



Dear Reader,

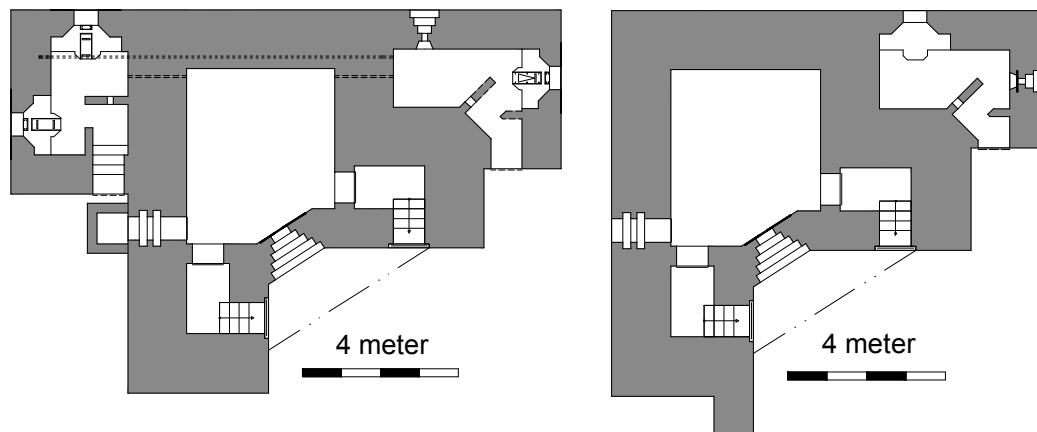
Here is the autumn edition of WMF-News. Our correspondent in Jersey keeps us up to date with the German bunkers and three other readers give us information about the Westwall and a German WW-I bunker in Belgium. Your contributions are always welcome !

Frank Philippart

## Westwall

### Bunker 4365 at Kehl, *Oberrheinstellung*, Westwall

The "Regelbauten" (constructions following standard plans) 10, 10a and 11 are well known in the books as the most important bunker types of the *Limesprogramm*, introduced in May 1938. Practice proves that there were no boundaries to the inventiveness of German engineers.



**Bunker 4365 at Kehl. The horizontal broken lines are voice-tubes. The square shaft for the emergency exit is very low and does not block the entrance to the left combat room.** *Regelbau 10*

We have here a *Regelbau 10*, a bunker for a maximum of 15 soldiers. Both entrances are protected by an embrasure. Though in fact only the left entrance is covered!

Behind the armored door of each entrance is the gas-lock before entering the crew-room. On the right side of the bunker is the annexed combat-room "*Angehengter Kampfraum*" with a small loophole for a rifle to the right and a large embrasure for an MG straight ahead. This model of bunker was also constructed in reverse.

This bunker is nowadays unique but at the time for the *Oberrheinstellung* certainly not an exception.

The embrasures of the annexed combat-room of the Kehl bunker combat-room have been interchanged.

On the left side is a second annexed combat-room with, exceptionally for a MG, two embrasures. The connoisseur recognizes here a modified combat-room of a *Regelbau 11*.



It is odd, but the demolition team has followed the procedure to destroy a normal Regelbau 10 and has placed explosives in the crew-room and the right annexed combat-room but left the additional one untouched..

Source : Patrice Wijnands & Sascha Kuhnert

## **Festungswerke Gerstfeldhöhe**

Some weeks ago, I visited the fortress (Festungswerke) Gerstfeldhöhe on the Westwall (better known by the English as the Siegfriedline). This bunker is situated in Pirmasens - Niedersimten (right over the French village Bitche).

For specialists this is an opportunity to compare the fortresses of the Maginot line or the Belgian forts near Liège (Battice, Tancremont, Aubin-Neufchâteau and Eben-Emael).

The original plan was to create 9 km of galleries of which 4 km for the barracks. The fortress would have been on two levels, connected with an elevator with a difference in height of 68 m. At entrance level there would have been ammunition stores and the barracks.

The first level would have had a railway system which would have connected it to the different bunkers within a radius of 5 Km.

In 1941 the tunnelling work stopped because the enemy was now far from the Westwall. Only a limited number of galleries had been finished. They were interconnected and large enough to station a lot of trucks. Later on the civilians of the neighbourhood took shelter in them.

In 1944 the SS stored supplies in it together with a slaughterhouse (the cattle were in the large tunnels).

After the war the tunnels were used as a depot for the American Army (even armed and fuelled tanks, ready to use, where parked in it).

Another topic can be seen before entering, namely a Regelbau 687 (this is a bunker with a Panther-turret)



**View of the Panther turret on the Regelbau 687. (H Trappeniers)**



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Here is a small overview of what you can see :

At the entrance : a tank (Walker Bulldog ?) and a 88 mm FlaK.  
In the galleries (only entry level) : a small exhibition about the Westwall. scale models of the different Reglabauten used on the Westwall , a scale 1:1 model of a Regelbau type 1, a 2 cm Vierling FlaK, a 88mm gun of a Jagdpanther to be placed in a bunker, ammunition, etc

For those interested in vehicles :  
different pieces of a (blown up) Tiger I, a gearbox and a Maybach engine, a Nahverteidigungs-Apparät (kind of grenade-thrower to defend the tank against close by enemy infantry), a GMC (US truck), a Horch Lkw (German truck), an American halftrack M3 for quad .50 MG, a German halftrack Kspz 251 D (in fact a version made after the war in Tchecho-Slovakia), a 76.2 cm (r ) anti-tank gun 36 (a Russian gun re-used by the Germans), ...

The owners plan to install more vehicles by next year.

Conclusion :

If you are in the neighbourhood, take a look. To make a special trip to it, I think that there are better fortresses and bunkers to visit.

More information <http://www.westwall-museum.de>

When you are there, don't forget to visit the gun casemate, Regelbau 516 at Bad Bergzabern. (also in the neighbourhood of Pirmasen). This bunker has been completely restored. The website looks good. <http://www.westwall.page.cx/>  
(Regelbau 516 : bunker for artillery (from 7,5 cm up to 15 cm) with ammunition rooms.

Source : Hendrik Trappeniers

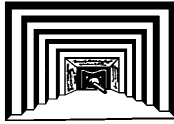
## Atlantikwall

### Jersey

**Noirmont, MKB Lothringen.** One of the steel observation copulas of the M132 has now been fitted with a tank periscope (post war) and is fully operational. The 101 or 501 which was excavated in the late 1990's is now starting to be restored back to its original condition.

**HKB Moltke, Les Landes.** The boiler and the chimney of the M151 (crew bunker) have been repaired so the central heating will be up and running for the coming season.

**Kernwerk.** The 609SK in the Rue du Coin Varin is locked as it is now in the society's care. There are no plans to restore the bunker at this time, but the dry moat in front of the entrances will soon be excavated and the bunker interior has been cleaned out. The 609SK can be visited by arrangement through the CIOS secretary.



**St Ouen's Bay, WN La Carrière.** The Jäger casemate for a 10.5 cm K 331 (f). Such a gun will soon be installed from the Noirmont site.



**One of the 10.5 cm K 331 (f) guns at Noirmont to be installed at La Carrière. (F Philippart)**

**Stp Corbière.** The ammunition room of the 633 (mortar bunker) has been restored. Only the loading table is missing and they have still to make some of the clips for all the mortar bombs. Meanwhile the members of CIOS (Channel Island Occupation Society) have started working on the 634 (6-embrasures turret bunker). All of the rotten wood dovetail battens on the walls of the entrance defence and crew rooms have been pulled out. The large concrete "patch" covering the rubble filled turret room is being treated with sealers to try and stop rain water getting in. The escape shaft is being excavated to help ventilate the bunker and all of the gas cut hinges have been removed. A trap door (434P01) has been found to replace the damaged one leading from the ventilation room into the tunnel to the 633. Finally the escape shaft door has been re-hung.

**WN Peters.** Better know as the St Peter's bunker. Unfortunately it's now sadly closed. The original collection has been sold to the Underground hospital. Then the bunker was reopened by the owners of the Atlantic Wall Museum at Lewis Tower. But they found the venture non profitable and closed last year. Since then the bunker has flooded at least once due to nearby roadworks, and no one will take up the offers of cheap rent to use the bunker.

Source : Amy Malcolm

## **Bunkers discovered at Knokke (BE)**

Recently I got a hint that there was a bunker discovered behind a mansion at the Zoutelaan. It is a bunker for two groups, a Regelbau 502 and built in "A" strength with walls of 3 m thick. The 502 has neither a copula nor a periscope. The owners have it dug out and discovered the bunker's name. It had been written in Gothic script but it is too blurred to read. Another thing that attracted my attention was the well preserved pale yellow paint of the 502, due to the fact that it has been covered with sand for a long period. The bunker number was perfectly visible at the entrance and on the walls there are still olive green camouflage spots. On the other hand all equipment, doors and metal parts were gone. Now the owners are busy giving it a new function as a child's playroom, but they want to keep its original exterior look. So they made a wide trench with sandbags around it. On the other hand they removed the inner wall between the two



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crew rooms and they have an entrance cup at the place of the "Gewehrscharte". Finally they spent a lot of money to have a square hole cut in the ceiling through about 3 m concrete. Despite these "modifications" we only can encourage such initiatives for the remaining bunkers. Well done.

At the Rubensplein the city is removing a 502 in September to build an underground parking.



**The 502 with walls of 3 m thick. Note the pale yellow colour. (F Philippart)**

## **New gun at Raversijde**

This year the Raversijde site re-installed an original gun for their MKB Tipitz (Ex MKB Salzwedel neu) battery. It is a 10.5 cm SK C/32U gun which stands now in one of the 671 casemates. It is worth the effort to visit it ! Hopefully taking photos is again allowed. The steel house of that gun has been installed in the other 671 with a dummy barrel. From outside it looks like a 15 cm SK. Nice, but for the bunker die-hard it looks like the bunker is too small for the gun.

## **Goblins in bunkers**

I found this funny message on the internet. In April 2002, children found sixty garden gnomes in a bunker near St Laurent-sur-Mer (Normandy, Omaha Beach). The French gendarmerie recovered them and put them in prison until the owners came to claim their gnomes. No traces of the perpetrators were found.

## **Omaha Beach**

Did you know that the famous beach is protected by a law dating from the 22 Nov 1946? It was included in the "Opération Grand Sites" (operation great sites) dedicated to preserving the natural landscapes of the battle of Normandy. Luckily due to this law, a mussel farm was forbidden by the government in July 2002.

Source : internet : [www.6juin1944.com](http://www.6juin1944.com)



## World War I

### German bunker at Stekene (BE)

Location : Nature reserve "Het Steengelaag" at Stekene in Belgium. This is an old clay quarry. This bunker forms part of the famous German "Hollandstellung", built in 1917 from the coast to Antwerpen along the Dutch border. You reach the bunker coming from the "Nieuwstraat" via a small wooden bridge opposite an industry site. You pass also an old excavating machine. Nowadays the bunker stands on a height because the clay has been removed. That makes it impressive, although the vegetation makes it difficult to photograph it.

The bunker has been built with "Formsteine" (concrete blocks) and is rather big compared with other bunkers from the same line; about 8.5 m / 7.5m. The outer walls are about 1.8 m thick and the roof about 1.4 m. This is also thicker than the other Regelbauten.

Inside I found a few inscriptions in the concrete between the blocks, namely the names "Noebet C" and "Vogels Bruno". The latter is probably recent, but the first one could be German.

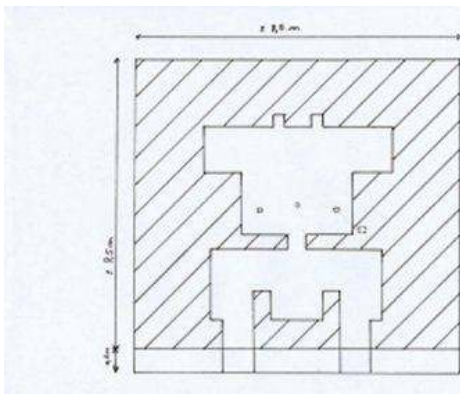
The two rooms inside were closed during the seventies.

Next to both entrances are the remains of a steel ladder to get on the roof. On the roof there are five square holes (ventilation, chimney?) and one central hole of about 5 cm (antenna, periscope?)

Two little concrete walls were also built on the flanks, but nowadays they have collapsed.

The bunker is impressive by its specific location on the clay-mountain, its wall of 4 m high and its basement of 80 cm.

Source : Paul Thibaut



Scheme of the bunker and view on the right entrance of the bunker. (P Thibaut)

### Moving copula's...

Just before the First World War the forts of the outer circle of Antwerpen were equipped with two steel observation copulas on their saillants. Their task was to observe the ground in front of the fort and to co-ordinate the flanking activities and the use of the search-light. Such a copula had three observation slits and weighed 13.5 tons. During the Second World War the Germans recuperated all Belgian guns and turrets for their weapon industry. Luckily they forgot the steel observation copula of the Fort of Walem. The Fort of Liezele (museum) started a project to dismantle the copula at Walem and to re-install it at Liezele. Assistance was found by the owner of the fort which is the municipality of Puurs to get to the Ministeries of Defence and Finance



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(owner of the Fort of Walem). The 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers Battalion received the order in 1997 to remove and to bring to Liezele. At Liezele they started the renovation of the copula's new location in 1998. The final installation began in September 2001. The main entrance could not be used because the height of the truck and the copula was higher than the ceiling of the entrance. Therefore they used a pontoon-bridge. A 50 tons Grove crane placed the steel turret on its new location with success..

From April 2002 on, the copula can be visited with a guide.

Source : Simon Stevinstichting - Mark Van Riet



**The copula still at the Fort of Walem before being moved. (F Philippart)**

## **Lange Max basements excavated**

One of the German huge guns, "Lange Max", was located at Koekelare. From 1917 on it fired many times on Dunkerque. The Germans recuperated the gun during the Second World War and after the war the open emplacements were demolished. The construction company Willaert started in 2002 to excavate the basements and Mr Willaert even intends to install a replica of the famous gun. There is already a museum at the Clevenstraat 4, Koekelare that can be visited every Sunday and holiday between 1400 and 1800 Hr.

Source : Het Nieuwsblad, via G Moens

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for spell checking.