



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNELS INTERNATIONAL **BACKGROUND ON NAZI WAR DIGGERS**

National Geographic Channel International's series **Nazi War Diggers** investigates history at the sites of some of the most intense battles of World War II. Unfortunately, a video excerpt from our show posted on our website did not provide important context about our team's methodology. This series operates in direct conjunction with organizations officially licensed to excavate battlefield sites and adhered to their procedures. All of the excavation featured in the series, including handling of human remains, was supervised by representatives from these organizations, which act under the authority of their country's government and are also backed by the official German and Russian war graves commissions.

Our team's operation is in direct contrast to illegal digging and looting of battle sites, commonly referred to as "black digging," which is a real and ongoing concern in these areas. Despite misinformation being circulated, our show will in fact demonstrate the need for the activities portrayed to be done in an authorized and legal manner. This will be a point of emphasis in the opening of each show, and the series will be complemented by a robust website further exercising this point.

In addition, during filming, our production crew remained in close contact with local museums, including the Latvian War Museum. All relics uncovered by the team were cataloged and photographed and are now in safe storage. Items have been offered to museums. No items were trafficked or sold. The human remains found in the series will be reburied with due ceremony in military cemeteries under the supervision of the relevant war graves commissions.

(Translated) Statement from Talis Esmits, leader of the military archaeology team Legenda, the official Latvian digging organization authorized to recover World War II MIAs by the German and Russian war graves commissions: "The National Geographic team worked at all times under the supervision of Legenda, which operates under permission from the government of Latvia and Brotherhood Cemetery Committee to recover missing soldiers of the Second World War. Digging without authorization and disruption of remains and means of identification is a persistent problem at battle sites across Eastern Europe. I can confirm the sites featured in the series are not designated to be of national cultural heritage interest and protected, and can be excavated under official license. The licenses were given by Brotherhood Cemetery Committee, which is acting based on intergovernmental agreement between Latvia and Germany, and Latvia and Russia. All these licenses were registered in local municipalities and agreed with landowners."

(Translated) Statement from Tomasz Czabanski, President of Pomost archaeological association in Poland: "Pomost Association is an organization dedicated to Polish-German reconciliation. We work on behalf of German People's Union for Care of War Graves from Kassel (VDK). The work we do is on their behalf and for their benefit. These jobs are carried out under existing permits in Poland from the Polish official authorities. These jobs are carried out by the members of our association including archaeologists and historians. The episode for National Geographic relating to work in Poland was filmed with our consent, in accordance with the permit issued by the Volksbund (VDK) press department from Kassel. The works were carried out under our constant supervision and according to Polish procedures."