



Dear Reader,

Here is the first newsletter for 2007. I received a Belgian and a French contribution a couple of special Belgian bunkers at Liege and information about a bunker tour at the Côte d'Azur.

CONFIDENTIAL

Fortification fair : Fortendag 2007 in Eben-Emael

(if you want that everybody reads something you put 'confidential' on it)

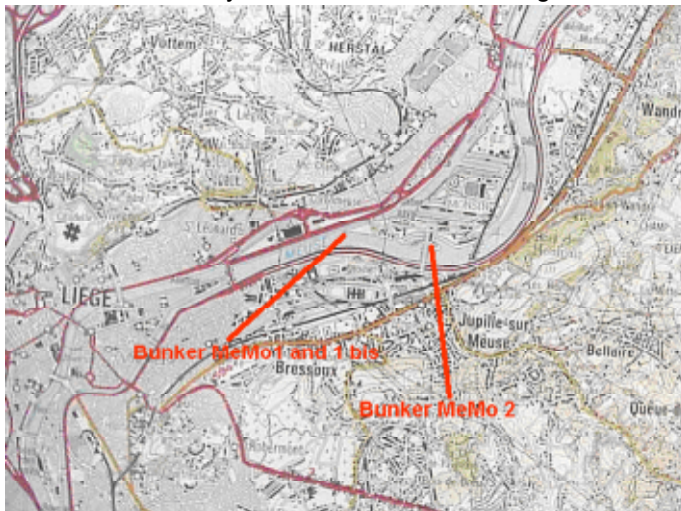
This year the Simon Stevin Centrum together with the "vzw Fort Eben-Emael" organises its fortification fair "Fortendag" in the largest fort of Europe. The event takes place on Saturday 16th June 2007. From 1400 Hr to 1800 Hr you can visit the fair (free) and the fort (payable). Associations who wants to set up a stand are asked to send an e-mail to Frank Philippart at fphilippart@be.safmarine.com.



BELGIUM

special bunkers at the south point of Ile Monsin (Liège, B)

No pictures from some exotic island this time (unlike my earlier humble contributions about fortifications on Mallorca, Tenerife and Ibiza ...), but just a small article about Belgian inter-war bunkers still in place on the southern end of "Ile Monsin", an island in the river Meuse, north of the center of the city of Liège (B). The work of Emile Coenen on the website of CLHAM (www.chlam.org) about the fortification of this small island is just so well done that I had to go there and see for myself some of the remaining bunkers.



The place had its actual state as an island since the Albert Canal was dug which connected Liège to Antwerp and started here at the river Meuse. Before that a small river ran to its west side. See picture 1 for situation and localisation of the bunkers discussed here. The Albert canal runs on the west, the river Meuse on the east of the Monsin island.

Picture 1 : Location of bunkers MeMo1, 1 bis and MeMo 2

About 14 bunkers were built on the island or on the west bank of the canal; now about 5 remain. The ones facing the Meuse were identified starting with MeMo, which stands for Meuse – Monsin. This is the typical way to name Belgian bunkers between two locations. The ones I visited and that I chose for this article are the MeMo 1, its direct neighbour MeMo1 bis and the MeMo 2.



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MeMo 1 and 1 bis were planned and built at the same time as the Memorial for the finished canal Albert. They were ready in 1939. They are remarkably well hidden in the structure. See picture 2.

Picture 2 : bunkers MeMo 1 (on the left of the Memorial Tower, with embrasure just above the water) and 1 bis (green door on the right).



MeMo 1 is a one room MG bunker covering the river Meuse in the direction of Jupille. It has its vertical access in the middle of the two bunkers, but it is closed now. The emergency escape is on the opposite side of the MG embrasure.

MeMo 1 bis is also a one room MG bunker covering the river Meuse but in the direction of Liège. The access is through a normally placed door. There was no access when I was there and no one around to ask.

Strangely, according to E.Coenen, there is a wash-bowl in each of these bunkers, as well as a hand pump to evacuate water that should possibly come into the bunkers.

The second particular bunker MeMo 2 is a bit east of the first site and crossing its fire with it. And again it is built at the same time as a civil art work, namely the weir-bridge at Jupille.



Picture 3 (left) : Weir bridge at Jupille with MeMo 2 bunker built-in on the right.

Picture 4 (right) : Close up of the two storey bunker with the two MG embrasures and their metal covers still in place.

Access is difficult since of course the weir is in continuous operation. I asked permission of the local workers to take outside pictures. Here again, as for the whole site of Ile Monsin, see the full article of E.Coenen for more detail.

Paul Thibaut



MAGINOT & SUDWALL

Bunker safari along the French Riviera!

The members of the Internet Sudwall Superforum (<http://sudwall.superforum.fr/>) were invited to participate in a 3 day bunker trip during the 11/11 2006 weekend. The area focused on ranged from Menton and the Italian border to St Raphael/Frejus sector (Cote d'Azur) and taking in : Nice and Cannes.

This was an amazing tour combining French, Italian and German bunkers of the 2nd World War in a prestigious and magnificent scenery : the French Riviera coast and the Côte d'Azur.

Let's roll:

On day 1 we were in the area of Menton. We were welcomed by our member Laurent Icardo at Cap Martin to check this area:

The French Maginot blocs of the Gros ouvrage du Cap-Martin, 3 blocs, located at Cap-Martin. Unfortunately we were not admitted to look inside the fortress due to works in progress. Then we drove to the Gros ouvrage de Roquebrune with 4 blocs, located NE of Roquebrune-Cap Martin (no entry inside too). From here you have a magnificent overview above Monaco and the best part of the riviera. The story of those two fortresses has been largely related in books.

But, the main objective for us was the small Maginot Casemate Pont St Louis (<http://pontstlouis.blog4ever.com/blog/index-32534.html>) at 7 meters from Italian border. This bunker is perfectly restored with its complete equipment and well kept by our member Laurent who was guiding us all this day.



(Left) The copula's of GO Cap Martin overlooking Menton. (Right) the casemate of Pont St Louis.

In Italy 400 m after the border we found two German bunkers: A gun casemate for a fieldgun (Regelbau 612) and a SK for a machine gun facing the bay of Menton. It's new proof that Sudwall was projected all along the Mediterranean coast and was crossing over the border limits.

Another proof that German troops were based on the Italian ground after the Italian armistice in 1943.

On day 2 we planned to visit the area of Frejus and St Raphael. We visited the strongpoint Stp Rap012 "Chrisantheme" at Frejus. This city is an antique Roman place with many ruins that was reoccupied by Mussolini's troops and next by the Germans. Here we saw an anti-tank casemate (Regelbau 680) integrated in an antique Roman wall. We stayed in Fejus and visited Stp Pt D'Argens. This is the Battery St Aygulf with a mix of Italian bunkers and German 671's. Don't miss the Italian fresco inside a gun room (It's in a private property but the owner will let you see it).



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Afterwards we drove to the Pointe Sardinaux at Ste Maxime to see two 612's and a small crew bunker, Regelbau 668.

At the battery of Cap Dramont, Stp Rap020, is one M272 still in place in fair good condition and nearby there are the foundations of a second M272. The third M272 is located in a camping site and completely turned into house. Not interesting to look at .



The area was heavily bombed when the allied attack took place and today you can still see the craters and the impacts on the bunkers. But at that time there were neither troops nor guns!

Mind this is private property, but the farmer is a nice, pleasant man and will give you access.

We continued in the direction of Cannes along the shore and inspected the following items at Port du Poussai : a small MG-bunker in the northern corner of the harbor, a 612 in the southern corner, one Italian MG-position and one German Tobruk, type 58c .

While we were approaching Cannes the road became a "Corniche" (Edge) and we arrived at the famous Viaduct Antheor that had been bombed by the allies.

The railway and the bridge were very strategic for the Germans and therefore protected by many batteries in the area. We found some well preserved batteries and also some that have almost disappeared.

Here is a list of what we checked : Camp Long called Stp Rap022 "Olive" with one small, nice camouflaged, Italian casemate for a machine gun and three open emplacement for FlaK. The FlaK battery of Pte Baumette, the FlaK battery of the Cap Roux and the FlaK battery of the Pointe St Barthelemy.



Sunset didn't stop us. In the late evening we went to the neighbourhood of Draguignan to visit the museum "Le Musée du Souvenir" (<http://perso.orange.fr/museedusouvenir/>). The owner, Mr Sylvain Harlé, opened the doors for us and showed us the curiosity we were searching for: the



bunker rebuilt inside the museum! Here's an impression of Interesting items in the museum for bunker fans : a plinth for a 5cm Fest Gr W 210 (f), a stove Wt 80 Haas and Son, a complete filter HES 2,4 m³ and many other German equipments.

We ended our third day in the area of Cannes and La Napoule. We started with a boat trip from the harbour of Cannes to the island De Lérins. From there we got to the small island of Sainte Marguerite (3km x 900m) in front of the bay of Cannes.

Here we could visit the resistance nests CAN039, CAN041, CAN042 and CAN044

There: wn's CAN039 CAN041 CAN042 CAN044 were checked in 3 hours in this small island (3km x 900m). It was amazing to see these bunkers in the same natural environment as the whole Cote d'Azur was in the 40's because there's almost no urbanization.

We finished our trip at La Napoule where the Germans turned the medieval castle into Stp CAN022. Three bunkers stand in the garden of this property owned by an American artistic foundation. On the beach, next to the castle, there are four 4 small Italian pilboxes.

If you want to know more, you can contact me : jory.sormail@wanadoo.fr

Jory Sormail

BOOKS

Eisenbahntillerie

We waited for it for a long time. Here is it, a good book about German railroad guns written by the French General Guy François. He tells the story and gives an overview of the guns starting from the First World War up to the Second World War. You'll find the technical specifications as well as the list of all the railroad batteries. The book contains plenty of photographs, even pictures of the mysterious Lange Bruno of which so far I haven't seen a correct photo. The general gives also an overview of the French guns captured by the Germans.

Author : General (2s) Guy François.

Editor : Editions Histoire et Fortifications

Price : 25 € Pages : 96

ISBN : 2-915767-08-4

Language : french



Jours Tranquilles et bruits de guerre au Mont de Welches

J-B Wahl is a well-known French specialist in modern fortifications and published this year a new book concerning one of the Maginot fortifications. The book begins with a short description of the fort "Le Mont de Welches". Later on the author gives a daily report, during the period going from August 1939 to July 1940, of the happenings in and around this fort based on the diary of the commander (named Capt. Tari). A lot of original pictures taken in that period gives a unique character to this book. There is also a great computer made coloured plan with all the underground galleries and fighting blocs. The book ends with 3 pages filled with a beautiful picture collection taken in the 80's.

Author & editor : J B Wahl

ISBN 2-9507681-2-1

Emmision year : January 2007

Price : 15 €

Pages : 45

Language : french

Purchase address : Jean-Bernard Wahl, B.P. 258, F- 68332 HUNINGUE CEDEX
E. Leysen



Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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