

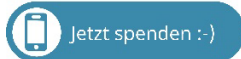
## On the road for peace: 3,441 kilometers by bike to Cannock Chase

*David Kumar collects donations for the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund) on his tour through Western Europe*

**The app shows 3,441 kilometers as David Kumar sets off on his bike from Bremen's main train station on Saturday. His destination is the Volksbund work camp in Cannock Chase, UK. On his tour through Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, he will visit war graves and other memorial sites, promote the Volksbund and collect donations for its work.**

"I'm nervous and excited. The tour is much longer than the ones I did before," says the 32-year-old. He has long been active in the Volksbund's regional association in Bremen, has been involved in the local youth group and participated in work camps in Cannock Chase several times.

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The idea for a fundraising tour was born in an English pub. Three years ago, the young man from Bremen was cycling across the island when he got involved in a conversation with a local. He asked him about the purpose of his unusual trip. At that time, the tour was purely an end in itself, just for the joy of traveling by bike. "The man gave me the idea of combining a long-distance tour with a mission, with a good cause," says Kumar. That good cause is now the Volksbund. Kumar wants to draw attention to the organization. He wants people to donate for the NGO's work.

The Bremen native knows from his own experience that the work of the Volksbund is important. He also knows that the association is constantly dependent on donations and membership fees and that the sums in both fields are declining. With his commitment David Kumar wants to help and get younger people involved in the Volksbund.

"It is important to deal with the history of one's own country," is his conviction. People should also look at international relations and ways of living together peacefully.

### **Same start - same goal**

At the same time as David Kumar, a coach sets off from Bremen on July 29. On board: 20 work camp participants on their way to Cannock Chase. The teenagers will spend two weeks tending graves at the German war gravesite, learning about the lives of the soldiers and the historical background. David Kumar's plan is to arrive there on time for the "Night of Friendship" on August 10.

The Bremen native feels a special bond with the military cemetery in Central England. Several years ago, during a Volksbund work camp, he met relatives of a soldier buried in Cannock Chase. Moved by this encounter and the story behind the gravestone, Kumar promised the family that he would lay a rose at the

grave of the fallen soldier during each future visit to Stafford - a promise to which he feels committed. "I will bring flowers to the grave this summer again," the young Bremen resident resolves.

### **Route along historical sights**

Before there is time for this gesture, David Kumar must pedal strongly. Several prominent sites lie on his route: from Bremen, he rides to Ypres in Belgium - a town that exemplifies the horrors of World War I. There he wants to visit the Menin Gate (Menenpoort) as a memorial to the unknown fallen soldiers of the Commonwealth.

The tour continues via Compiègne in France, where a cease-fire was concluded twice: in 1918 when the end of WWI was sealed and in 1940 when the German Western campaign resulted in the occupation of France.

### **On both sides of the English Channel**

After a stop in Paris, the route continues to Normandy. There, David Kumar visits the legendary "Omaha Beach", the nearby American military cemetery and the German war gravesite La Cambe.

From France, Kumar's journey leads across the English Channel to Southwest England, to the city of Plymouth. Passing Stonehenge, the young man from Bremen finally continues toward Stafford, where the work camp participants await him.

While the group of teenagers travel back to Bremen by bus comfortably, David Kumar starts his journey home again by bicycle. The next stops are London, Dover, and Calais. In France, the young man wants to visit one last memorable place: the Douaumont Ossuary. This is where the bones of more than 130,000 unidentified French and German soldiers from the Battle of Verdun are kept.

By the time the young man sets course for Bremen again, he will have visited important sites in 20th-century European history, looked out on battlefields and stood in front of graves. But above all, the young cyclist will have made his personal mark for peace.

David Kumar appreciates anyone who supports his tour with a donation or spreads the word in their networks. Those who would like to follow him on the route can find frequent updates on the Volksbund Facebook page. Thank you for supporting our work for peace!

### **Join us and run for peace!**

Do you want to actively support the work of the Volksbund? Then take part in the "Running for Peace" campaign from September 1 to 21. Everybody can participate - when, where, how far and how fast is up to you. Walk, jog or cycle for peace - donate and enter your kilometers online - just like David Kumar does when he returns to Bremen.

Learn more:

