



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 1 of 2009

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

Dear Reader,

Well, here we are in 2009 and I want to wish you all the best for 2009!

Here you will read about a splendid project to renovate the east-bank of Ostend with the MKB Hundius and the FlaK site of the "Halve Maan". There is also more good, or less good news about the resistance nest Waldersee.

We also introduce a new a new topic "Spotlight on a Museum" in which we give you the good and the lesser points of military museums and why you should visit it.

So, if you have visited a museum, tell us about it and send me your comments! (frank.philippart@telenet.be) Thank you.

Enjoy.

Fortification Fair on the Heritage Day at Dendermonde



On October 4th, the city of Dendermonde organized the Fortified Heritage Day with various activities. Dendermonde has still some remains of its old fortifications belonging to the Wellington Barrier which was created as defence against France. On several locations in the city people could explore these remains. Re-enactment groups of the Fort of Liezele and the Regiment of Gent relived the history.

The Simon Stevin Centrum organized a fortification fair for the city in which associations and cities from Belgium and abroad presented their fort or fortified city. 20 associations, fortified cities, authors and book handlers were present among which three from the Netherlands and one from France. We welcomed : De Krijger, Fort aan den Hoek van Holland, the Menno van Coehoorn Stichting, the forts of Kessel and Liezele, the IWVA (batt Adinkerke), the Domein Raversijde, Mr Rudi Rolf, the forts Aubin-Neufchâteau, Barchon, Eben-Emael, Hollogne and Fort 4, the Association for World War Archeology, the Staats-Spaanse Linies, Erfgoed Vlaanderen (Fort Napoleon) and the cities Dendermonde, Ieper, St Omer and Menen.

There was an exhibition about the Wellington Barrier at the same location and a presentation by the mayor Mr Buyse, Dauwe, Mr Aeseloos and Mevr Buyse jr about the local history.



Photo E. Leysen



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SPOTLIGHT ON A MUSEUM

Museum of the KW-Line

This museum is situated in the small village Chaumont-Gistoux in a splendid neighbourhood almost next to the highway E411 from Brussels to Namur. It's located in a middle-size house that doesn't look like a museum. But the turret of a British Matador AEC MK II gives the game away almost immediately!.



Inside you are in for a surprise. If you are going to visit the KW-Line, then you will be disappointed as there are only two information panels and a Cointet pole outside! But, the museum bulges with uniforms and small equipment. It would need to be three times bigger to give everything the space it deserves. The uniforms are grouped per event : May 40, occupation, D-Day, liberation, the Ardennes, Airforce . The nationalities are equally spread : German, French, British, Belgian, US. You have to look carefully, because each square meter is used and everywhere you will notice some rare items. To give some examples : German generals' visor caps and side caps, German coastal artillery visor caps, tank uniform with pink and yellow piping, German and US Airforce uniforms and even a cartoon-like bomber jacket. Not only uniforms but also some small items attract your attention like an original, last letter of Field Marshall Hermann Göring.

You can only visit the museum from May to September on Sundays and public holidays from 1400 to 1800 Hr which is a pity.

The coordinates are : Rue Pré Delcourt 1, 1325 Chaumont. Contact : Mr Chantrain Tel : 010/84.02.70



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BELGIUM

Which fort?



About a year ago a member sent me this photo with the question "Which fort is it?". Last summer I saw the photo again in the Canadian Juno Beach Center at Courseulles .

The caption of the photo is "*Scouts of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada entering the fort of Brasschaat on 9 October 1944*".

ATLANTIKWALL

Restoration of the east bank of Ostend

After the absolute nadir of the autumn of 2007 with the silting up with sand of the bunkers of the Halve Maan at Ostend we can announce that the Halve Maan and the battery Hundius will get a face lift. Not only these two sites, but the whole east bank of Ostend will be taken in hand.

The project was presented to the public in the presence of the Flemish Minister-President Kris Peeters on September 17th .

On the sea-side they will create again a salting area and on the land-side a fresh water dune area. They will excavate the sand from the bunkers and remove the additional constructions that spoil the original design of the bunkers. The command bunker (610) will be the central point of the guided tour and the crew bunker (656) can be visited with a guide. Moreover the open emplacement in front of the 610 and the embrasure of the machinegun casemate (515) will be excavated of sand. But the accent will be on nature. All these works will be executed with the aid of the Flemish government, Natuurpunt and C-Power.



Command bunker 610 during January 2008.

The accent for the Hundius battery will be on history. One part of the battery will become a bunker park and the east part with the impressive fire control post (M157) will get a museum function under the wings of Fort Napoleon. To be clear, the fixed residents, the "Marinekadetten" will stay on the site.

At the naval square there will be a new ferry for pedestrians and bicycles and an old warehouse will become a new reception center about the North-Sea.

The Maritime Site Oostende with the slipway and the old ships yard Seghers will be expanded as a museum port.



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The Simon Stevin Centrum is partner in this project as consultant for the bunkers of the Halve Maan, the battery Hundius and the mortar bunker (633).

Ok, what now? Subsidies and offers for the renovations have been asked. The last unknown bunker was excavated and opened on January 4th in presence of the press. Here we are talking of the machine gun bunker (515) (more about this in the next edition). The ugly pole on top of the M157 has been removed and they are making a new, decent fence around the Hundius battery. An architect office will be assigned during 2009. What we could see this year is that the wet moat in front of the Halve Maan will be restored.



The press on January 4th at the excavations



The M157 without ugly pole!

Do you want to know more? Surf to the project coordinator's, Buitengoed, site : www.oostendeoosteroever.be

* Cointets

As a reaction to the Cointet article in the previous number, one of our reader sent me this interesting photo.



The image is from the French archive SHM and it shows resistance nest Ar45 Pilat near d'Arcachon.

Source :
Jory Sormail



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* WN Waldersee preserved?



The municipality of Koksijde voted unanimously on September the 15th for the conservation of the Atlantikwall resistance nest WN Waldersee in the Zeebermduinen. They had already voted for this conservation on September 11th in 2006. The problem is that it is not clear on whose territory the property stands, Flemish or not. The Departure for Nature (Editor's note. Incomprehensible when you see that nature and bunkers go together without problems in Ostend in the Oostende Oosterover project). The municipality has started an investigation to find out who's the owner of that area with

dunes. If this should be the Flemish Region, then there's a serious risk of demolition. WN Waldersee is the only remaining resistance nest along our coast that is not a battery. Here you see a flanking casemate (612), Tobruks, an open emplacement for a 5 cm gun and several covered trenches.
Source : Eric Maes

MAGINOT LINE

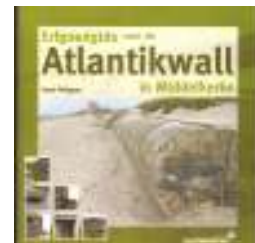
Health and Safety works at Galgenberg

To conform with health and safety regulations Galgenberg has to install emergency lighting and fluorescence signposting. They must also make provision for emergency exits, which is not a problem because some blocs had them originally. But, lighting has to be installed in the staircase shafts and at least one phone has to be installed in each area where visitors are to be expected.
Source : Anko Zwerver

BOOKS

Ergoedgids voor de Atlantikwall in Middelkerke

Middelkerke has 7 Atlantikwall sites of which 4 are protected monuments. Frank Philippart has put all 7 on a map together with photo's, plans, armament and history. The maps of the coastal batteries Westende (Stp Seydlitz) and Middelkerke (Stp Leeb) have not been published before! The book published in November 2008 by the city of Middelkerke contains 23 pages. You can buy it at the local tourist office (4 €) or from Frank Philippart (7.5 € (Be) or 9 € (Europe) port costs inclusive)
frank.philippart@be.telenet.be



Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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