



Dear reader,

We're in the middle of interesting events like D-Day, "Market Garden" and many others, but meanwhile life continues and many things have happened around the bunkers and forts.

Enjoy it!

Frank Philippart

## **Fortendag Memorial 2004**

2004 is a remarkable year, full of celebrations and commemorations for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World-War I and the 60<sup>th</sup> of the liberation of Belgium.

In that framework the Simon Stevinstichting organised this year its third fortification fair together with the vzw Fort Liezele. The centre of activity was the fort of Liezele. This is a fort of the outer circle around Antwerp that was constructed in 1912. It was equipped with armoured copula's with 15 cm, 7.5 cm, 5.7 cm guns and 12 cm howitzers. It is the best preserved fort of its kind around Antwerp. The association has done great work with restoring it and by reconstructing a troop room, a command post, a combat post and many other things.

Military vehicles of the Second World-War stood in front of the fort's entrance and inside there were exhibitions of the Atlantik Wall and the fort of Liezele in 1914. Last but not least 23 associations and book-shops from Belgium and abroad participated in the fair : the Simon Stevinstichting, De Krijger, Fort de Hollogne, Fort d'Embourg, Fort de Lantin, Fort de Loncin, Fort de Flémalle, Fort d'Aubin Neufchâteau, Fort Eben-Emael, Raversijde, Fort 4, Fort Napoleon, Fort Kessel, Vesting Ieper, Fort Napoleon (SVE), VCM, Menno van Coehoorn stichting (NL), Fort aan de Hoek van Holland (NL), AAOFLM Fermont (F), Fort de Seclin (F), Cité d'Aleth (St Malo) (F), Musée Message Verlaine Tourcoing (F), Fort de Verny (F) and Mimoyecques (F).

The WEATHER was splendid and we welcomed about 5000 visitors to the fort and the fair.

Many thanks to the participants and to the visitors !!!



**The fair inside.**



**Military vehicles outside.**



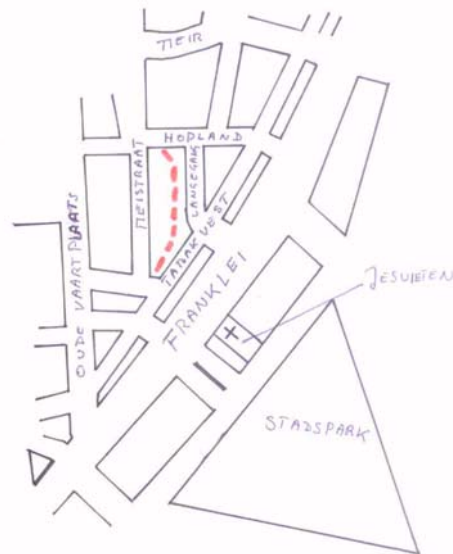
The majority of the participants

### Tunnel to the bunkers in Antwerp?

For years a story has gone around that there is a tunnel from the Jesuit college leading to the bunkers in the city park of Antwerp. For those who do not know the city : the college and the park are separated by a road. In the park stand three St bunkers, a crew bunker 622 and two command bunkers 608. Inside them I have not seen a tunnel entrance.

However, some time ago Mr Jean-Marie Wilten told me that his father was chief-constable in Antwerp during the war and just after the liberation his father took him to a tunnel cut by the resistance through the cellars of several houses to get closer to the city park.

See the dotted line on the plan  
Maybe the secret is now finally resolved?



### Mortar bunker is disappearing...

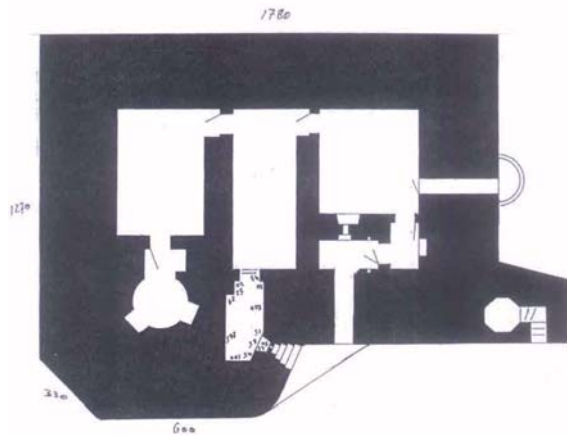
When you enter the Dutch city of Breskens at the Schelde estuary you certainly will see the huge mortar bunker on the left in the middle of a crop field. It is a Regelbau 633, designed for the 5 cm mortar M19. The bunker has walls of 3 m all around and it has still its armoured copula for the mortar. At the entrance you see the bunker number with the indication 633 and the number of the building area. Unfortunately there was no



further equipment available, except for one German non-technical text painted on one of the walls.



The bad news is that the bunker is being demolished together with an ammunition bunker 607 close by. Breskens belongs to the city Sluis. What is the background to this story? Our Dutch colleagues from the Stichting Bunkerbehoud have already done a good job by taking a councillor and two researchers to the bunker sites. They agreed that a proposal should be put forward for the bunkers to be classified as historic monuments and for them to be integrated into a cycle- and foot path. On the other hand the bunker stood on the grounds of a house-building association and a demolition agreement was granted in May 2004! Rather strange that the councillor mentioned the plans about the mortar bunker without the one who granted the demolition agreement reacting to it. (This is again proof that money speaks!)



As it stands the demolition has been

stopped for a short period because there was something wrong with the wording of the demolition agreement. Meanwhile the Stichting Bunkerbehoud looks for assistance from the province, the Ministry of Monuments (Rijksdienst voor Monumentenzorg) and others. To be continued.

Source : Stichting Bunkerbehoud

## Actual situation of some bunker sites at the Pas-de-Calais

Date of observation : 25 September 2004.

- **Battery Friedrich August.** The foundations of the first casemate and casemate 2 are still there, but on the cattle field in front of the foundation, there is now a large warehouse.

- **Dom bunker of Wimille.** Still present.

- **Battery Todt.** There is a big pile of sand in front of the entrance of Turm IV, but it is still easily accessible. The earth has been removed from the staircase in front of the embrasure and luckily there is no new damage to the fresco's inside. The owner has



created a floor in the gun room on which various guns has been exhibited amongst which a nice American 4.7 cm anti-tank gun.

- **Stp Pinguin and WN Otter at Blériot Plage.** The bunkers are still closed since last year. The sand dunes are gaining on the sea.

- **Battery Oldenburg.** The bunkers are closed since last year, but someone told me that one of the large casemates has been opened again. The hospital floor of the Fire control post is also open again and someone is busy opening the entrance to the upper level again. Somebody else has heard that the port of Calais is going to expand and it might be possible that Oldenburg becomes endangered.

- **Stp Norbert at Le Tape Cul.** No changes to the army coastal battery.

- **The fire control post of battery Oye Plage.** Still present. The fence has been broken, so that you can walk around again.

- **Stp Luise at Grand Fort Philippe.** No changes

## **Maginot news**

\* The members of the small work **Rohrbach or Fort Casso** are intensively working to renovate Bloc 3 with the machine gun turret. They hope to open the bloc half way through next year.

\* At the shop of Fort Casso I bought a new book about the larg work **Simserhof**. "Le Simserhof, découverte d'un ouvrage Maginot du Pays de Bitche". The authors are Alain Hohnadel and Jean-Yves Mary. It has 60 pages and was published in June 2002. It describes the history of the Maginot Line, the fort with its different components and the events of June 1940. The book is well illustrated with cut-away views and photo's, all in colour. I paid 9 EUR for it

## **Bulgarian coast defense**

Who can tell us more about coastal -defences on the Black Sea in Bulgaria?

In Albena on the north of the Black Sea coast (near Romania) we found behind the 'Orchidea Park Hotel and close to the 'Arabella Villas' a small concrete coastAL defence. The exterior dimensions are approximately 4,5m x 3,5m. The bunker has 1 entrance protected with an internal (removed) sliding door and defended by 4 positions for machinegunS. The concrete wall- and roof thickness measure about 1 meter. The 4 gun positions are similar, protected inside by a small vertical sliding steel plate. Under those fire positions there is a horizontal reservation in the concrete wall probably for a wooden plate/table, which had to be incorporated and fixed with mortar.



# WMF News

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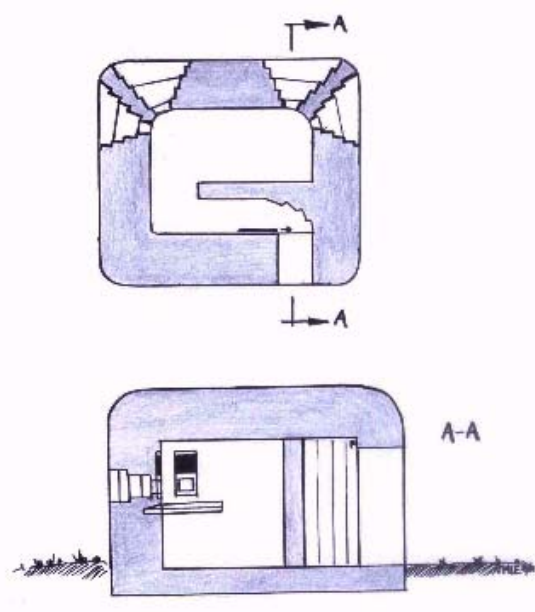
Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

If you know more about Bulgaria's coastal defences and if you have more information about those concrete bunkers, then we would be grateful if you would send your answers to the following WMF-e-mail [fphilippart@be.safmarine.com](mailto:fphilippart@be.safmarine.com) .

Manu Leysen



Inside view from 2 fire positions



Outside view of the gun fire position

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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