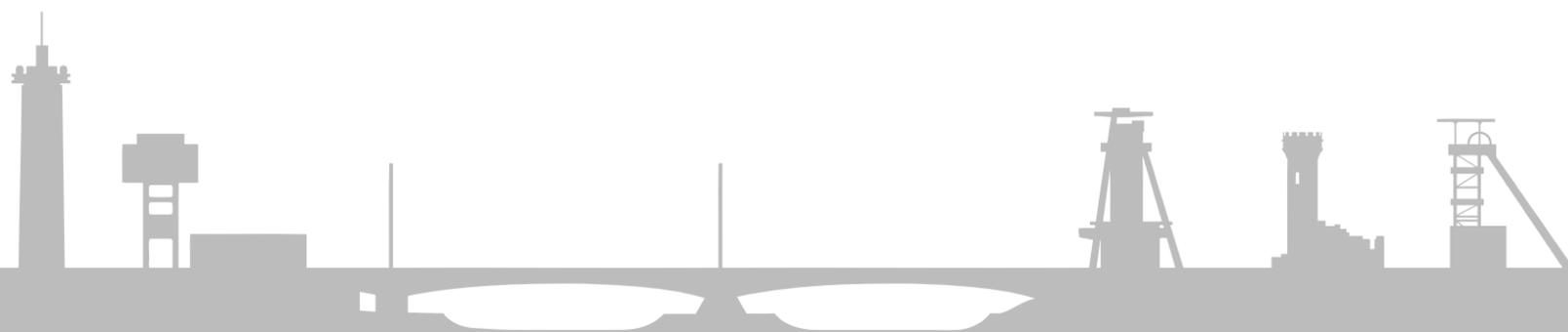
broke out between Prussia and France concerning the succession to the Spanish throne. On 19 July, the French Emperor Napoleon III declared war on Prussia. The southern German states of Baden, Bavaria, Württemberg and Hessen-Darmstadt also unexpectedly joined the war effort. Following the fights close to Saarbrücken, some 25,000 French soldiers faced fewer than 20,000 soldiers from the North German Confederation in Spicheren on 6 August. The Prussians won the upper hand after heavy fighting, benefiting from the hesitance of the French leadership under General Frossard. The consequences on both sides were considerable: on the French side, Emperor Napoleon III was captured and the Third Republic was established on 4 September 1870. On the German side, the German Reich with the Prussian King Wilhelm I as the 'German Emperor' was established on 18 January 1871. The war raged on until 10 May 1871.

Not an easy neighbourhood

“Saarbrücken was still ‘the town’ for Spicheren. It was a sales market for agricultural produce and an employer for people in the region at that time”. Local historian Édouard Klein, born in 1935, flags up the close neighbourly ties right along the border. The main



trade route was the so-called 'Milchweg' (Milk Route) which ran through the heart of the historic battlefield. The normality of this small-scale border traffic stood in direct contrast to the role of the location as a front-line battlefield: the graves of American, German and French soldiers from the Second World War bear testament to this, as do the bunkers and the white cross – a reminder of peace oriented towards the border.

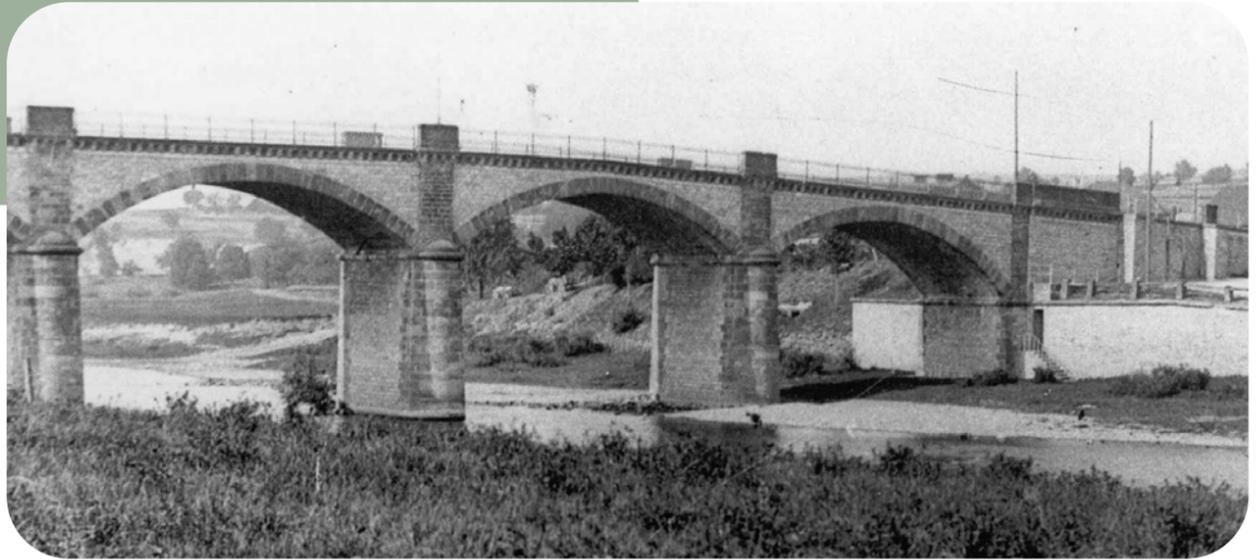


Easy read

The village of Spicheren is situated on the border. On one side is France and on the other side, Germany. This is why battles once took place here. Many people were killed. They are buried in the cemeteries in the village and in the forest. The large white cross pays tribute to the dead.



Friendship Bridge



Freundschaftsbrücke (Friendship Bridge)

Today you can quickly reach the other side on foot or by bike. The 'Friendship Bridge' spans a highway as well as the river Saar and the Saar canal. It links together what belongs together.

With, without, with again

Bliedestroff was first documented in the year 777 when it was a town which spanned opposite sides of the river banks. Towards the end of the 16th century, both sections received their own name: Kleinblittersdorf on one side because it had fewer inhabitants, and Grosbliedestroff on the other. In 1815, politics and fate intervened at the Congress of Vienna and divided one community into two. The first bridge was built in 1880. Alsace- Lorraine was then part of the German Reich. They were pleased for the workers on the right of the



river Saar who now had quick access to the train in Kleinblittersdorf. At the end of the First World War, the bridge served more as a means of connection than division. The Saarland region was under the direction of the League of Nations and border and customs controls were only introduced at the end of this rule. In 1939, the beautiful arched bridge with five bridgeheads met its end. The French military prepared to attack the German army and blew up the simple connection between the two countries. This was replaced shortly afterwards by a makeshift wooden bridge built by the troops. Between 1964 and 1993, an arched steel bridge linked the two towns but was eventually torn down to give way to the new bridge which stands in its place today. Armin Neusius was born in Kleinblittersdorf in 1943 and reflects on the time when residents were dependent on ferry services:

“It wasn’t expensive to take the ferry; at that time, it cost 10 cents for the journey there and back. But it’s much easier with the bridge. When the residents at the other side wanted to come over, they had to shout and wait for the ferry lady to head down the stairs. It all took some time!”



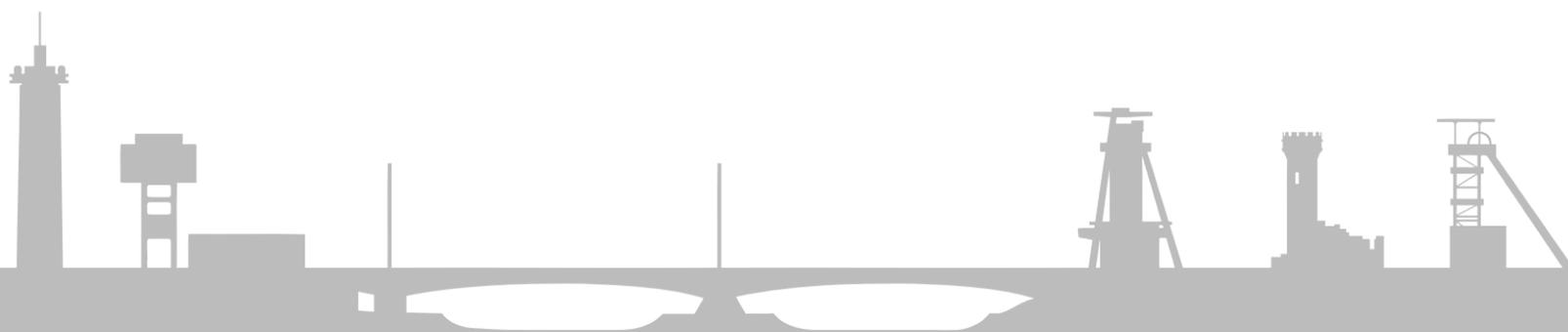
All good fun

Neusius also says that the often complicated border situation had another side to it – as he explains with a grin. Together with his friends from ‘Die Grünschnäbel’ carnival society, he established the free town of Carnevalis on a 30 m² island in the river Saar in 1982. It had everything a republic needs: its own stamps and coins, ministers and even diplomatic relations with its neighbouring states – its most famous visitor was probably the former German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher. He poured himself a beer from the ‘Wurstbaum’ (sausage tree) and, in doing so, secured his honorary citizenship. Not much remains of Carnevalis and attempts to auction off the small state on an auction platform failed. Only a plaque bears witness to its past. It states: “The legendary free state of Carnevalis sank here due to global warming after 33 years in existence”.



Easy read

The village of Bliedestroff is divided by a river. The bridge links both sides of the village. One part is situated in France and the other in Germany. There were once various bridges located here. They were then destroyed. After that, a ferry was used to cross the river. But that was more difficult. There is also a small island in the river.



Hoferkopf

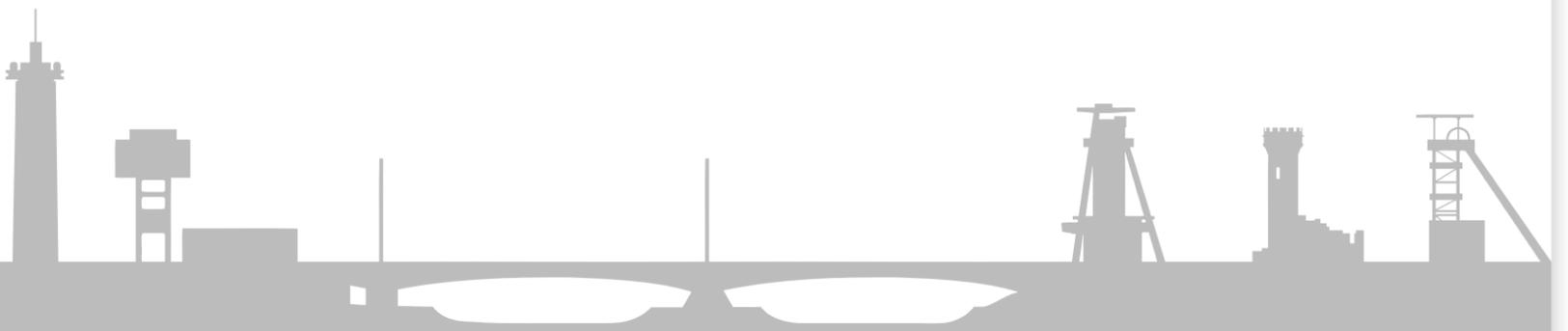


Hoferkopf – Friedrichsthal

Imagine standing at a position 20 m higher than you are now with wonderful views to admire. That was something which happened previously on the Hoferkopf hill. Many times. The views even impressed Goethe and regularly attracted people from the surrounding area over a period of 100 years.

A barren sandy mound

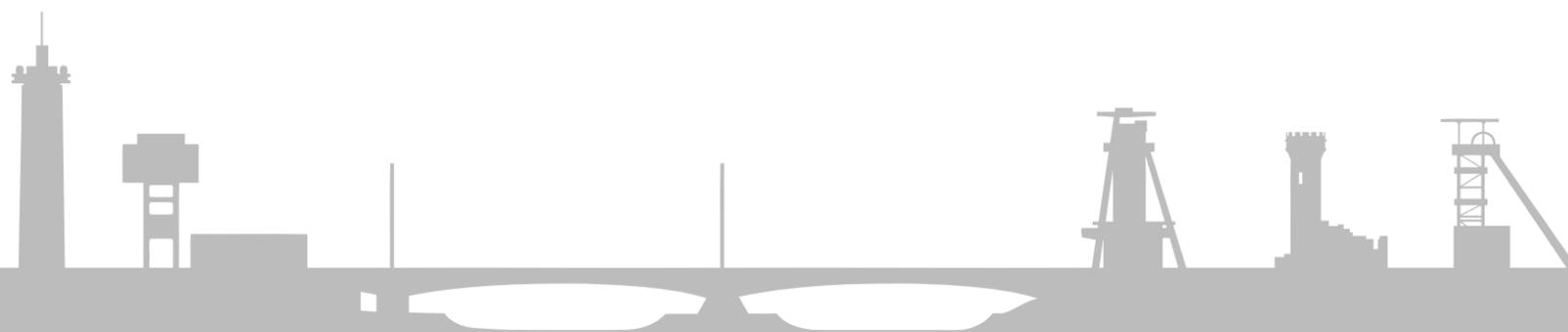
Lush forest and good quartz sand provided the best conditions for glass production. Friedrichsthal had both and the glassworks built here by Count Friedrich Ludwig von Nassau-Ottweiler in 1723 became a nucleus in the community. Situated between the seats of power in Saarbrücken and Ottweiler, the sandy mound on the Hoferkopf offered magnificent panoramic views from the top. Even Goethe was able to enjoy views across



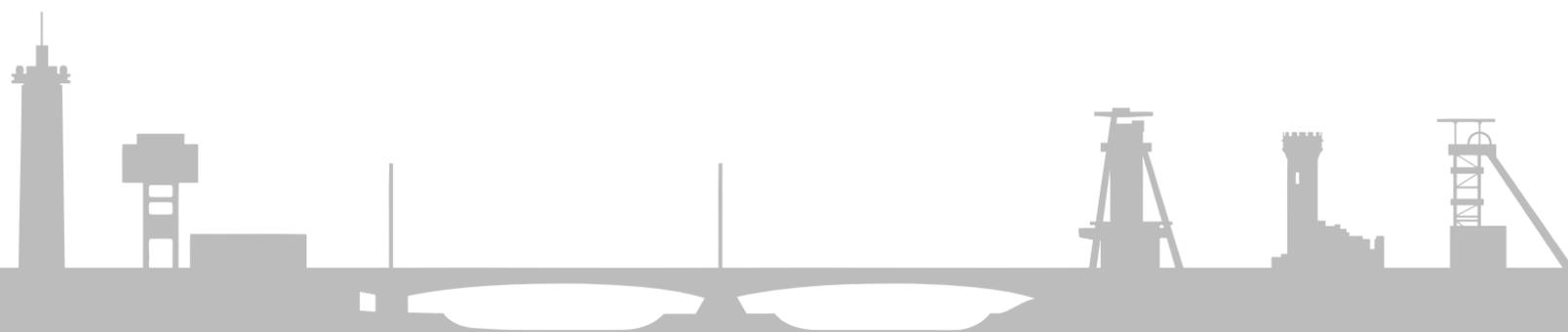
to Neunkirchen's ironworks on his travels through the region. Few chimneys were smoking at that time. This changed following the opening of more and more glassworks and the triumphant success of coal. Soon there was smoke everywhere and the people found welcome respite high up on the Hoferkopf hill. In 1922, the local 'Saarwaldverein' (Saar Forest Association) was founded and the area began to be improved. Its highlight was the construction of the first viewing tower in 1931 which offered wide-ranging views extending as far as the Vosges. "You have to imagine: Previously, Friedrichsthal was home to chimney after chimney and mine after mine. There was a coking plant in Altenwald as well as in Heinitz. That means: there was smoke being emitted here constantly. And the local people naturally needed nature and their leisure time. And then there was this barren mound. And so the Hoferkopf was redeveloped as a pleasant place to spend some time, take a walk and relax," explains Helmut Quint of the Saar Forest Association in Bildstock.

Heading downhill

The strategic location of this hill made it ideal for military use. During the Second World War, Russian prisoners of war were deployed to secure the Hoferkopf and

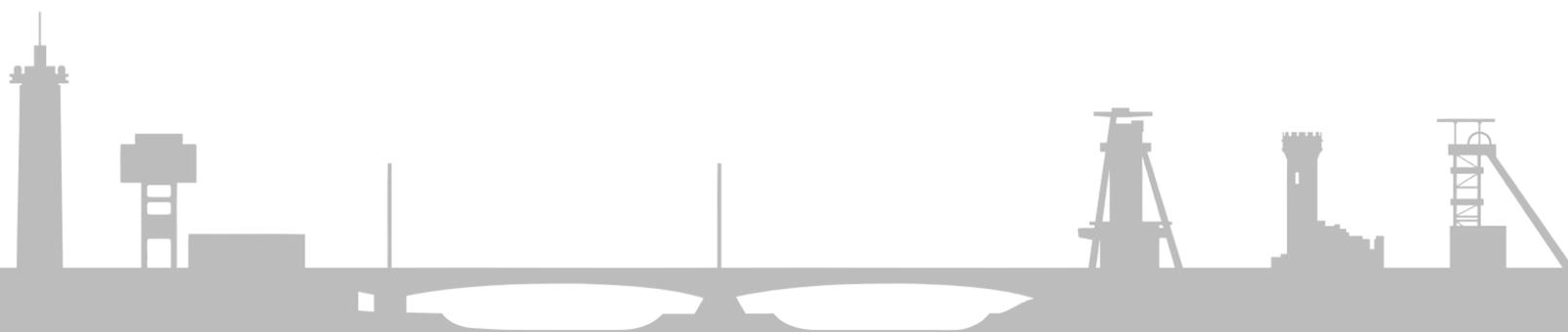


dig numerous bunkers in the mountain. Another relict with roots dating from this time is the chapel. The local people vowed to build a church should Friedrichsthal be spared from the bombardments. The hollowing out of the hilltop by the military and miners, however, took its toll. The terrain subsided by almost 20 m. In 1972, the solid wooden tower had to be dismantled and the community lost its landmark. 22 years passed before the 'Technisches Hilfswerk' (civil protection organisation) build a new tower. However, due to its open structure, this became rotten after two decades and also had to be demolished. Since then, a local initiative has been campaigning heavily for the construction of a third tower on the Hoferkopf.



Easy read

The Hoferkopf is a hill in Friedrichsthal. Sand was once mined here. This was then used to make glass. The hill offers beautiful views. Various viewing towers were therefore constructed here over the years. Many people came here to recuperate. Today there is no longer a tower here.



Impressum

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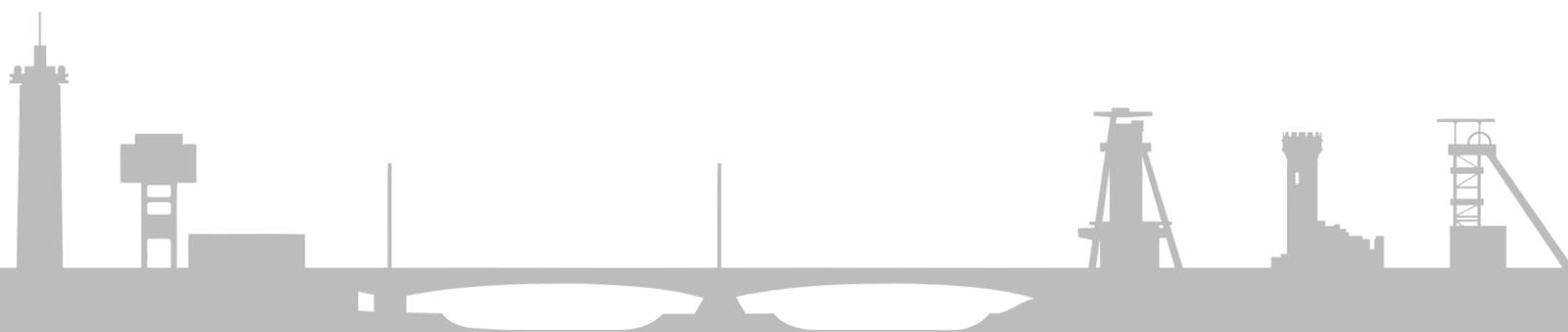
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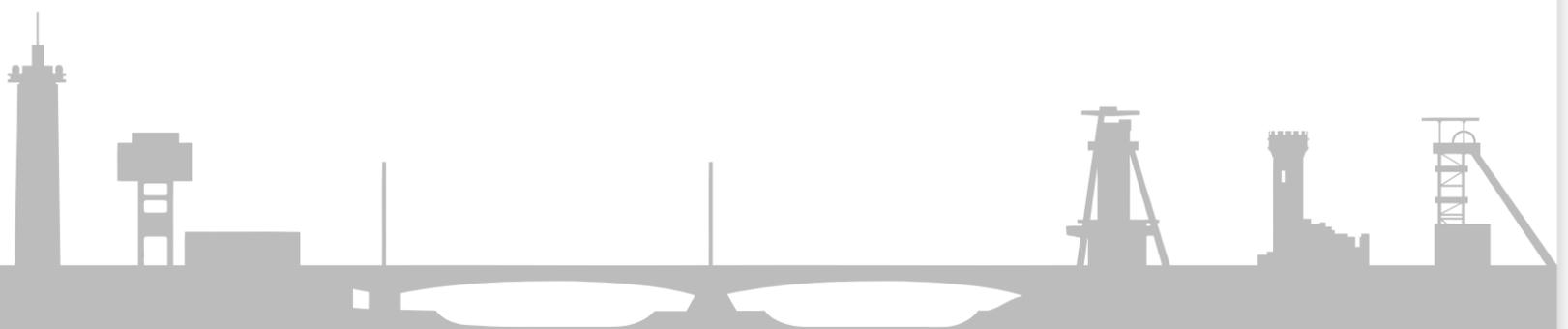
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