



SPOTLIGHT ON A MUSEUM

"For Freedom" museum at Ramskapelle (Knokke-Heist)



This brand new museum is located in a cute, quiet village just behind Heist. The architect was the same as for the Dead Man's Corner museum in Normandy. You expect that the main focus lies on the liberation of the region by the Canadians in 1944 and that's true. You see nice, large scale dioramas and many mannequins in Canadian uniforms. On the other hand you see also uniforms which have nothing to do with the liberation but with the war in general, which is a bit strange. Outside there's a hall with

the vehicles with some rare items, namely a German halftrack Sdkfz 251 Ausf D, a German light tank 38 (t) and a nice Buffalo landing craft.

As far as fortifications are concerned, you see a German soldier in the uniform of the navy coastal batteries and a French tank turret that came from a Tobruk.

It's also nice to know that the museum is still growing because some dioramas are still under construction.

Open from Easter to mid-november from 1000 Hr to 1700 Hr. From mid-November to Easter open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1000 Hr to 1700 Hr.

Ramskapellestraat 91/93, Knokke-Heist. Tel : 050/68.71.30.

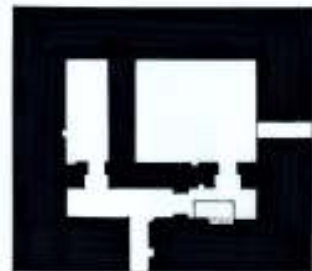
www.museumforfreedom.be Email : info@forfreedommuseum.be



ATLANTIKWALL

FlaK bunker, L409, found at Ostend

One of our members, Pierre Nowak, and his team, excavated in the beginning of this year a FlaK bunker in the dunes between Fort Napoleon and the dike. He found the bunker after research in the archives. The bunker was almost completely covered with sand, just the roof was visible. After the excavation he got the confirmation it is a L409. The open gun emplacement was demolished after the war because it didn't fit anymore in the post-war world. The crew room of the bunker is not damaged but completely stripped of steel attributes. The ammunition room however shows traces of an internal explosion. A particular item is a large niche with a hole in the ground in the gas lock. Here stood probably a water pump. In the





entrance he could see the bunker number, namely **Ostende 01/II-108**. On one of the walls of the crew room are the remains of a drawing and they could recognize the name "**Hundius**". This brings us to the unit that manned the bunker. It was a Zug (section) with three guns. There was a second L409 situated between this L409 and the nearest 671 bunker of the MKB Hundius. The Flak pit of the third gun was on the roof of the fort. We know from the Gliederung that the Hundius battery had one 2 cm gun and two 4 cm Bofors guns. Are these the FlaK battery of the Hundius battery? We can assume it is, because the FlaK bunkers of the Halve Maan belonged to a Luftwaffe unit : IInd Zug of the 4th Battery of FlaK Abteilung 252.

Photos : Pierre Nowak



The entrance of the crew room.



The drawing with "Hundius"

Luftschutzbunker at Ostend

This huge air-raid shelter is hidden behind the buildings of the Bootsman Johnson barracks. WMF made a file sent it to the Ministry of Monuments & Landscapes with the question if something could be done to give it a new destination. The file was processed and finally Minister Geert Bourgeois visited the bunker in 2010 and it was protected in 2011 as a monument of history. See *WMF-News 2009-3* for an article about this bunker.

Source : De Standaard, 9 Feb 2011

WESTWALL

He who would like to visit the Westwall has to find his way to the Saarland near the French-German border. Lots of bunkers survived here thanks to protests from the local population. The fact is that this area was densely populated due to the industry and after the war the occupation force was busy destroying the bunkers. That caused too much vibration and damage to the houses that the people were rebuilding, so that they started to protest and the authorities stopped the demolitions.

Some of these bunkers are completely restored as museums. In this newsletter I want to focus on two huge bunkers for a Sechsschartenturm (6 embrasures turret).





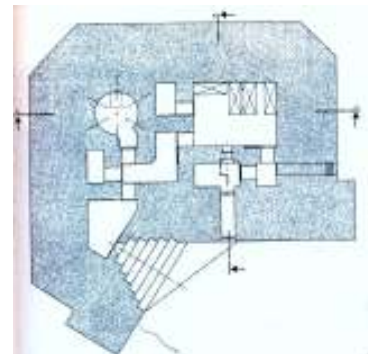
Westwallmuseum Beckingen

This bunker is a Regelbau 114a for a "Sechsschartenturm" (6 embrasures turret). It's located in the Pfaffenkopfweg at Beckingen. It's a huge lump of concrete that has been built in strength A which means that it has walls of 3,5 m thick! Your attention is directly attracted to the enormous embrasure for the flanking combat room. The armoured plate used for it is a 422P01. This is an armoured plate with a loop hole and an observation slit. This time the builders have left some space in the concrete for



the observation slit (usually this one is hidden behind the concrete). There is one entrance and that means also that it has an emergency exit. Notice the rare steel fence to close the bunker in a first instance. Inside there are a crew room, a storage room, mainly for food, an ammunition room, the flanking defence room and the turret room. That place consists of three levels, the ground level with two filters, an intermediate level and the turret itself. Two machine guns MG34 are mounted on a specific gun-carriage. This carriage could be served for each loop hole, but not next

to each other because there was no space for it. Loop holes that are not used are closed with a heavy lock. On the carriage was place to store the spare barrels. On the mounting there was also the aiming site for the machine gun. In the middle of the turret is the place for the periscope. There are also three other loopholes for an additional telescope. The roof of the turret is painted in six compartments with a different colour and each compartment has a number. The reason for that is that orders about a target in a certain sector were given as "yellow five". When the men couldn't hear the entire sentence due to an explosion, they always could hear the first or the last part of it being "yellow..." or "...five" and they still would know the



direction.

The total crew of the bunker was 12 men, under command of an NCO. Each machine gun was manned by three men, thus six in the turret. (maybe a 7th for the periscope?)

Actually the team is restoring the bunker for opening in August of this year. For the turret they have a gun carriage, the aiming site, a MG 34 and a telescope. In the flanking combat room we noticed a restored gun carriage and a complete



filter (the filters are everywhere present) The crew room is still under construction but we noticed already the telephone, a bunker stove and a bunker toilet.

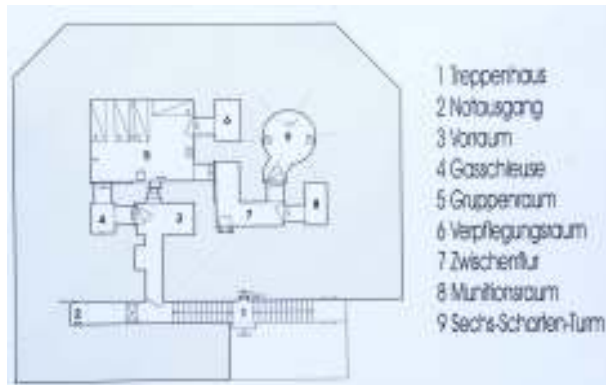
If you want to visit this bunker, you have to make contact with the relevant person :

Axel Jungmann. axelfi@t-online.de

Mobile : 49 1708342535.

PS. Next to the bunker is also a Regelbau 2 with a crew room and an gun embrasure (still with its armoured plate). Unfortunately this one is firmly closed and the plate is overgrown.

Westwallmuseum Dillingen



This bunker is also a Regelbau 114b SK, a bunker for a Sechschartenturm, just like the one of Beckingen. However there are a few exceptions. First it's the mirror image of the Beckingen bunker and this one has no close defence room because it's completely built underground.

You'll find the bunker in Pachten, near Dillingen at the crossing of the Annastrasse and the Wilhelmstrasse.

You enter the bunker via a deep entrance with a staircase. Here you see the bunker's name : Douamont. Once you are down you see the shaft for the emergency exit. This part of the bunker makes it that it is a SK (Sonderkonstruktion = special construction) Then you enter the bunker via the classic entrance. Notice also the rare steel fence. In the gas lock there is a rack with tools. The crew room is entirely restored with bunks, stove (WT80K), filters,



telephone, period pictures, ... The storage and ammunition room are very nicely restored with a cupboard with provisions and ammo crates. Notice also that the niches for the electricity is empty. It was the intention to bring electricity in the bunker, but it never happened (just like in the Beckingen bunker). But in 1944 the Germans brought electricity in it via a cable via the entrance! If you look around in the crew room you will see only two niches for a carbide lamp. (it must be very dark there at that time!) There's also a rather painful detail. The winter of 1939-40 was extremely cold and the soldiers closed everything firmly and the stove kept on burning. That caused many casualties due to the



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carbon monoxide. To avoid that the guard had to call the command post every hour to let them know they were still alive!

Finally you come in the turret. Here you see a very nice mounting with a MG34 and its aiming device. Here is also a telescope for one of the three small loop holes.

Another interesting detail is the fact that the Germans dismantled the bunkers from June 1940 on to use the equipment in the bunkers of the Atlantikwall. They started "refurbishing" them again in 1944.

You can visit the bunker every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month from 1400 Hr to 1800 Hr from April to October.

Webside : www.bunker20.de

I think you can also make an appointment with the owner of the bunker, Mr Johannes Dräger.

Email : Johannes_draeger@yahoo.de

Other bunkers in the region of Dillingen

See the book "Der Westwall im Raum Dillingen von 1936 bis heute"

In the chapter about the books.

BELGIUM

The command bunker at the Kimmelberg

The Belgian command post of the Cold War is now open to the public.

You can visit the bunker from April on Tuesday and Saturday. Visits take place in groups at 1000 Hr, 1145 Hr, 1330 and 1515 Hr. Duration of the visit is 1.30 hour.

Tickets: € 3 pp. Individuals, € 2 pp. Groups, € 1 pp. younger than 26 year. Guide: € 2.

Groups are also welcome (Min 20) 50 € for a group.

The bunker is located at the Lettingstraat 64, 8950 Heuvelland - Kimmel.

Tickets only at VVV Heuvelland, Reningelststraat 11, 8950 Heuvelland - Kimmel. 32 (0) 57.44.89.99 or at toerisme@heuvelland.be. You'd best book your tickets in advance because only 49 persons are allowed together in the bunker for security reasons.

Visit the fort of Barchon

Many things have been changed in the fort like the staircase to the 120 mm turret. In several rooms you can see information and artifacts of the two world wars and there is a movie about the combat actions during the wars and the history of the fort. This year the movie will also be in the Dutch language. A must see is the huge ventilation tower of the fort.

You can visit the fort every 2nd Sunday from April to November.

On request you can visit the fort with groups of 15 persons and more. Prepare and take a jacket, appropriate shoes and a torch.

Info at : www.fortbarchon.be and by Mr Omer Meyer at mobile 32 87 63 13 28.



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FOR SALE

* 25 Signals. Dutch- en French editions

Magazines from 1940, 1941, 1942 and one magazine from 1943.

It's not the top quality, what do you expect looking at the bad quality of paper and the age. But, it is original! Moreover for who is interested in the Maginot line, railroad guns, the desert, the eastern front and other campaigns it's a nice deal with very nice pictures in color and black and white. If you want an overview of the magazine, just send me mail and I'll give you the list.

Make me an offer and they are yours!

Frank.philippart@telenet.be

BOOKS

* Der Westwall im Raum Dillingen von 1936 bis heute

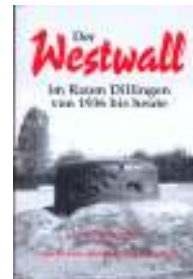
We bought this book in Bunker 20 in Pachten. It contains a copy of a position map 1939 with all the bunker built in and around Dillingen and Pachten. The book gives a short description of the construction of the Westwall and what happened in 1944-45. The major part of the book shows pictures and plans of the bunkers on the map. The bunkers are numbered like the original numbers on the map. At the end you have an overview of the actual situation of the bunkers.

It's certainly a must have if you want to visit the Westwall there.

But you must also map to merge the old map with.

The authors are Johannes Dräger and Stefan Reuter. It's published in 2006 by Geschichtswerkstatt Dillingen. The book contains 238 pages and it costs 20 €. Language : german.

More info : Email : [Johannes draeger@yahoo.de](mailto:Johannes_draeger@yahoo.de)



* Regelbauten der Luftwaffe

This book has more than 100 pages of bunker of the German airforce, the Luftwaffe.

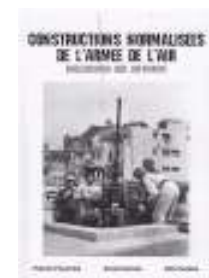
208 pages - Cost price : 17 €

To order :

Belgium : 17 € + 3€ (port) to herbots.karel@skynet.be

Europe : 17€ + 3€ (port) to Patrick Fleuridas kerfleu@yahoo.fr

Rest of the world : contact the authors



* 29 Mei 1940. Tancremont houdt nog steeds stand

During the last study visit of SSC to the fort of Tancremont I discovered this book. Initially it's written in French and this is the translation. The book starts with an overview of the history before the war with all the political and military movements of Germany. Don't fear, it's kept short, but interesting. Then follows the description of the fort. But the major part is story of the fort seen by two soldiers. The story has been made with their diaries. At the end there's also the history of one of the observation bunkers also by means of the diary of the chef of the casemate. One minor point, the quality of the photos could be better.

Conclusion, a very interesting book to know what happened with the fort.

It's a paperback version and has 121 pages.. The author is René Gilis.

Editor : ASBL Amicale du fort de Tancremont. Published in 1999.





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Price 10 €.
As far as I know it's only for sale in the fort.

*** A new Belgian editor**

There is a new editor in Belgium for books about military constructions:
Editions du Patrimoine Militaire
5, Clos Marie Popelin
4800 VERVIERS

*** Le fort d' Eben – Emael – Genèse et description de l' ouvrage – Tome 1**

This book is the first edition of the " Editions du Patrimoine Militaire". The author is Franck Vernier, well known by his books about forts and bunker lines around Liege.

The book describes the project and the construction of the fort. He talks about the barracks, the engine rooms, the ventilation, the combat blocs, etc with plans and photos. The scope of this book is more technical.

It counts more than 100 pages and it's written in French.

You can the book by transferring € 24 + € 3,95 port to account IBAN : BE55 132 524 659 44. BIC : BNAGBEBB. Pass your address too to www.editionsdupatrimoine.be .



*** “Big Business met nazi-Duitsland”**

Probably you have been asking yourself how World War 2 was financed? What caused that war? Was Hitler the inventor of the anti-semitic ideas? What was the role of the US in that war? How did Germany got all the modern technology to start a war?

This book gives an answer to all these questions. The owners of the large industries and banks feared the upcoming communism because they would no longer be able to make profits. To eliminate potential threats like communists and unions they needed a dictator... The author explains how they fixed it to lead Hitler into power. You read about the transactions of the big German companies and also about the strange behaviour of large US companies like Ford, General Motors, ITT, IBM and others.



It's an interesting book that gives an insight to a part of the history which was not clear at all until now. Moreover you discover that the behaviour of the large companies hasn't changed much nowadays!

Author : Jacques R Pauwels
Editor : Epo. Published in 2009. Pages : 235.
Isbn : 978 90 6445 129 4

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

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