



Dear Reader,

This year we start with the announcement of our Fortification Fair in Ieper (be) and some interesting articles from readers at home and abroad.

Enjoy!.

Fortification fair **Fortendag 2006**

We, **Simon Stevin Centrum** and the **Genootschap voor Geschiedenis en Vestingbouwkunde Ieper** have again this year organised a fortification fair "**Fortendag 2006**."

The activities will take place on Saturday June 10th 2006 between 1100 Hr – 1830 Hr in the Cloth Hall at Ieper. The activities are :

- A fair for other fortification associations, book-trades and fortified cities,
- A talk on the subject : "**Fortifications through the centuries**",
- an Exhibition with subjects : "**The German bunker line of World War I along the Belgian-Dutch border**",
- A visit to the fortified walls of Ieper for the public,
- A visit to the fortified walls of Ieper for the exhibitors at 1100 Hr.

At this venue, fortification associations can present their fort(s) to the public and sell their publications. The fair is free. There are two possible ways for exhibitors to participate :

- **Formula stand**. This is a stand which is setup and manned by the association. A suspension system with a cable is available. The association can bring their own panels. Selling publications is possible.
- **Formula (disposable) posters**. The Simon Stevin Centrum guarantees the presentation and the circulation of the exhibitor's leaflets.

If your association is interested in taking part in the "Fortendag 2006", then send me an email and I'll send you the details.

Contact address : fphilippart@be.safmarine.com

BRITISH COAST DEFENCES

EAST LANE BATTERY, BAWDSEY, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND





WMF *News*

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 1 of 2006

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

My husband had to make a trip to Ipswich and as usual in these cases if we are off somewhere I try to find something interesting in the area to visit! This is how we came to be standing on a very wet and windy morning on the Suffolk coast looking at the grey North Sea and taking pictures of the Bawdsey East Lane Battery.

According to the official information this emergency battery consists of the following:

- two reinforced emplacements (now minus the roofs visible in 1971) with attached magazines and machine housing.
- BOP in excellent condition.
- Two surviving CASLs
- Perimeter defences are visible as a series of type 22 pillboxes.
- A small number of anti-tank cubes
- The whole site is under some threat from coastal erosion, but the BOP and main battery position are under a more considerable threat from any expansion of the lagoons / silt traps built adjacent to them.

Two gun emplacements (6 inch) linked by a passageway which allows access to a central war shelter and two magazine rooms per gun. Overhead cover to gun emplacements removed. The whole structure is defensible with gun loops. Manned by 332 Battery, 515 Regiment R.A.

Bawdsey is more famously known for the radar station at Bawdsey Manor where a great deal of pioneering work was done on radio location. We were not able to visit that site though as our visit was out of season.



The Battery Observation Post



General View of the emplacement



Close up of pill box



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Site of one of the two searchlights

This is not the original but on close inspection this would appear to have been the message on the wall because you can feel the outline of the letters.



Inside the connecting tunnel.



The gun loops.

Source : Yvonne Mayo Photos courtesy of Jim Mayo

ATLANTIC WALL

There are more Würzburg radars than you think !!!



A Czech colleague, Radek Hrabcak, read the article about "the last working Würzburg radar" in WMF-News 2005/3 and sent me this update. Thanks!

There is an observatory named Ondrejov in the Czech Republic, where there are two Würzburg radars and one of them is still in use.



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The first one was working until 1994, until the main bearing was damaged but not repaired). Both radars were acquired in 1956 from Czechoslovakian army. The second one (not working now) was used for measuring the radio flux from sun on a wavelength of 260, 536 and 808 MHz (the device was modernized after 1956). The first one (still working) was used as a radio spectrograph for observing the sun on band of 100-1000MHz.

You can find some photos at the following sites:

http://www.transcad.cz/badatelna/xref/vojt_budkovice.htm (Czech language, look in the middle of the page)

<http://www.asu.cas.cz/english/pics/> (English language).

Source : Radek Hrabcak

On visit by the French army at Lorient

On January 25th and 26th the teams of the Bunkermuseum Park Den Brandt and the "Koninklijk Leger Museum" of Brussels (KLM) and Raversijde drove to Lorient to get some bunker parts that are necessary to finish a couple of projects in Belgium. I've gone for Lorient Kernevel because these bunkers have been sold and due to be destroyed. Moreover, I visited them in 2005 and saw then that there were still some interesting items to be salvaged. So, I acted as a guide.

After some contacts between the French Navy and the Belgian Army we received the go ahead at the beginning of January. We had one month to do the exercise because at the end of the month the bunkers must be empty. The Belgian army provided us with equipment and we drove with 13 men to Lorient where the French army made us very welcome. The next day we started dismantling. Luckily we were with a lot of people because it was a hard job. Raversijde needed some doors, Brussels some stoves, doors of a different type, vans and HES filters and De Brand a stove, doors and lots of small equipment to be reused in their SK1 bunker. After we had put the material together to load with a crane, we drove to the U-Boat bunker in Lorient (Keroman) to pick up some drums of the army (*Heer*) and the navy (*Kriegsmarine*) and some filters with agreement of the French Navy. These items which I discovered last year, were due to be scrapped.



At the same time we were able to visit the manor of Admiral Dönitz and there we saw this splendid table but we didn't get it from the French...



Outside view of the personal SK bunker in which we recovered the material.



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After we loaded everything on an Army Volvo truck we went home, tired and dirty but happy because our mission was completed successfully thanks to the fantastic dedication of Comander Matthieu of the KLM and his assistants.

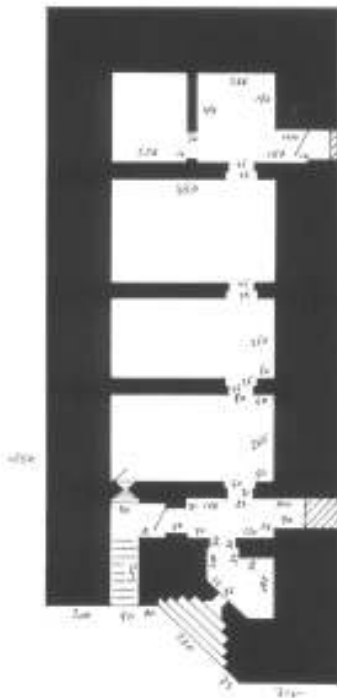
Source : Dirk Peeters

The Veurne bunker is still there!!!

In the autumn of 2000 I wrote an article about this bunker in the initial version of WMF-News (at that time it was a part of the Vesting periodical). It was said that the bunker was due to be demolished as soon as possible. It looked like it was a matter of a couple of weeks. Now, we are March 2006 and I heard from a colleague that the bunker is still there!!! Amazing, isn't it?



The entrance and the flanking loop hole.



Ok, what do we have there?

Roughly said, the bunker has the layout of an air-raid bunker (*Luftschutzbunker*), all rooms lie on one line. There is a tunnel leading from the bunker to the station and another to a house at the Stationsplaats 9. One thin armoured door still remains to close one of the tunnels. It is built in strength B (2 m thick) and it has a close-combat room (*Nahkampfraum*). There's only one entrance with a staircase leading 1 m down. The bunker can be closed with a gas-tight door of an unknown type and there is no gas-lock, neither antenna niches. On the other hand, the entrance is defended by a loophole (*Gewehrscharte*) that still has its shutter.

The bunker is situated at the Vaartstraat next to the gas-station Battard and the supermarket. According to the the owner, the bunker had been a command- and transmission post. The house at the Stationsplaats 9 housed the administration for people who had to work in Germany. Besides the bunker there were two smaller crew bunkers, but these are gone for some time.

If we make a guess, then the German map of March the 25th of 1943 tells us that it was the command post of Infantry Regiment 71 located at Veurne. This unit belonged to the 171st Infantry Division.



Inside the close defence room.



The defence of the entrance.

BELGIUM

Oil tanks at Zwankendamme

Whom so ever cycles from Brugge to Zeebrugge along the canal, will certainly see three strange, long concrete constructions. They lie on the dike just to the south of the village Zwankendamme and north of the village Lissewege.

These are Belgian oil tanks. Two of them were constructed before the war and the third was been built after it. A pipe-line led to the barracks along the road leading from Brugge to Zeebrugge. The Germans did not make any use of it during the war. The tanks were in use until the late eighties .



View on one of the oil tanks.

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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