



SPOTLIGHT ON A MUSEUM

New! BASTOGNE ARDENNES 44 MUSEUM



This is a new museum about the battle of the Ardennes in 1944 at Bastogne along the road N84 from Bastogne to Wiltz (Luxemburg).

The museum is actually (July 2012) not yet 100% ready but they are working hard at one level to create a battlefield scenery. The collection which is already displayed (about 70% of the total surface) is absolutely worth seeing! Everything is displayed in a very authentic and realistic way in a very nice décor of pine trees, a living room, a stable, etc. ...

More detailed information about tariffs, opening hours, ... you can find on following website : <http://www.bastogneardennes44.com/NL/index.html>

Source : MLE

Museum : Bunker d'Hitler



This site is located in Brûly-de-Pesche. This tiny village lies in the southern part of Belgium in a forest in the middle of a triangle between Chimay, Couvin and Rocroi (Fr).

For 5 € you can visit the bunker, two chalets, a wooden shelter and you can make a small tour along the pool and the Omega construction. In the first chalet you have a lot of photos about Hitler's stay, a scale model of the village and the bunker site and a documentary. The second is dedicated to the local resistance. Here you have a small diorama with models, equipment, photo's and again a documentary.



The armoured door 434P01



The only room was closed with an armoured door of an unknown type.



The loophole was closed with an armoured plate that looks like a type 57P8.

Brûly-de-Pesche, Hitler's commandpost (FHQu) in Belgium in June 1940

The subject of Adolf Hitler still creates controversy and that will continue for a long time. It's so touchy that a few years ago a show including him in a series about the preferred food of famous personalities was cancelled. We consider him as an historical character who had a serious impact on the world for several years. In this framework we want to draw attention to the headquarters that was situated in Belgium in 1940 for a couple of weeks. This means that we do not associate ourselves with his ideology, but denying him completely is historically not correct. He existed and keeping silent about him will not change that history.

Background

Hitler has commanded the campaign against Poland from out off a special equipped train wagon, but for the western campaign he wanted to dispose of fixed headquarters. To meet this requirement, they built the "Felsennest" in the Eifel region, not that far from the border in Germany. It was located in Rodert near Bad Münstereifel. 1050 m² concrete buildings were built for this HQ. At 12 Km from the new HQ was the airfield Odendorf, but Hitler travelled with his



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

entourage by train at 9 May 1940 from Berlin to the Felsennest. He arrived there on the 10th one half hour before the offensive on Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg started at 0435 Hr (Belgian time). How this offensive went is material for another article.

Not long after the start of the hostilities and the advance to the West the search for a new adequate location for a headquarter started. Hitler wanted to follow the advance and didn't want to stay too far behind the lines.

The quick advance of the German troops in 1940

In the first instance they looked for new headquarters to the north of France, but the Maginot bunkers to the east of Avesnes or to the south of Maubeuge were not suitable. On 22 May 1940 Colonel Schmundt (head adjutant of Hitler), Captain Engel (Adjutant of Hitler for the army), Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas (successor of Erwin Rommel as commander of the Big Headquarter) and "Reichsminister" Todt flew to Philipville to land in Charleville. By car they searched for a perfect location. They chose a small, discrete, rural village that lay at 6 Km from Couvin, Brûly-de-Pesche. The small village lay in the middle of a forest. A few kilometres away was the airfield of Gros Caillou which was important for communications. The village was strategically located in the framework of the future operations. Moreover the main communications cable was nearby to which they could connect Brûly-de-Pesche rather quickly.



Hitler in conversation with Göring next to one of the chalets. Notice the white strips on the trees to avoid light during the night. Source : DVD "Hitler, Brûly-de-Pesche, Juni 1940"

The Organisation Todt started on 26th May with the infrastructure works under the command of Captain Bertram. The entire area was forbidden to everyone "Sperrgebiet" and had to be evacuated. This concerned 28 villages, in the surroundings of Chimay and Couvin. 3 hours after the order a

few thousand civilians of the area had to leave their houses. The houses had to be closed and the key with a name tag put back in the lock. Of course the civilians did not hear why they had to leave their houses. About 80 inhabitants from just outside the "Sperrgebiet" were taken as hostages to the prison of Dinant. The arrival of Hitler was foreseen on 6 June whereby the labourers had to work on from 0600 Hr till 2230 Hr to get ready in time.

In the beginning of June, the general staff was moved to Couvin, while the Supreme Headquarters of the Army (Oberkommando des Heeres) was moved to Forges near Chimay. Hermann Göring (supreme commander of the Luftwaffe), Heinrich Himmler (Reichsführer SS) and Joachim von Ribbentrop (minister of foreign affairs) settled down in Yvoir (in his train "Asien" on the track near a tunnel), in the castle d'Ardenne in Houyet and in the royal castle of Ciergnon.

The Germans installed a barrier of barbed wire around the area and on the four corners there were ant-aircraft guns. The OT succeeded in finishing the job by using lots of labourers and working long hours, although they didn't want to work with lamps due to the war situation. In the village school a large room was emptied to allow Hitler and his staff to follow the operations on maps. For the senior officers there were rooms prepared in the rectory and the nearby sheds and



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

stables. In the wood they built three wooden chalets and a concrete bunker nearby Hitler's chalet. During the construction the material was always camouflaged with branches and bushes.

On Thursday, 6 June 1940 at 1200 Hr Hitler's airplane took off from the Odendorf airfield to fly to the new headquarters. Two other planes followed it with on board officers from the team of Hitler and soldiers of the security command. Hitler was awaited at the airfield of Caillou and brought to Brûly-de-Pesche where he arrived at 1330 Hr. He called his new headquarter "Wolfsschlucht". When he arrived they had just removed the shuttering of the bunker and there was still some water dripping out of the ceiling and the walls.

Description



The village in 1940. Source :
DVD "Hitler, Brûly-de-Pesche,
Juni 1940"



1. Chalet
2. Bunker for Hitler
3. Mess
4. Operational HQ of the Wehrmacht
5. Local HQ
6. Church
7. Bunker
8. Pool
9. Omega
10. Airstrip

Map : F Philippart



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

One of the chalets was intended for the exclusive use of Hitler and was equipped with a bedroom, a living room and a bathroom. A few meters away stood the bunker. According to witnesses the bunker has never been used by Hitler, not even when a few British airplanes dropped bombs in the neighbourhood.

A second chalet on the other side of the bunker served as the mess for Hitler and his staff and the third served for the operational staff of the Wehrmacht (Major-General Jodl and his adjutant).



**Actual view on the entrance of the village. Left, the former school, in the distance the rectory. Right the pub.
Photo : D Maes**

The church clocks were removed and in the space vacated a cistern was installed. The church was used as a cinema in which Hitler watched the movies to censor. It was also used as the dormitory for his bodyguard . The school became the card room and the

residence of Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel and his adjutant. The adjutants of Hitler stayed in the rectory.

The local inn housed the press, while the shed was used as restaurant and cinema. On the other side of the street a second bunker was built for other people of Hitler's staff, but it has never been used. Next to that a third bunker was under construction in the wood, but never finished.

**The church of Brûly-de-Pesche in which the capitulation conditions were translated during the night of 20-21 April.
Photo : D Maes**

They foresaw a small landing strip for the light Fieseler Storch reconnaissance aircraft in the neighbourhood of the second bunker. It was mainly Hermann Göring who arrived from Yvoir in that kind of plane. The house not too far from the inn was used as the local headquarters (Kommandatur). The Organisation Todt created in the neighbourhood of the chalets a circle in the shape of the character omega and a small pool.



Wolfsschlucht I during the war

Hitler's schedule whilst in Brûly-de-Pesche was not different than that during other periods of the war. It was said that he worked mainly at night because he was persuaded that he could think better in the quietness of the night. Allied airplanes flew over the area and some bombs were dropped, but there was never a direct assault and there were never casualties. He never used the bunker.



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

A conference with the American journalist and with the Spanish General Vigon took place on 16th June in the castle of Acoz in the neighbourhood of Charleroi at about 50 Km from Brûly-de-Pesche.



Hitler with Rudolf Hess in the map room of the school after his unattended arrival at the HQ. Source : DVD "Hitler, Brûly-de-Pesche, Juni 1940"

The supreme commander of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring visited three times Brûly-de-Pesche to meet Hitler. Twice he used the Fieseler Storch that could land in the village. The third time he used a Mercedes car. The supreme commander of the army, Von Brauchitsch also met Hitler several times to discuss the operations. Erich Raeder, supreme commander of the navy, also

met Hitler there to discuss an eventual landing in England. Rudolf Hess arrived unforeseen at the headquarters, a few days after it was finished. He had a chat with Hitler and wanted to go to the front, but Hitler refused it, because he wanted to have a reliable man as backup. Therefore he ordered Hess to return to München which was a disappointment for him.

Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler visited Hitler four times there, but the minister of propaganda, Josef Goebbels didn't go to the headquarters. Although he had several telephone conversations with Hitler during the period that he was in Brûly-de-Pesche.

Hitler accompanied Göring along the church after a visit to the HQ. Source : DVD "Hitler, Brûly-de-Pesche, Juni 1940"



During the campaign in France the Germans got several successes and quickly they were looking for a new headquarters. For this they inspected the railroad tunnel in Rilly to the south of Reims, but on 17th July the reconnaissance's were stopped because they had received a request for peace terms with the intervention of the Spanish government. So, temporally there was no need any more for a new headquarters in the framework for the battle of France. On 17th June, Hitler left at 1845 Hr for the nearby airfield to leave from there to Frankfurt. From Frankfurt He took the train to München to meet Mussolini to get a common point of view about the peace conditions concerning France. Hitler succeeded in persuading Mussolini to drop his territorial claims to France.



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

On 20th June the head of the translation service was called in to Brûly-de-Pesche to translate the peace conditions into the French language. This had to be ready by the next day and they worked the whole night in the church by candle light. During the night they were visited a few times by Keitel and even Hitler who wanted to be sure that the translation should be ready in time and that he had also the possibility to make some changes.

It was also from Brûly-de-Pesche that Hitler started with two former comrades of the Great War a tour of the battlefields where they fought.

During these 22 days of the active period of the headquarters there were only two casualties. One guard died during the cleaning of his gun and a labourer of the Organisation Todt made a deadly fall during a repair of the roof of the church.

After the departure of Adolf Hitler

Hitler left on 28th June 1940 at 0800 Hr from the nearby airfield of Gros Caillou to arrive at 1100 Hr in "Tannenberg", his next headquarters in East-Prussia.

On 27th June an order was given that a number of inhabitants may return to their properties from 29th June on. In Brûly-de-Pesche the Organisation Todt was sent in to restore the village as much as possible to its original shape. They dismantled the three chalets and they took the material with them. In the beginning of July the other inhabitants were allowed to return to their houses, but it was only in April 1941 they discovered by an article in the Illustrierter Beobachter why they had to leave their houses in 1940.

David Maes

Sources

FOCKEN, Christel, "FHQ Führerhauptquartiere: Wolfsschanze", 2008

FOCKEN, Christel, "FHQ Führerhauptquartiere: Riese", 2008

HANSEN, Hans-Josef, "Felsennest, Das vergessene Führerhauptquartier in der Eifel", 2006

MATHOT, René, "Hitler in België", 2000

SEIDLER, Franz W., e.a., "Die Führerhauptquartiere, Anlagen und Planungen in Zweiten Weltkrieg", 2001



A reconstruction of a wooden shelter of the local resistance at the area of the museum. Photo : F Philippart



WMF News

WMF is a section of the Simon Stevin Centrum
Edition 3 of 2012

Composed by Frank PHILIPPART

Hitler's Other Headquarters

Name	Location	Start construction	Finished	In use
Adlerhorst	Langenhain-Ziegenberg (Taunus)	01/09/1939	yes	yes
Tannenberg	Freudenstadt/Kniebis	01/10/1939	yes	yes (from 28 June 1940 till 5 July 1940)
Waldwiese	Glan-Münchweiler	01/10/1939	yes	no
Felsenest	Rodert (near Bad Münstereifel)	Unknown	yes	yes (from 10 May till 6 June 1940)
Wolfsschlucht I	Brûly-de-Pesche (België)	26/05/1940	yes	yes (from 6 June till 28 June 1940)
Anlage Süd	Strzyzow	01/10/1940	yes	no
Wolfsschanze	Rastenburg	01/12/1940	yes	yes
Anlage Mitte	Tomaszow	01/12/1940	yes	no
Bärenhöhle	Smolensk	01/10/1941	yes	no
Wehrwolf	Winniza	01/11/1941	yes	yes
W3	Saint-Rimay	01/05/1942	no	no
Wolfsschlucht II	Margival	01/09/1942	yes	yes
Wasserburg	Pskow	01/11/1942	yes	no
Olga	Orscha (200 km from Minsk)	01/07/1943	no	no
Riese	Walim	01/11/1943	no	no
Siegfried	Pullach (near München)	1943	yes	yes
Zigeuner	Diedenhofen	01/04/1944	no	no
Olga	Ohrdruf	End 1944	no	no
Wolfsschlucht III	100km southwest of Paris	unknown		
Anlage Süd (2)	Krosno (Poland)	unknown		

Fig. 1: Führer headquarters (modified from out "FHQ: Riese" pag. 9). Some headquarters are known under a different names.

Thanks to Yvonne Mayo for the spell check.

=====