



Dear Reader,

The main topics in this edition are: our Fourth Fortification Fair in Ieper (be), the list of Atlantic Wall bunker sites that are on the list to be classified and a preserved bunker site at Turnhout.

Enjoy!.

## Fortification fair **Fortendag 2006**

On Saturday, June the 10<sup>th</sup> we, the “Simon Stevin Centrum” and the “Genootschap voor Geschiedenis en Vestingbouwkunde Ieper” organized the Fourth fortification fair “**Fortendag 2006.**”

The events took place in the Cloth Hall at Ypres. Our “Fortendag” was called “**Day of fortified inheritance**” because it fitted within the larger concept of Septentrion. Together with our fortification fair there was a fair of fortified cities with Dendermonde (be), Aire-sur-la-Lys (fr), Bergen-op-Zoom (nl) and many others. The event was officially opened with a few speeches in the presence of Minister-President Yves Leterme and the governor of the province of West-Vlaanderen, Mr Breyne.



**A general view on the fair.**



**Minister-President Yves Leterme.**

A total of 19 associations and publishers were present at our Fortendag comprising 1 Polish and Belgian publisher, 13 Belgian associations, 5 French associations and 1 Dutch author. 9 associations sent us leaflets and posters : 6 French, 2 Dutch and 1 Belgian association.

They were : The Simon Stevin Centrum (be), the Genootschap voor Geschiedenis en Vestingbouwkunde Ieper (be), De Krijger (be), the field battery of Adinkerke (be), La Coupole (fr), Raversijde (be), Musée Message Verlaine (fr), Rudi Rolf (nl), Fort de la Creche (fr), Fort de Seclin (fr), Forts of Aubin-Neufchâteau and Barchon (be), Fort of Eben-Emael (be), Fort of Lantin (be), Fort of Hollogne (be), Fort of Kessel (be), Fort of Liezele (be), Fort Napoleon (be), VCM (be), Forteca (pl), the Maginot work Fermont (fr) and Fort 4 (be).

The associations who sent leaflets were the Maginot works Four-à-Chaux, Rohrbach, Immerhof, the Atlantic wall fortress Cité d'Aleth (fr), Fort 2 (be), Fort de Verny (fr), Villey-le-Sec (fr), Fort aan de Hoek van Holland (nl) and Fort of Rijnauwen (nl).



At the same time a colloquium "Fortifications through the centuries" took place with the following subjects : Gerard Soeters "The Roman period, ex. Maastricht", Stéphane Deméter "The Middle Ages, ex. Brussels", Christian Corvisier "The crisis of the steel canon ball", Philippe Bragard "the climax of the bastion", Robert Gils "the Brialmont system", Julien Depret "Séré de Rivières in Lille", Franky Bostyn "Dugouts in World War I", Frank Philippart "Concrete fortifications", Prof Piet Lombaerde "The influence of fortifications on cities, ex Antwerp".



Finally there was an exhibition about the German bunker line of World War I along the Belgian-Dutch border.

The location in the Cloth Hall was splendid as was also the tropical weather. Unfortunately the sea and King Football were too strong an opponent for us, so that there were only 300 visitors and 40 listeners for the colloquium. On the other hand, the exhibitors took the opportunity to exchange ideas with each other.

## **ATLANTIC WALL**

### **21 bunker sites on the list be become a monument**

The Ministry of Monuments & Landscapes asked in 2002 the WMF to make a study on the remaining Atlantic Wall sites in Belgium. They wanted to propose that a group of interesting bunker sites be classified as monuments. The Ministry chose 21 from the 28 proposed bunker sites. Some weeks ago we were informed that they were temporally protected for the duration of the feasibility study. After that period the Minister will sign the final agreement. A lot has been written in the newspaper about this project, but always the list of bunker sites was incomplete. Here's now the complete one!!

1. WN Ludendorf at the bridge on the Westkapelse Steenweg, nearby nr. 160, 8380 Brugge
2. The remains of Stp Blankenberghe Mole, at the Oude Wenduinse steenweg opposite nr 3.
3. The remains of Stp Westlich den Haan, at the Koninklijke Baan next to the "Zeepreventorium" at De Haan.
4. The remains of railroad battery E 690 , at the Koninklijke Baan at Bredene.
5. The storage bunker of Stp Hafen – at the Slipwaykaai at Oostende .
6. The transformer bunker of Stp Hafen at the Dokter Edouard Moreauxlaan at Oostende.
7. The transformer bunker of Stp Hafen at the Godetiastraat at Oostende .
8. The bunker for a anti-tankgun (505) of PzStp Blaue Schleuse- at the Brugsesteenweg 37, at Bredene
9. The bunker for a 5 cm Kwk (667) of the Landront of Oostende at the Polderdijk 2 at Zandvoorde .
10. The observation post of the Landfront of Oostende at the Polderdijk at Zandvoorde
11. The remains of a field battery at the Grintweg nearby nr. 121at Zandvoorde



# WMF News

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12. The air-raid shelter at the Stationsstraat at Zandvoorde
13. The command bunker (117b) of Stp Iltis at the Oudstationstraat nr.8 at Stene.
14. The remains of Stp Seydlitz at the Strandlaan and the Koning Ridderdijk at Westende.
  15. The former army coastal battery at the ex-camping Cosmos at the St Laureinsstrand at the Koninklijke Baan 151 at Westende.
16. The remains of Stp Seeckt at the Kustweg 101, at Lombardsijde.
17. The remains of the Navy coastal battery Ramien at the Oude Zeedijk at Nieuwpoort.
18. The remains of the former army coastal battery Groenendijk Plage at WN Karthauserdünen at the crossroads of the Kinderlaan, Toekomstlaan and Nieuwpoortse Steenweg at Oostduinkerke.
19. The anti-tank gun bunker (677) of WN Coxyde II at the James Ensorlaan at Koksijde.
20. The remains of the command center of the 171<sup>e</sup> Infantry Division at the IJzerheemplein nr 1, Gasthuisstraat nr 6 and Willem Tellaan nr 3 at Diksmuide.
21. The control tower of an German airfield in 1940 at the Westvleterse Weg at Poperinge.

The following sites were rejected :

1. Stp Westkapelle-Haus at Westkapelle with a 117b, a 501 and one Tobruk.
2. The complete Stp Hindenburg at Zeebrugge.
3. WN Schill at Zuienkerke with a 621N (thin walls)
4. Stp Blücher at De Haan because the entire village of De Haan is already protected!
5. A Vf firecontrol bunker at Middelkerke near the airport
6. The last remaining real resistance nest WN Waldersee at Groenendijk
7. The command bunker 608 of WN Coxyde II at Koksijde because it was already demolished before the proposed protection became active.

In subsequent editions of WMF-News we will investigate each site.

## Fort de la Creche

Who remembers the days that the Creche battery was a garbage dump and the bunkers a home for tramps? Since the association AFLC took over the fort, it's getting its third lease of life (initially the French, then the Germans and now a museum).

Actually they are busy with clearing a part of the dry moat and the reconstruction of the paving stones of the barracks square . They are also clearing the steps to an open emplacement of 1879 and the cleaning of a well. They also are going to install a pump. The Conservatoire obtained also a small piece of ground to the east of the battery on which a flanking casemate stands.

Finally they had success with an exhibition about the French torpedo boat hunter Chacal that was bombed by the Germans who manned the Creche guns in May 1940. The Chacal sunk in front of the Dunes de Slack at Ambleteuse.

Source : AFLC Members Letter

## AERIAL PHOTO'S

### France from the air !

On the internet there's now a splendid site on which you can look for your favourite Atlantikwall, Maginot or Séré de Rivières sites. There are excellent guide lines to retrieve them.

See : [www.pagesjaunes.fr](http://www.pagesjaunes.fr)

On the right of this page you have a column in which you see a link to aerial photographs. When you click on it you'll get another page in which you have to enter the name of the village. So, key



in the name of the village next to a bunker site or a fort. The software displays a colour photo of that village. You can zoom in and navigate through this window by dragging while clicking the left mouse button. The result is really fabulous!!! You can't save them, but you can take a print-screen of it to copy it in a drawing software.

Give it a try with for example : Gatteville, Waldam (go to Oldenburg) or Schoenenbourg.

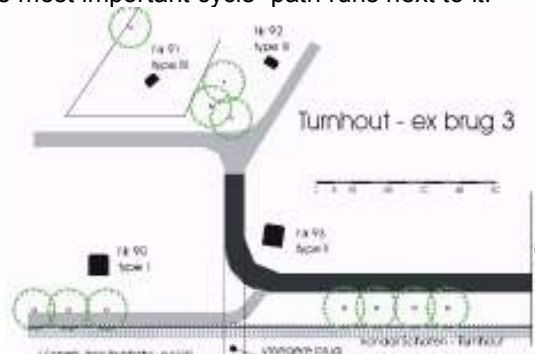
## BELGIUM

### German World War I bunkers preserved

The city of Turnhout bought at the end of December 2005 the bridgehead at the "Gesprongen Brug" for € 8.217. It's a very valuable area for history, ecology and the landscape near the Dessel-Schoten canal at the height of bridge 3 in the Wieltjes. The Germans started at the end of 1916 on this place with the construction of bunkers following standard plans (Regelbauten). It concerns two observation bunkers in first line and two crew bunkers for an open machine gun pit, type I.

These bunkers (no 90, 91, 92 and 93) are a part of the "Antwerpen - Turnhout Stellung". This line goes from the river Schelde in a big bow above Antwerpen to reach the the Dessel-Schoten canal at the height of the Fort of Schoten. From there the line follows the canal to the "Oude Kom" at Turnhout. Then left at the canal to end in the area of the monastery of Corsendonck at Oud Turnhout. 132 bunkers existed in this line from the Fort of Schoten to Oud Turnhout.

The bunkers lie close to the road along the canal and thus is a good accessible site. Moreover the most important cycle path runs next to it.



Observation bunker, nr 93.

Some bunkers lie just next to the area that was bought, but good agreements were already made with owners.

At the rear of the crew bunker, you can see very well the rails that have been used to armor the concrete. The rails came from the tram railroad Turnhout-Geel. Therefore they call them tram- or railroad bunkers.

Nothing remains of the trenches and machine gun pits. The wood used for their construction and that of the barbed wire obstacles were "salvaged" after the war.

An information panel about the German bunker line of 1917 will be put next to the most interesting bunker. It's the intention to add the bunkers to the tourist attractions of Turnhout. In wintertime they will be a hibernation place for bats.

The Simon Stevin Centrum will instruct the city guides and will provide the necessary information for the panel and the tourist leaflet.

Source : George Melis / Rudi Vannunen



## MAGINOT LINE

### GO Molvange

The association of Fermont has sent a request to the French army coordinated by FASF to salvage two turrets of the Molvange work to exhibit in their museum. The army gave them their permission to remove the following turrets : the machinegun turret of Bloc 6 and the artillery turret of Bloc 5. The artillery turret contains 7.5 cm Mle 32. With these turrets Fermont will have an example of each turret of the Maginot line, with the exception of a turret for two mixed weapons. Therefore you have to go to the small work Rohrbach, also called Fort Casso. I know, there is one at the entrance, coming from Le Chesnois, but it's empty. They are working just like at Bréchain. The super heavy domes are replaced on the empty shafts.  
Source : Maginot forum of Yahoo

### PO Laudrefang



Some time ago I received this photo from a friend. He told me that he found it on [maginotmoselle.free.fr](http://maginotmoselle.free.fr). On the photo you bloc 1 with two 81 mm mortars in the diamond ditch. As you can see the ditch has been completely filled with sand. Again a illusion left...

### GO Agaisen

If you pass your holidays this summer in the Alpes Maritimes in the south of France and you want to visit a Maginot work which is not in the regular visiting schema, then you have to go to Sospel to visit the GO Agaisen. The work is open in July, on the 16<sup>th</sup> and on the 30<sup>th</sup> and in August on the 13<sup>th</sup> and on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

## AGENDA

### Open Monuments Day

It's on September the 10<sup>th</sup>. As usual many forts and bunker sites will be open for a visit. The forts of Walem and Liezele will be open.

### Fortified weekend

Like every year, the Davids Fonds organises a fortified weekend. This time, it's the weekend of Sep the 30<sup>th</sup> and Oct the 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 100 years Armoured forts

In the framework of this event VCM organises together with the newspaper "Gazet van Antwerpen" a visit to three concrete forts around Antwerp in October. **Fort Kessel** on Oct the 7<sup>th</sup>, **Fort Stabroek** on Oct the 14<sup>th</sup> and **Fort Liezele** on Oct the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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