



Dear Reader,

Here is the fourth newsletter of 2005 with articles about a coastal battery at Tenerife, Maginot equipment in a German and French museum. Unfortunately I have to mention some sad news too about bunkers at Cap Blanc Nez.
Last but not least : All the best for the Christmas period!

Enjoy it.

SPANISH FORTIFICATIONS

A Coastal battery at San Andrés on Tenerife

This article is a report of a visit of a coastal battery at San Andrés on Tenerife., I was very surprised to find at least ten bunkers , after having explored a Spanish fortification website called www.castillosnet.org which mentioned a few bunkers at Médano, Los Christianos and San Andrés.

The bunkers at Médano and Los Christianos are simple square shaped machine-gun bunkers. The Spanish embedded local rocks on the roof as camouflage. The loop holes are next to each other in order to defend from one or both edges one of the few larger beaches on the island (the rest of the coast is very rocky).



Photo 1. A 152 mm Vickers coastal battery gun

San Andrés is a quite different story. My attention was attracted by a picture on the website of a three level observation bunker high on a steep hill which overlooks the harbour of the capital Santa Cruz De Tenerife. Before I

went to that location, I stopped at the military museum established in a small fort at the northern end of the town. The fort is still military domain and arriving twenty minutes before closing time I wasn't allowed to enter anymore, but I asked permission to take some pictures of the material exposed outside. Next to a M 41 tank, there is a superb search light and two licence built famous 88 mm AA guns, my attention was attracted to the gun in a corner of the square half hidden under the trees. It was an intact 152 mm Vickers coastal battery gun. **See photo n° 1.** The markings on the back of the breach block show that the gun was built in 1925. One of the soldiers guarding the entrance followed me at a distance when I took my pictures and I asked him about this gun and also about the three level bunker in the neighbourhood. I understood that these belonged to a coastal battery and I was even more surprised to hear that the second gun was still in place and freely accessible. I had to make a choice between climbing the hill to the observation post or looking for the gun in place because I promised my wife to visit also the ancient pyramids of Guimar the same afternoon I chose for the second option, we went further north to look for the battery along the coastal road. The first item we found at the view point in the Los Banquitos was a strange complex of small brick buildings around what seems to be a gun or search light position. The central structure has a sort of steel tobogan to the left which could be for evacuating empty shells. **See photo n° 2.**



Photo 2. The toboggan.

2nd gun
emplacement →
Remaining
15 cm Gun →



Photo 3. View at the battery.

Anyone who can identify the purpose of this site please let me know. Anyway, from this viewpoint I discovered the battery on the left on top of a plateau surrounded by the main road in front and a secondary road at the back. We passed in front of it without noticing, but seen from there, it looked spectacular! **On the photo n° 3** you can see the remaining gun, the empty emplacement for the gun in the museum and the hill with the three level observation post in the back. Then we went down to find an entrance to the site. When we drove back we found the entrance gate with a text "Todo Por La Patria" above it. No access from this point, so we took the first small road to the right and then right again to arrive behind the rock.



Photo 4. The barracks and ammo stores. Photo 5. A 152 mm Vickers gun in its gun-pit.

There we saw that the barracks and the ammunition stores have been cut out of the rocks. **See photo n° 4.** But : back to our visit ! I couldn't visit the inside because I didn't had a torch with me, but from what I could see while looking through the doors and the windows it seemed that everything was still quite clean. I spotted rifle racks and gun barrel cleaning holders on the wall, as well as an ammunition lift and a manual siren, still in a mint condition. No graffiti. I climbed the stairs and reached the 15 cm gun in all its splendour. The gun and the gun-pit are clean but all the small removable accessories, like the name plates are, well ... removed (compared with the gun I saw in the museum which is really complete). Next to the gun pit stands an observation



post, again camouflaged by rocks embedded in its roof. **See photo n° 5.** Walking south on top of the fort you find the second gun pit where the gun was removed and exposed in the museum. A bit further you can find two smaller open emplacements, for AA or MG guns I presume. **See photo n° 6.**



Photo 6. Same gun from another angle.



Photo 7. The cruise Reina Victoria Eugenia.

Back home I did some research on internet about 15 cm Vickers guns and I found out that the guns on Tenerife most certainly came from the cruiser “Reina Victoria Eugenia”. **See photo n° 7.** The ship dated from 1923 and had 9 six inch guns. In 1934 it was recalled “Republica” and from 1936 it was called “Navarra”. This ship was in service till 1950. After that its guns were removed to be installed in Spanish coastal batteries at Tarifa, Algeciras and ... Tenerife.

Conclusion. It's a most interesting site, but nobody took ownership of it. Knowing that it's easily accessible (risk for vandalism) and that the real estate development is chasing every location, it's more than time to preserve it. I wrote a letter to the military museum in the hope they would try to conserve this unique site. Let's hope!!!

If someone has more info about this battery or about other fortifications on Tenerife, please contact me on paul.thibaut@pandora.be.

Source : Paul Thibaut – November 2005.

ATLANTIC WALL

The bunkers at Cap Blanc Nez will disappear.

The Cap Blanc Nez is a steep cliff with a height of 132 m between Calais and Wissant. From the top of the cliffs you have a splendid view on the white cliffs of Dover which are 46 Km further.

During the war the Cap became a large strongpoint (*Stp 109, Düsseldorf* in 1944) with radar, FlaK, many crew bunkers and a gun towards Sangatte. Within the framework of *Operation Undergo*, the Canadian *Régiment de la Chaudière* conquered the strongpoint on September the 25th of 1944.

Meanwhile I've had confirmation from a French correspondent that the bunkers at the Cap are doomed to disappear.

The official “Conseil Générale du Pas de Calais” decided to restore the Cap Blanc Nez back to its original state. The Conseil Générale groups organizations for financing (Europe, state,...) and technique (Eden 62, Le Parc des Caps, ...) This project has several phases. The first is the construction of a temporary parking near the D490, the destruction of the old parking at the top of the cliff, the restoration of the monument of the Dover Patrol, the reconstruction of the nature and the destruction of human constructions, They mean with “the destruction of human constructions “



surely the bunkers and FlaK emplacements!!! It seems that the three observation posts will remain and maybe the bunkers at the northern part of the cliff. The works started on September the 19th and are projected to end in 2008!!



Is there anything that we could do to preserve them? Our correspondent gave me a quite accurate description of the mentality at the department Nord Pas de Calais.

The chance to preserve them is nil. The major organization, the "Conservatoire du Littoral", will do everything to remove all German constructions in favor of nature conservation and it seems also that they are still the reminders of the occupation and terror. Moreover the locals are not interested in the bunkers, on the contrary they are attracting

garbage, junks and others... People who are showing interest in them, like we, are considered as right oriented. Vauban and Séré de Rivières forts are respected, but the German constructions? No. *(note from the redaction : even worse. The French are even trying to wipe out their own masterpiece of fortification : the Maginot Line, by covering it with sand!!)* The little group of bunker enthusiasts that would dare to protest them receive reactions like : Why do they meddle with our affairs?

The tendency at the Pas de Calais is to say that there are already many witnesses of the Atlantikwall (what's in fact not true!) like Eperlecques, Mimoyecques, Watten, the museums of Ambleteuse, Calais, Batterie Todt and recently the Fort de la Creche. Enough, they said.

See also <http://mehmet.perso.cegetel.net/archives/BlancNez/blancnez.htm>

Advice : If you want to see *Stp Düsseldorf* for the last time, jump in your car and rush to the Cap before it's too late!!

Source : Hervé Olejniczak

And what about the others?

The Battery Oldenburg seems not to be in any danger because it's too far away from the city. Although there is a project to renovate the ancient Todt camp but actually nothing has been done yet.



At Wissant, the mayor believes that the bunkers have to be kept for the commemoration of the Second World War. But, what if there will be another mayor with other views? The Cap Gris Nez will also be renovated, what means that the Wellblech bunkers will disappear there too. You know what to do!

Source : Hervé Olejniczak

Aire-sur-la-Lys

The remaining command bunker 608 of the LXXXII AK at Aire-sur-la-Lys in France is now in use as a training location for the local fire brigade. Unfortunately the walls are black from the soot and in the rooms cupboard, chairs and tables were placed to increase the difficulty in movement in the darkness in the smoke between furniture. Another "black" site of this re-use is that the technical texts on the walls are gone and that the remaining filters have been removed too. The Michelmann is still present.

Source : Mario Deliens

Creche has now a gun



The Creche association AFLC has now a gun. It's a 130 mm gun coming from the French torpedo-boat hunter Chacal that fired on the fort during the campaign of 1940. The story of the gun is rather weird. It had been for a long time the property of a company and it lay on a quay at Boulogne. When the company went bankrupt the previous president of the association tried to obtain the gun for the history of the fort. But the gun was suddenly gone!! Later on they found it back on a dump of the city waiting to be scrapped. The association could buy it back for the weight of the steel with borrowed money. The plan is now to mount the gun on an emplacement near the southern edge of the barracks Séré de Rivières to commemorate the battle of 1940.

The Chacal was one of the six torpedo-boat hunter of that series with the names : Jaguar, Chacal, Léopard, Lynx, Panthère and Tigre. The Chacal navigated together with the Léopard and other French and British torpedo boats in front of the coast of Boulogne during 22, 23 and 24 May 1940. They fired on enemy targets like the occupied fort de la Creche until *Stuka* dive bombers made a deadly hit on the Chacal. The crew left the vessel before it sunk between le fort d'Ambleteuse and les Dunes du Slack. During the seventies the wreck was recovered. In that framework the AFLC is building exhibition about that theme.

For the fort see : www.fortdelacreche.asso.fr

Mail to : aflc@nordnet.fr

Photo : Mario Deliens

Info : Robert Dehon

Blankenberge

A couple of years ago a FT17 tank turret with gun was discovered next to the locks at the port estuary of Blankenberge in Belgium. In October I noticed that the turret has been removed. The rumour goes that it went to Raversijde.



BELGIUM

Aubin Neufchâteau fort



This photo has probably been taken on the same day as the surrender of the fort. The officer in the back is *Oberst Runge* who led the assault on the fort. The soldiers in front are carrying two parts of a H50 hollow charge of 50 Kg. Diameter : 520 mm and height : 260 mm. The Germans have used hollow charges on the turrets with 75 mm guns of BI and BII. The turret BII rose 4 times to fire shells with hail on 360°. Finally a pioneer succeeded in placing a hollow charge between the turret and its collar. The explosion burned the crew and damaged the rotation mechanism whereby it was out of

use. Another hollow charge was placed on block P, the ventilation block. The damage caused by the hollow charges was identical to the one employed on Eben-Emael.

Info : Paul Charlier

Photo : Michel Nilles

MAGINOT LINE

Complete tank recuperated



When you visit the museum of the Séré de Rivières fort Séclin near Lille, you surely will see the splendid FT17 tank with a 37 mm gun, used in World War I.

Probably you do not realize that you are looking at a piece of the Maginot Line! The entire tank has been recuperated from out of the ground in the sector d'Arrancy sur Crusnes. During the period that small constructions were built, the famous MOM period, various obsolete tanks were dug in to serve as observation posts.

Only 20 tanks of this kind were known in the world (!) and 10 of them are in France. Knowing that many of them have been buried on the hills of the Maginot Line, it was a challenge to find one to recuperate. After a deep study of the maps and obvious locations, we made several reconnaissance sorties during winter-time in the region. While we were looking for a tank, the administrative roundabout has been fixed. Finally we arrived with heavy duty equipment like



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pneumatic hammers, a truck with trailer and a crane. The first thing we did was checking with a detector if there were no mines! After that another team cleaned the inside by removing carrions of animals, garbage and sand. With pneumatic hammers we started removing the edges of the block of concrete in which the tank was welded. With jack-screws the concrete walls were pushed away from the tank. After 12 hours of hard working we could take the tank to Lille. We discovered some remains of the original paint on the hull that helped us to repaint it with the correct colours. Another luck was that we found the turret and the wheels at a nearby scrap merchant.

After a fierce work of restoration we could show our tanks during a passage of the president.

At the moment we are working to restore a second tank and we are looking for parts of any kind for this type of tank. If you can help us, please contact us at : museum@fortseclin.com or by phone 33/3/20.97.14.18.

Source : Sophie Boniface Vandermersch

(PS. One FT17 stands in the Army Museum in Brussels (gun) an another in the museum at Overloon (NL) (machinegun).)

From turret to Tobruk



The "Belgisch Tank Museum" visited in September 2005 the German "Heeresmuseum" at Dresden and received as "specialists" a special tour behind the stages. Hendrik saw in a corner the French "Mortier de 50 mm modèle 1935" originally used in the fixed turrets of the Maginot works. At the Atlantikwall the mortar was mounted in a specific mount to put on a pole in Tobruks. (See Bray Dunes). The Germans called the mortar : "5 cm Fest.Grw 210 (f)".

Characteristics :

Barrel length : 45 cm Weight : 11 Kg
Max range : 695 m Rate of fire : 10 – 15 rounds per minute

Source : Hendrik Trappeniers



Last year I've got this photo from a colleague that shows a similar mortar on its original location near the Mont St Frioux (Fr)

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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