



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 2 of 2009

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

Dear Reader,

In this second edition of WMF-News you will read about some interesting items in the army museum in Vienna and you will get some feedback about the Atlantic wall at the Belgian coast. Our French correspondent sent us a couple of photos of the remains of Cointet obstacles and we discover an unknown defence line in Bulgaria with buried tanks. Finally there's some Maginot news and a book review.

Enjoy.

SPOTLIGHT ON A MUSEUM

The Army Museum in Vienna

Vienna, the city of Mozart, Strauss, Franz-Jozef and Maria Theresia has also an army museum. It's located in the Arsenal not far from the Sud-Bahnhof (southern station) of the city.

Of course the accent lies on Austrian history, but I went to see World War I and II. For these subjects they have more space than exhibits. The Army Museum in Brussels is much richer. In spite of new display boxes, it's too dark. You can hardly take any good pictures, again no flash is allowed.

But, the museum is worth a visit for :

- the car in which Franz-Ferdinand was murdered (the start of WW-I). His uniform is also there.
 - you see a mighty 38 cm M1916 Skoda howitzer.
 - and last but not least you see the turret for a 12 cm gun from the fort of Kessel in Belgium.
- Interesting to see is the 30.5 cm shell which is still stuck in it. The Austrians put it on a train after the siege of Antwerp in 1914 and brought it to Vienna.

Source : F Philippart



The Kessel turret



The car of Franz-Ferdinand

ATLANTIKWALL

The machine gun bunker of the Halve Maan at Ostend

On the 4th of January the machine gun bunker of the Halve Maan at Ostend was excavated. Moreover it has been closed for more than 15 years. So we were anxious to know what remains inside. It concerns a Regelbau 515, "MG-Schartenstand am Vorderhang". It's a classic Regelbau with one exception, namely the unusual long entrance tunnel. Inside we noticed that



WMF News

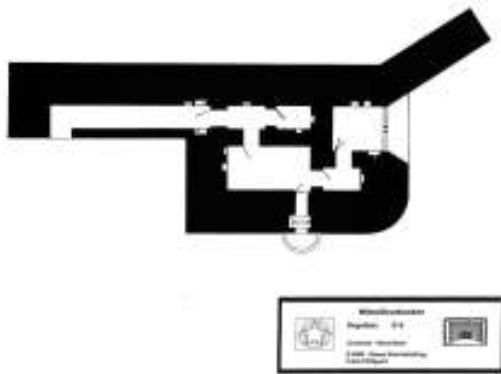
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the Belgian army had used the bunker for storage. All the walls are repainted and all equipment, even the tubes, were gone. However, the thick armoured plate is still there!

Within the renovation project for the east bank of Ostend, the bunker will be integrated in an historical circuit.

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



The schema of the 515.



The machine-gun room with the plate.



Emergency exit.



Crew room.

Tunnel found under the dike in Ostend

The newspapers mention the discovery of a tunnel 1.5 m under the road of the sea-dike on 4th of June. The tunnel was found during excavations for a underground parking. It was built by the Germans during the Second World War. It's the first time that a tunnel of such a length was found : 900 m. Engineers inspected it and it is in a good shape but on some places it's collapsed and no "souvenirs" were found. The tunnel is in brick with a half-round ceiling and it runs from the casino to the seamen memorial.

When looking at the German maps then we can conclude it connected the MKB Kursaal with the Navy commandpost Stp Dietl.



Bunkers at the Wilrijkse plein in Antwerp

The Germinal-Beerschot Football Club is going to rebuild its training camp. On this territory there are three German bunkers that belong to the headquarter of the LXXXIX^e Army Corps of the park De Brand. They are all protected as monuments of historic interest since June 2004. The bunkers are a transmission bunker, Regelbau 618, and two crew bunkers, Regelbau 622. The bunkers will be cleaned, superfluous vegetation will be removed and they will get a rough renovation. Remaining armoured doors will be replaced and steel parts will be treated against corrosion. All the bunkers will come under the control of the vzw Bunker-Vliegtuigarcheo who has the SK1 Atlantic Wall museum in the park De Brand.

Source : Bron : F Philippart

Wurzburg radar preserved!

In WMF-News 2007-2 I mentioned the announcement of Mr Deseyne that the Wurzburg radar from Humain would be coming to Raversijde.

This has since been done! But it still has to be rebuilt.

Photo's taken on 1 May 2009.

Source : F Philippart



Cointets in south-west France



Here are some actual photos of fixation poles for the Cointet element at strongpoint Ar221 Lège Cap Ferret. Unfortunately Jory did not find any remains of a Cointet element in the South-West of France.

Image du SHM de la position Ar45 Pilat a coté d'Arcachon.



Source : Jory Sormail

BULGARIA

An auction of the Bulgarian defence line

This is not actually new news, but I discovered it some while ago. It's from the beginning of 2008.

The Bulgarian Ministry of Defence was preparing an auction of about 140 (figures are varying depending on the source) old World-War II tanks.

During the war Bulgaria received some 97 German Panzer IV tanks, about 100 "Sturmgeschütz III" assault guns and "Jagdpanzer IV" tank destroyers from Germany.

During the Cold War, when Bulgaria was part of the Warsaw Pact, it built bunkers and buried former Soviet and German tanks on its border with Turkey as a defence against NATO.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, Bulgaria joined the NATO in 2004.



A German Panzer IV tank half-buried at the Bulgarian-Turkish border
© AFP Boryana Katsarova



A Russian T34/85 tank turret.

The tanks and their adjacent bunkers were forgotten by the army, but not by souvenir hunters. Bit by bit they were scrapped and it became a lucrative business in Bulgaria.

Mr Blagoy Milenov, deputy director of Bulgaria's National Museum of Military History said that it concerned about 40 German tanks and about 100 Russian T34's built in a second line after the Cyprus crisis of 1974.

It remained calm until the autumn of 2007 when a rare German Jagdpanzer IV L/70 disappeared from the Lesovo region.

The stolen tank was one of about 30 L/70 models remaining worldwide, said Milenov.

The Jagdpanzer IV L/48 model dug out of the field is one of only six of its kind in the world, he said. Since then a Bulgarian officer and two German civilians have been arrested.

In March 2008 12 tanks have been excavated so far. A defence ministry agency is storing them until the army



A German Jagdpanzer IV L/48 tank
© AFP boryana



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decides their fate. But the army doubted their value, because these tanks are completely stripped by collectors.

Nevertheless, huge amounts are bid for them. A bid of 22,000 USD was received for one Soviet gun turret. Even more amazing, a Russian collector offered 2.5 million euros to buy one of the museum's own models, a German Panzer IV.

Sources : <http://www.wehrmacht-awards.com/forums/showthread.php?t=339613>

<http://news.sawf.org/Lifestyle/48337.aspx>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88616249>

MAGINOT LINE

Ouvrage A2 Fermont

The Maginot fortress Fermont has recently extended its outside museum (next to the ammunition entrance) and will have a surface of almost 1000 m². Today you may visit the part already in spite of it not being 100% ready. In this museum they display the guns of almost all artillery and infantry types. Fermont had already three eclipsing turrets (2x75 mm, 2x135 mm and 2x81 mm



mortar) of the Bréhain fortress whereby you could look in the gun rooms. This year they added their collection with the complete mechanism (gun room, control mechanism and balance mechanism) of two other turrets of the Molvange fortress (2x75 mm and machinegun). When you stand next to it, you will get an impressive sight of the knowhow from then and how great and detailed these turrets with their mechanisms were created.

Other new items for this year are the various displays with different pieces of artillery that give you a realistic view how they were manned and

served;

In other words, a unique collection and probably also the most complete and biggest exhibition of all possible defence tools of a Maginot fortress.

The classic visit that precedes the museum remains unchanged. You still visit the big ammunition storage, the barracks, the kitchen, the engine room, etc, and the original train brings you still to artillery block 4 (3 x 75 mm).

This fortress is certainly worth the visit.

Source : E LEYSEN

Maginot fortress for sale



On the German Ebay is a large house for sale in village Lembach. Together with the house they sell the small work Lembach in the Alsace. It consist of a small entrance, two infantry casemates and an observation block. The price is 249.000 EUR.

Source : Erik Janssen



BOOKS

Le Mur D'Atlantique dans la Baie de Wissant (du Cap Blanc-nez au Cris-nez)

This book counts approximately 168 pages and gives an overview of the majority and most important strongpoints of the German Atlantikwall between the Cap Blanc-Nez and the Cap Gris-Nez. It gives the complete and technical description of about 50 strongpoints, richly illustrated with location schema's and detail drawings. There are more than 100 bunker plans and about 200 black and white photo's of which half are period-taken pictures. All possible details are mentioned like in- and outside measurements of the bunkers, the frequencies of the FuMo51-radar, the different types of ammunition of the Todt battery, etc...



In other words, a unique and complete reference book about the Bay of Wissant where the Germans built a huge amount of bunkers of which the majority is still present today!

Authors : Hervé Olejniczak, Jörg Poweleit, Dirk Peeters & Yannick Delefosse

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Source : E.Leysen

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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