# HISTORY AND MEMORY

## THE KARVINÁ-DOLY CEMETERY

The original local cemetery, established in the Middle Ages, was probably located right next to the Church of St. Peter of Alcantara. However, when Karvinná began to grow rapidly thanks to coal mining, the cemetery's capacity was no longer sufficient. A Catholic (later municipal) cemetery was thus established in the place where you are now standing. At the end of the 19th century, the district governor's office in Fryštát issued the official permit for the cemetery to operate..

The old settlement of Karvinná largely disappeared due to mining subsidence during the second half of the 20th century. Along with the former coal mine sites and the iconic leaning church, the cemetery is now the most visible evidence of the previous existence of this large community.
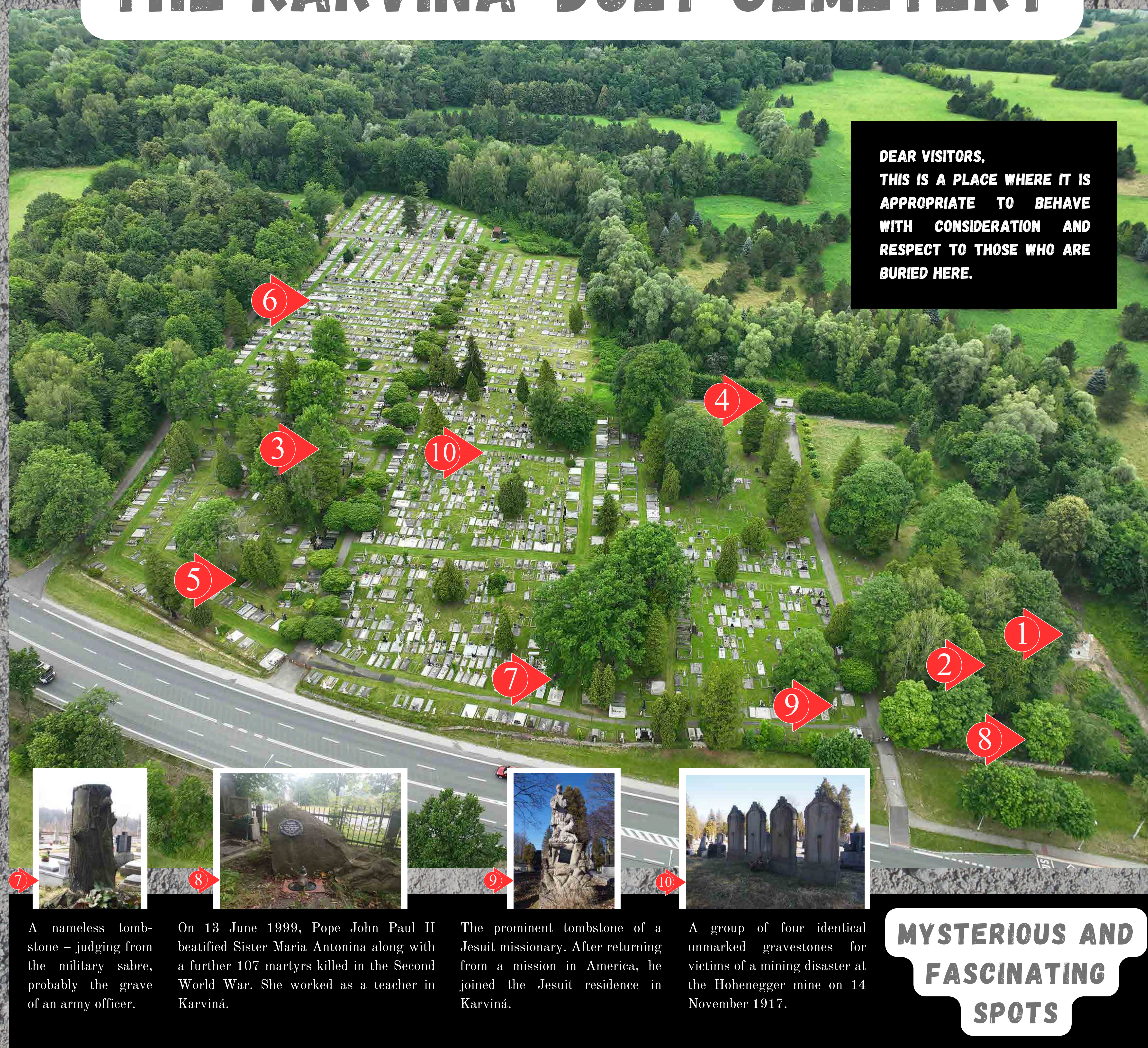
This final resting place has paradoxically survived the town's turbulent history, and it has become a place of memory for the local community. It is still used by the town's residents, and it also contains a number of historic tombstones and memorials documenting the 20th century in all its complexity.

Visitors can see inscriptions and names in Czech, Polish and German (the languages that were historically spoken in the region), though there are also names from Italy and other countries, belonging to people who moved here for work. The cemetery is the resting place of many miners and labourers, and it commemorates several mining disasters – a tragic aspect of this region's history.

Resting alongside them are important municipal officials, doctors, teachers and businesspeople, as well as representatives of the Church and political parties.

The cemetery also commemorates the most traumatic period in Karviná's history – the years of the Nazi occupation – with a memorial to Soviet prisoners of war and graves honouring the victims of wartime bombing or those who were murdered by the occupiers.

In some parts of the cemetery, the historical memory has already faded and been lost. In these mysterious spots, visitors can only speculate about the stories lying behind the tombstones that are now nameless.

**DEAR VISITORS,
THIS IS A PLACE WHERE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO BEHAVE WITH CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT TO THOSE WHO ARE BURIED HERE.**


**7** A nameless tombstone – judging from the military sabre, probably the grave of an army officer.


**8** On 13 June 1999, Pope John Paul II beatified Sister Maria Antonina along with a further 107 martyrs killed in the Second World War. She worked as a teacher in Karviná.


**9** The prominent tombstone of a Jesuit missionary. After returning from a mission in America, he joined the Jesuit residence in Karviná.


**10** A group of four identical unmarked gravestones for victims of a mining disaster at the Hohenegger mine on 14 November 1917.

## MYSTERIOUS AND FASCINATING SPOTS

## MEMORIAL SITES


**1** ### Memorial to the victims of the mining disaster of 14 June 1894

This memorial commemorates the most tragic mining disaster that ever happened in Karviná, which claimed an unbelievable 235 lives. The disaster struck three coal mines owned by Count Jindřich Larisch-Mönnich – the Františka, Hlubina and Jan-Karel mines.

**2** ### Grave and memorial to the victims of the mining disaster of 16 March 1895


This memorial commemorates 52 miners who died in a gas explosion caused by the detonation of dynamite in an underground explosives store at Archduke Bedřich's Hohenegger mine.


**3** ### Grave and memorial to the victims of the mining disaster of 12 April 1924

Listed as a cultural monument, this memorial consists of a wall with pylons, a dedication in marble, and commemorative plaques bearing the victims' names. The disaster at the Gabriela mine (renamed the UNRRA mine after the war) unfolded over a period of three days; it started with a fire, which caused several explosions. The first explosion killed 15 miners who were reinforcing a wall to prevent the spread of the fire. The subsequent explosions caused extensive and permanent material damage.

**4** ### Tomb and memorial to Soviet prisoners of war


Listed as a cultural monument, this memorial features a black marble plaque bearing the names of 75 Red Army soldiers taken captive during the World War II. The memorial is situated among the graves. The region had several prisoner-of-war camps during the Second World War. Many of the inmates were Soviet soldiers, who were held in appalling conditions and forced to work in the mines or on factory-building projects.


**5** ### The grave of Dr. Wacław Olszak

Dr. Olszak was a doctor, a Polish patriot and a politician. He was the mayor of Karvinná from 1929 to 1936. He was the doctor to the Larisch-Mönnich family, who were prominent local aristocrats. He died after being interrogated under torture by the Gestapo.


**6** ### Grave and memorial to the victims of the occupation

This grave and commemorative plaque honours the citizens of Karviná who were murdered by the Nazis. There are also individual victims' graves.