



65th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge

Media Kit

Press Release

- Belgians, Americans celebrate 65th anniversary of landmark WWII victory

Fact Sheets

- Calendar of Events in Bastogne
- Calendar of Events near Bastogne
- Battle of the Bulge
- 32nd Bastogne Historical Walk (includes route maps)
- U.S.-Bastogne Partnership
- Official Color Guard
- USAG Benelux
- Chièvres Air Base History
- “Nuts!”

Bios

- Howard Gutman, U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium
- Col. James Drago Jr., commander, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux
- Lt. Col. Henri Badot-Bertrand, commander, 1st Artillery Regiment, Bastogne
- Maurice Sperandieu, Bastogne Historical Walk organizer & WWII veteran



PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Kevin Downey, Public Information Officer
32 (0)68.27.5910 until 4 p.m. Dec. 8
Or 32 (0)475-950798 from Dec. 9-13

Kevin.Downey2@us.army.mil
Public Affairs Office
7950 Chièvres, Belgium

Belgians, Americans celebrate 65th anniversary of landmark WWII victory

CHIÈVRES, Belgium – Sixty-five years after World War II's landmark Battle of the Bulge, U.S. and Belgian troops will again march side-by-side in Bastogne, Belgium, Dec. 12-13.

Veterans and service members from both nations will join thousands of well-wishers, including town officials, dignitaries and local citizens, in commemorating the Allied forces' victory during the famous World War II battle.

“The traditional carnival-like atmosphere in Bastogne over the weekend celebrates the historic grit and determination of our two nations' veterans 65 years ago, and the solemn ceremony at the Mardasson Memorial overlooking the city honors the great sacrifices our countrymen have made,” said U.S. Army Garrison Benelux commander Col. James P. Drago. “The spirit of which our Benelux community shares with the citizens of Bastogne demonstrates the undying bond between our Allied nations.”

-30-



Calendar of Events

In Bastogne

Dec. 12

8 a.m.

- 32nd Historical Walk, with marches of 8, 12, 16 or 23 kilometers starting in Bastogne.

2:30 p.m.

- Parade through Bastogne with commemorative ceremony including a wreath laying at Gen. Patton's Monument and McAuliffe Square. The event will feature U.S. and Belgian World War II veterans.

4 p.m.

- Traditional "Walnut Festival" with throwing of walnuts from the balcony of the Town Hall into the crowd by the mayor of Bastogne and dignitaries.

8 p.m.

- Historical re-enactment show in Bastogne.

8 p.m.

- Memorial ceremony at the nearby Mardasson Memorial, honoring the memory of more than 75,000 U.S. Soldiers killed or wounded during the Battle of the Bulge.

Dec. 13

11 a.m.

- Paratrooper drop at the Mardasson Memorial.

2:30 p.m.

- Military vintage vehicle convoy through Bastogne.



Dec. 9 – 31

- 65th Anniversary Display at the Battle of the Bulge Museum in La Roche-en-Ardenne, including more than 20 uniforms from veterans of the battle.

Dec. 11 through Jan. 3

- Photographic display by the Royal Army Museum and Military History at the Tourist Office at Arlon.

Dec. 11

- Display of vintage vehicles and World War II equipment, downtown Arlon.
- “Remember 44” concert by the U.S. Air Force Band at the Saint Martin’s Church in Arlon. Free entrance.

Dec. 12

10 a.m.

- Allied and German WWII camp set up at Vaux-sur-Sûre

11 a.m.

- Unveiling of a plaque honoring the U.S. Air Force at Fouches (Arlon)
- Re-enactment of the 87th Infantry Division battle at Remagne (Libramont)

2 p.m.

- Vintage vehicle parade and static display at Arlon

4:30 p.m.

- Vintage vehicle parade leaves Arlon for Clairefontaine

5:30 p.m.

- Sound & Light show on the Battle of the Bulge at Vaux-sur-Sûre (shuttle from Bastogne departs at 5 p.m. and returns at 7:30 p.m.)

9 p.m.

- Liberation 44 Ball at the Institut Notre-Dame in Arlon



Calendar of Events

Near Bastogne

Dec. 13

9:45 a.m.

- Commemorative ceremony and unveiling of a plaque in presence of 87th Infantry Division veterans at downtown Remagne.

10:15 a.m.

- Vintage vehicle parade leaves Remagne to Quatre Bras, Bonnerue.

10 :30 a.m.

- Ceremony in presence of two 87th Infantry Division veterans at Quatre Bras, Bonnerue.

11:15 a.m.

- Unveiling of a monument honoring the 326th Medical Company, 101st Airborne division at Barrière Hinck, Sainte Ode.

2 p.m.

- Sound & Light show on the Battle of the Bulge at Vaux-sur-Sûre.
- Official ceremony at the Baugnez (Malmedy) memorial honoring the victims of the Malmedy massacre.



Battle of the Bulge

Beginning of battle

- Sept. 16, 1944, Hitler announced his decision to prepare a counterattack out of the Ardennes with the objective of occupying Antwerp.
- Dec. 16, 1944, more than 200,000 German troops and nearly 1,000 tanks launched Adolf Hitler's attempt to drive forward to the English Channel, after being stopped previously by the actions on and after D-Day.
- Germans struck in the Ardennes Forest over a 85-mile stretch
- Four American divisions were stationed in the forest for rest and rejuvenation.
- Germans broke through the American front, seized key crossroads and advanced toward the Meuse River.

Challenges throughout battle

- Dec. 17, 1944, Belgian civilians and 86 unarmed American Soldiers were taken prisoner and massacred on the spot in what now is known as the Malmédy Massacre.
- English-speaking Germans disguised themselves as American Soldiers, captured critical bridges, cut communications lines, struck fear into the Belgian townspeople and spread rumors among the American forces.
- Soldiers faced frigid winter weather conditions of freezing rain, snow and fog along with a mix of wooded, muddy, hilly terrain and populous villages.
- During points of the battle, ammunition, medical supplies, fuel and other necessities were scarce and had to be rationed.

Turning point

- Dec. 18, 1944, the first shells fell on the city of Bastogne.
- The Supreme Allied Commander, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, rushed reinforcements to hold the shoulders of the German penetration.
- Within days, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. had turned his Third U.S. Army to the north and was counterattacking against the German flank.
- Soldiers delayed armored spearheads with obstinate defenses of vital crossroads, moved or burned critical gasoline stocks to keep them from the fuel-hungry German tanks and came up with questions on arcane Americana to stump possible Nazi infiltrators.
- Local civilians and Belgian Soldiers who volunteered to serve with the Americans also did their part to provide aid to the American Soldiers and to slow the Nazi advance.
- By Dec. 20, 1944, Bastogne had become an armed camp with four airborne regiments, seven battalions of artillery, a self-propelled tank destroyer battalion and the surviving tanks, infantry and engineers from two armored combat commands all under the 101st Airborne Division.
- Dec. 21, 1944, Germans closed in on Bastogne and surrounded the city.



Battle of the Bulge

- At the critical road junctions of St. Vith and Bastogne, American tankers and paratroopers fought off repeated attacks, and when the acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne was summoned by his German adversary to surrender on Dec. 22, he simply responded, “Nuts!”
- Through January, American troops, often wading through deep snow drifts, attacked the sides of the shrinking bulge until they had restored the front and set the stage for the final drive to victory.
- The last shells fell on Bastogne on Jan. 15, 1945, but the battle ensued in the region for another 10 days.

The Battle of the Bulge numbers

- **Military Strength = more than 1,000,000**
 - ~ 600,000 Americans
 - ~ 500,000 Germans
 - ~ 55,000 British
- **American Military Casualties**
 - ~ 81,000 casualties
 - ~ Of those, 19,246 were killed
- **British Military Casualties**
 - ~ 1,400 casualties.
 - ~ Of those, 200 were killed
- **Belgian Casualties**
 - ~ Approximately 3,000 civilians killed
 - ~ More than 20,000 houses were destroyed or inhabitable
- **German Military Casualties**
 - ~ No official German losses for the Ardennes have been computed but they have been estimated at between 81,000 and 103,000. Most of the figures cited do not differentiate between permanent losses (killed and missing), wounded and non-battle casualties

Additional sources of information

- **Office of the Chief of Military History: The Ardennes: Battle Of The Bulge, By Hugh M. Cole**
 - ~ http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/7-8/7-8_cont.htm
- **Bastogne Historical Center**
 - ~ www.bastognehistoricalcenter.be/download/the-battle-of-the-bulge-and-the-liberation1944.pdf



32nd Bastogne Historical Walk

Practical information

- When: 8 a.m. Dec. 12, 2009
- Address: Centre Sportif "Portes de Trèves," Rue Gustave Delperdange, 6600 Bastogne
- Cost: €6, including certificate and patch. Benefits will go to veterans' organizations
- This year's walk is in the area south-southwest of Bastogne in the villages of Sibret, Assenois and Fort Boggess. There are four routes: 23, 16, 12 or 8 km.

Sibret area (23 km route)

- In Sibret, the commander of the 28th Infantry "Keystone" division, Maj. Gen. Norman D. Cota, had about 200 men left after four days of heavy defensive battles that began along the River Our on the border of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. They had already been forced back from Wiltz, Luxembourg, the town where the 28th was headquartered when the German attack began on Dec. 16.
- The Soldiers, mostly stragglers and pickups from other units, were organized into a provisional battalion (Task Force Caraway) and thrown into the fight to help hold Sibret. It was vital that Task Force Caraway hold open the Bastogne-Neufchâteau road to the southwest.
- There were three howitzers near Sibret, and the main anti-tank defense consisted of just two bazookas which assistant division Commander Brig. Gen. George A. Davis ordered held in reserve.
- Sibret became a "strongpoint" in the VIII Corps screen against the massive German attack. At 3 a.m. on Dec. 21, 1944, Soldiers of Kampfgruppe Kinkel advanced through the dark to the south edge of the village while mortar fire fell on the American positions.
- The first rush of troops took the solidly-built "Gendarmerie" State Police station alongside the highway. Cota went around the streets rounding up men for a counterattack, but taking the building was not possible with unsupported infantry.
- In the thick early morning fog, the three howitzers had been overrun by German tanks, but a battery of the 771st Field Artillery remained some 2,000 yards northwest of the village. After much maneuvering to attain a firing site where there was no minimum elevation, the 771st opened fire on the barricaded Germans in the "Gendarmerie."
- At almost the same time, the Germans began heavy shelling of the village while panzers moved in on the battery. Cota ordered his small force to retire to Vaux-les-Rosieres, a village five miles south, where he set up his command post.
- The fight for Sibret lasted about six hours. The last road to Bastogne was cut and the town was encircled in a matter of hours.



32nd Bastogne Historical Walk

Assenois area (12, 16 and 23 km routes)

- In the gathering dusk on Dec. 26, 1944, around 4:30 p.m., six Sherman tanks under 1st Lt. Charles P. Boggess, followed by armored infantry in halftracks, moved out of the Clochimont crossroads direction southwest, towards Bastogne, 7.5 km away.
- At 4:35 p.m., Boggess radioed he was nearing Assenois and requested artillery fire. Four artillery battalions and a separate battery of 155mm “Long Toms” dropped 420 rounds “soft and sweet” on the village.
- Just before the village, Boggess called for the artillery fire to be lifted, but before he received the all clear, gunned his tank and entered Assenois. Artillery was still falling as Boggess continued to push forward; smoke from burning buildings and dust reduced visibility to a few yards. Two tanks made a wrong turn and a halftrack strayed into the column and remained behind the third tank. One halftrack was knocked out by friendly artillery fire just as hundreds of Germans emerged from cellars ready for a fight. The American infantry fought it out in fierce hand-to-hand combat while the tanks continued toward Bastogne.
- Boggess’s column now was three Shermans in the lead, followed by the stray halftrack with two tanks bringing up the rear. Driving through the woods, the tanks maintained a steady stream of machinegun fire on both sides to keep the Germans deep in their foxholes.
- A gap in the column allowed the Germans to place a few Teller mines on the road which knocked out a halftrack. The remaining mines were removed and the last two tanks raced to catch up with Boggess.
- The last major obstacle was on old Belgian concrete pillbox on the east side of the road. Boggess’s gunner, Cpl. M. Dickerman, took it out with three rounds from the Sherman’s 75mm cannon. Boggess saw American Soldiers about 50 yards away take cover when he opened fire. Standing in his open turret, he called: “Come here! This is the 4th Armored!” Second Lt. Duane J. Webster, 326th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne, came forward and shook hands at 4:50 p.m. The siege of Bastogne had been lifted.

Fort Boggess (all routes)

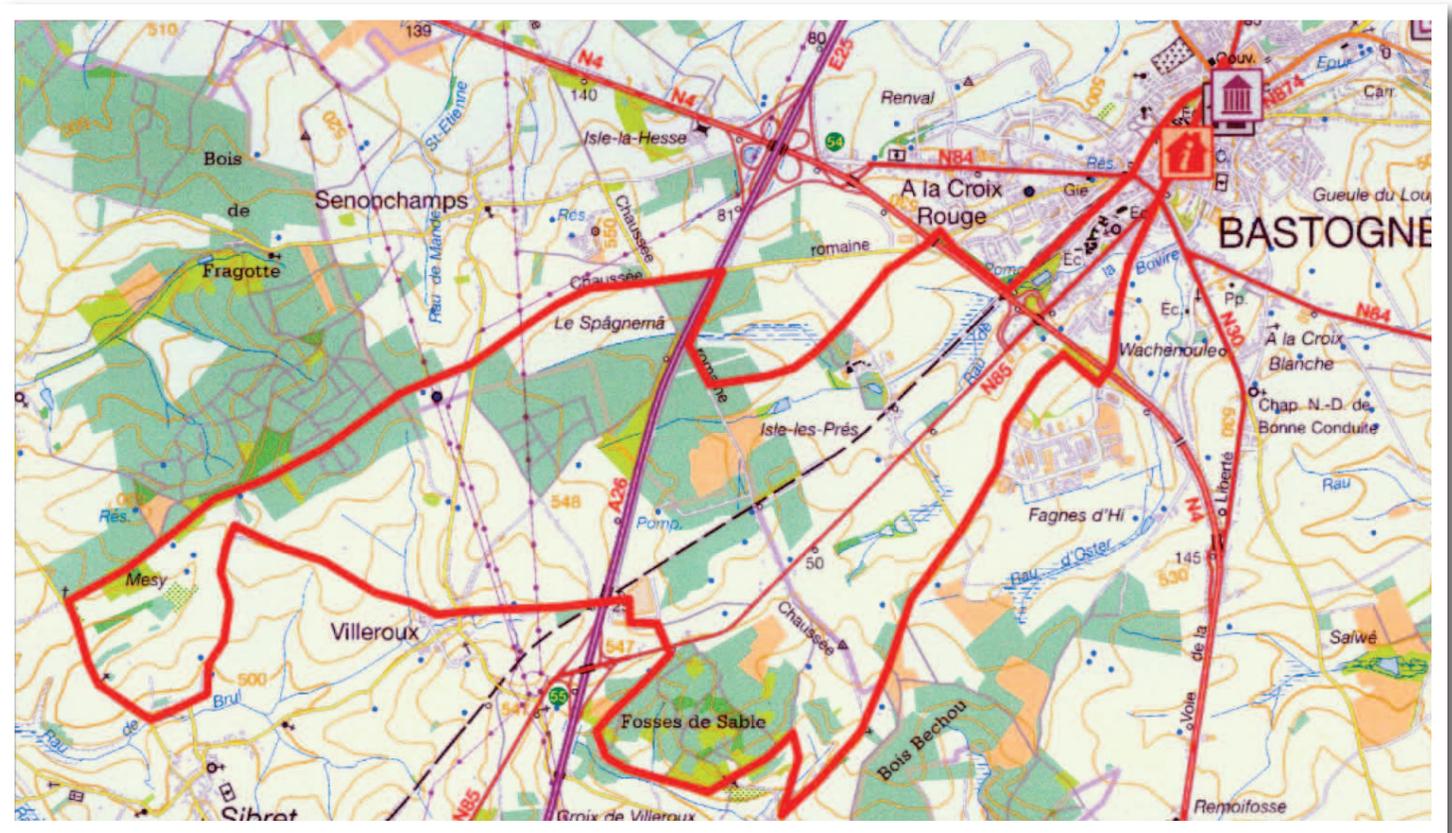
- On this secondary road, forward elements of the 4th Armored Division, Third U.S. Army, broke the siege of Bastogne after fierce fighting in the villages of Chaumont, Clochimont and Assenois. This pillbox was the meeting place where 1st Lt. Boggess, 4th Armored Division, met the men of the 326th Airborne Engineer Battalion. A small ceremony will be held for the walkers at Fort Boggess at noon.

Walk initiator and organizer

- Maurice Sperandieu, a Belgian WWII veteran who fought with Gen. George Patton’s Third Army during the Battle of the Bulge.
- Every December since 1977, he retraces the defensive lines held by American Soldiers.
- Sperandieu will be leading the walkers and providing running commentary on the battle.



23 km route



U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs
0032/(0)475 95 07 98
0032/(0)476 74 00 18
dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil
www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil

The City of Bastogne
0032/(0)61-24 09 00

l.thonus@bastogne.be
www.bastogne.be



32nd Bastogne Historical Walk

16 km route



U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs
0032/(0)475 95 07 98
0032/(0)476 74 00 18
dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil
www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil

The City of Bastogne
0032/(0)61-24 09 00
l.thonus@bastogne.be
www.bastogne.be



32nd Bastogne Historical Walk

12 km route



U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs
0032/(0)475 95 07 98
0032/(0)476 74 00 18
dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil
www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil

The City of Bastogne
0032/(0)61-24 09 00

l.thonus@bastogne.be
www.bastogne.be



32nd Bastogne Historical Walk

8 km route



U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs
0032/(0)475 95 07 98
0032/(0)476 74 00 18
dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil
www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil

The City of Bastogne
0032/(0)61-24 09 00

l.thonus@bastogne.be
www.bastogne.be



U.S-Bastogne Partnership

The connection between Bastogne and the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux goes back to December 1944

- From the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge on Dec. 16, 1944, heavily loaded U.S. Army Air Force fighter-bombers took off from Chièvres Air Base, now home to the garrison, to support the U.S. operations against Hitler's troops.
- The siege of Bastogne was a devastating one: many GI's and Belgian citizens lost their lives or were wounded.

The city and the garrison share friendship and a duty of memory

- Officials and citizens of Bastogne are committed to honoring the memories of the World War II heroes through monuments, commemorations and the education of their youngest generations
- Garrison officials express their commitment by participating in every commemorative event with official representatives and a color guard, and by educating their service members, civilians and families.
- Belgian Soldiers of Bastogne's 1st Field Artillery Regiment and their American counterparts of the USAG Benelux will march together during the 65th anniversary commemorative events and perimeter walk as a symbol of the Belgian-American friendship. Both units have trained together on several occasions in Chièvres and Bastogne during the past few years.



The city and the garrison – a partnership charter connects the past and the future

- During the reception that will follow the afternoon parade on Dec. 12, Philippe Collard, mayor of Bastogne and Col. James P. Drago, commander of the U.S. Army Garrison Benelux will sign a partnership charter that will formalize the 65 years of friendship between the town and the U.S. Army.
- The charter will be displayed in the Bastogne city hall and in the garrison's headquarters building as a symbol of the alliance between Belgium and the United States of America.



Color guard makeup

- The color guard consists of five Soldiers. Four of the members are enlisted Soldiers and there is one noncommissioned officer in charge.
- Of the four, two are known as guards and carry replica M-16 rifles. The other two are flag bearers.

The Soldiers of the color guard

- Soldiers with the rank of specialist or below are the guards and march on the outside of the formation.
- Sergeants or staff sergeants carry the flags on the inside of the formation.
- In an effort to accurately represent the partnership between the U.S. and Belgium, a Soldier from the 1st Artillery Regiment, stationed in Bastogne will carry the Belgian flag during color guard events.
- Since September 2009, a Belgian Soldier has partnered with the USAG Benelux color guard for most events the color guard takes part in.

The NCOIC of the color guard

- The NCOIC of the color guard is responsible for representing the command sergeant major during the event. The command sergeant major is in charge of a unit's colors.
- The NCOIC stands directly behind the color guard in order to give them directions and vocalize maneuvers.



Typical color guard events

- In addition to events in Bastogne, the USAG Benelux color guard participates in numerous other events around Belgium. Some of these include Memorial Day events at overseas American cemeteries, local remembrance and liberation ceremonies for WWI and WWII events, Victory in Europe Day and Armistice Day.

Soldiers of the Official Color Guard for the 65th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge

- Spc. Michael Speagle, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – Right guard (next to the U.S. flag)
- Sgt. Brandon McIntosh, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – U.S. flag bearer
- Adjutant Chef Henri Plessiet, Belgian 1st Field Artillery Regiment – Belgian flag bearer
- Spc. Giovanni Antonello, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – Left guard (next to the Belgian flag)
- Staff Sgt. Scott Wesley, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux – NCOIC



- U.S. Army Garrison Benelux is unique among the U.S. Army garrisons in Europe. It is the only garrison working to support NATO and serves the widest geographic area: Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, areas of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Poland.
- USAG Benelux is comprised of three subordinate garrisons which provide U.S. Army base operations supporting more than 17,000 Americans across the garrison's seven-nation footprint, the largest and most diverse within Installation Management Command - European region.
- Three main areas of activity are in support of the NATO headquarters in Brussels (U.S. Army Garrison Brussels); Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (Chièvres Garrison); and Joint Force Command Brunssum (U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen).
- The garrisons rely on a large number of host nation employees both from Belgium and The Netherlands.

Chièvres Garrison

- Chièvres Garrison its approximately 400 service members, civilian and host nation employees support a community of more than 4,500 Americans, including SHAPE, Chièvres Air Base and Caserne Daumerie. The garrison is located approximately 30 minutes from the French border and also supports U.S. military members serving in NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in France, Great Britain and Luxembourg.

USAG Brussels

- U.S. Army Garrison Brussels supports more than 3,000 U.S. state and defense department employees assigned in and around NATO headquarters in the Belgian capital region.

USAG Schinnen

- U.S. Army Garrison Schinnen in the Netherlands provides base operations support to more than 6,000 joint, inter-agency service members and federal civilians in support of U.S. interests in NATO.

History

- Originally designated as the 80th Ordnance Group, the organization was activated on Jan. 25, 1945 at Luneville, France, and then later that year inactivated at Fort Benning, Ga. It was again reactivated at Red River Arsenal, Texas, in 1954 and redesignated as the 80th General Support Group in 1966 when it moved to Vietnam.
- After more than five years of distinguished service supporting 13 campaigns in Vietnam, the organization was inactivated in 1972. Redesignated the 80th Support Group [Area], or more commonly the 80th ASG, the organization was provisionally reactivated at Chièvres, Belgium, on Aug. 30, 1984.
- It joined the NATO/SHAPE Support Group [U.S.] in Brussels, which was activated on April 1, 1967, and moved to Caserne Daumerie in Chièvres later that year.



Chièvres Air Base History

WWI

- A primitive airfield at Chièvres was built by the Germans during World War I. It was a single grass runway with one hangar. The airfield was abandoned in October 1918, after Jasta 18 withdrew to a field southwest of Waterloo. Farmers tore down the hangar and the runway returned to pasture and sugar beet fields.

Early WWII

- In early 1939, as war clouds once again gathered over Europe, the Belgian government began planning a diversionary airfield at Chièvres. Initial smoothing of the fields on the plain began but did not progress far before the country was invaded by the German Army in 1940. By May 19, the airfield was in German hands. A German fighter wing of ME-109s set up shop temporarily but left in June for airfields in France. The German Luftwaffe began to upgrade the airfield immediately and soon had over 9,000 workers constructing hangars, runways, barracks, ammunition depots, bomb shelters, radar and anti-aircraft positions. At its peak in 1942, 7,000 Luftwaffe personnel were on the air base and at times, 250 to 300 bombers and fighters.
- In September 1940, the Italian Air Force arrived with bombers and fighters. They suffered serious losses over Britain and were recalled on January 10, 1941, to the Mediterranean front. The Germans then moved in their bomber squadron 6 (KG 6) equipped with JU-88 medium bombers and later, an upgraded version, the JU-188. A mix of other bombers and fighters were also here as were the first combat jet fighters and bombers of the Luftwaffe.
- The Allies dropped hundreds of tons of bombs on the airbase from 1940-1944. Damage was heavy but flight operations continued. The Germans even used the main road from Mons to Ath as a runway. The airbase was bombed 31 times during these years.
- The Germans abandoned the airfield in August 1944.

Battle of the Bulge

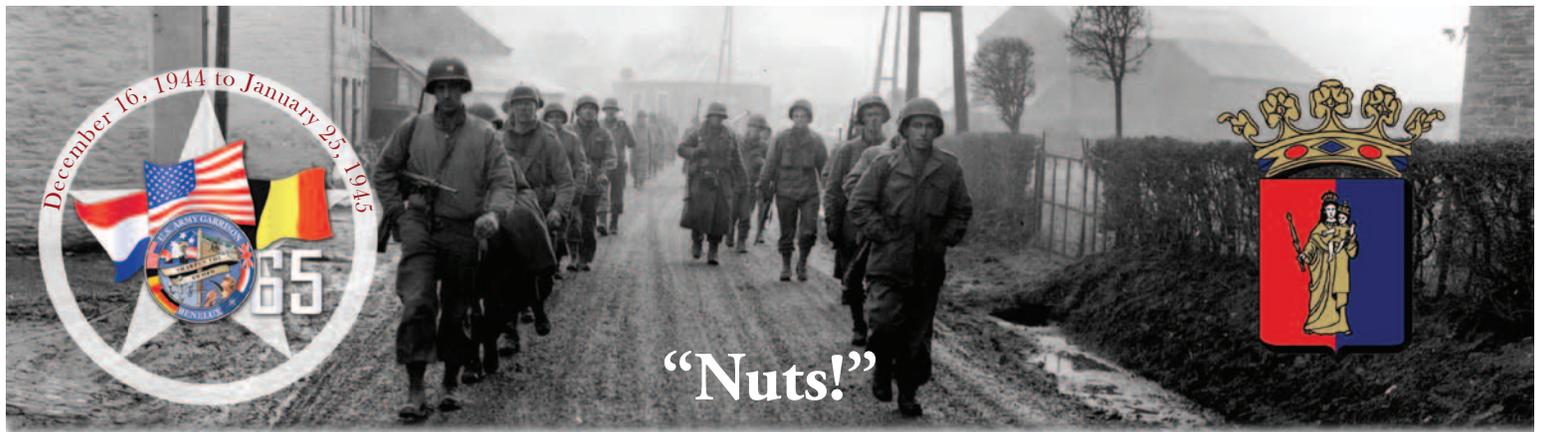
- One week after the Allied liberation, 1,500 Belgians began to repair the airfield. It became operational again in October for American and British aircraft. Air support was provided for the Battle of the Bulge, the crossing of the Rhine and other missions into Germany until the end of the war.

Post WWII

- On December 31, 1945, the U.S. Army Air Force turned the base over to the Belgian Air Force. Meteors, Hunters, F-84 jet fighters and C-119 cargo planes flew out of Chièvres from 1947 until 1967. Chièvres was also the home for the Red Devils, Belgium's aerial acrobatic team. The Belgian Air Force 7th Wing inactivated in 1967.

U.S. Operations at Chièvres Air Base

- In March 1967, the U.S. Army NATO/SHAPE Support Group (NSSG), now U.S. Army Garrison Benelux, relocated from Paris to the airfield and Caserne Daumerie. The U.S. Air Force, Europe (USAFE) established a flight detachment as well, Detachment 1, 52nd Fighter Wing. Today, 309th Airlift Squadron manages the airfield and provides direct support to NATO, SHAPE, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and USAFE.



History

- It was during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 in Bastogne that Gen. Anthony McAuliffe uttered his famous reply “Nuts!” when German forces demanded his surrender.
- On Dec. 22, four German soldiers approached the Americans, waving a white flag as if planning to surrender. They presented a note to the Americans that said “the honorable surrender of the encircled town” is to be accomplished in two hours on threat of “annihilation” by the massed fires of the German artillery.
- When McAuliffe heard the German threat, he laughed and said, “Aw, nuts!” The written response was given to a German captain to take back to the German commander. U.S. Army Col. Joseph Harper told the captain, “If you don’t understand what ‘Nuts’ means, in plain English it is the same as ‘Go to hell.’”

The “Nuts” Cave

- The 101st Divisional Headquarters, “Nuts Cave,” is open to the public Dec. 11-13. This cave is where McAuliffe and his generals made crucial decisions. It’s where he slept, and it’s where he wrote his famous reply to the German demand to surrender.
- This cave was the “Oval Office” during the battle for Bastogne and was visited by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower Lt. Gen. George Patton, Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, Col. Joseph Harper, Col. Bob Sink, Lt. Col. Julian Ewell, Lt. Col. Harry Kinnard, Lt. Col. Ned Moore and more.

Opening Hours:

Dec. 11 – afternoon

Dec. 12 – all day

Dec. 13 – all day

Address :

Caserne Heintz

Route de La Roche, 40

6600 Bastogne

U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Public Affairs
 0032/(0)475 95 07 98
 0032/(0)476 74 00 18
 dlima-e-beneluxpao@eur.army.mil
 www.usagbenelux.eur.army.mil

The City of Bastogne
 0032/(0)61-24 09 00

l.thonus@bastogne.be
 www.bastogne.be



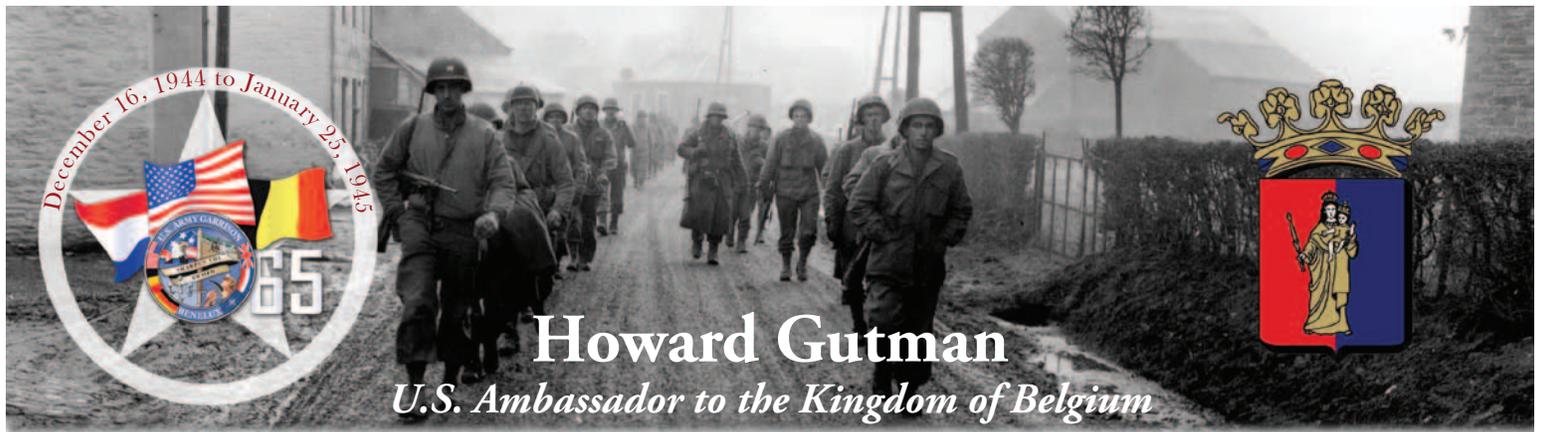
The “Nuts Fair”

- The word “nuts” has had a symbolic meaning in Bastogne for more than 150 years.
- In the days of old farm servants, cow tenders and shepherds were hired by word of mouth. They would attend the Nuts Fair, the last fair of the season, and farmers would gather to hire staff for the new year. At the time, the landowner’s verbal contract was as binding as written contracts are today.
- Servants would attend the fair with all of their belongings wrapped in a bundle carried on a long stick. When they were hired, they would wear a red and white polka-dot kerchief around their neck and a blue smock.
- To celebrate employment, the servants bought sweet breads and nuts, and although expensive, they traditionally gave the sweets to their girlfriends and boyfriends as tokens of their affection.

The 65th Commemoration Walnut Festival

- Dec. 12 at 3:30 p.m., dignitaries will toss bags of walnuts from the balcony of the Bastogne Town Hall to hundreds of people gathered below to commemorate the 65th anniversary of McAuliffe’s famous response.





Howard Gutman

U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium



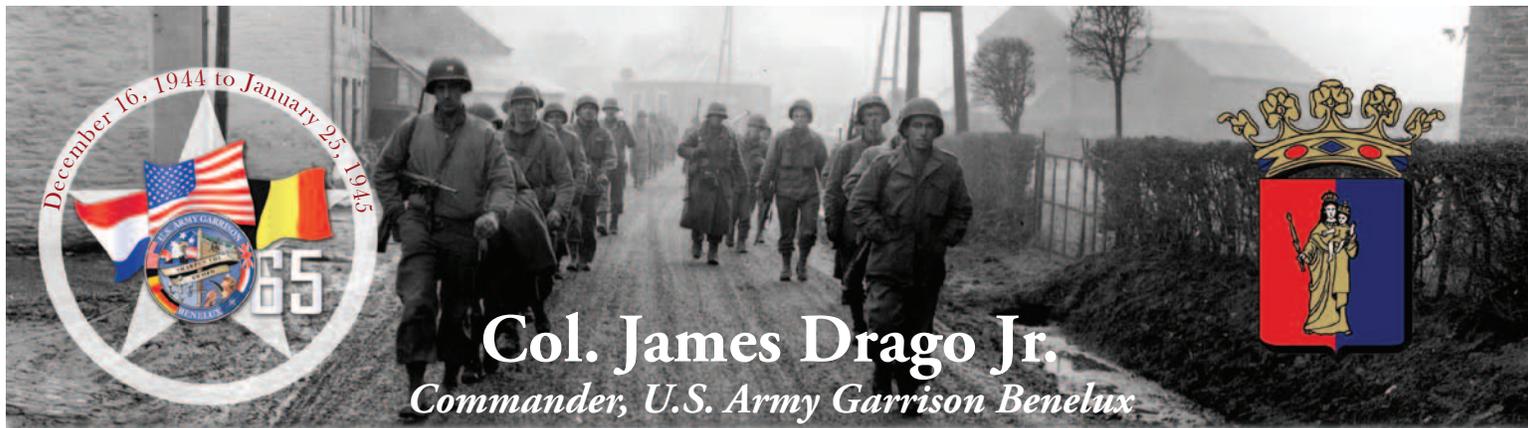
Howard Gutman was nominated by President Barack Obama to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on July 24, 2009.

Before being named Ambassador, Gutman was a partner with the Washington D.C. law firm of Williams & Connolly LLP. In his more than twenty-six years with the firm, Gutman handled the full gamut of litigation, investigation and counseling matters. Identified as one of “Washington’s Top Lawyers” by Washingtonian magazine (December 2004, December 2007) and selected to numerous “Superlawyers” and similar attorney award lists, Gutman’s areas of practice focused on the complete range of complex commercial litigation, including securities, contracts, antitrust, labor, banking, real estate, intellectual property, insurance coverage, international law and partnership disputes; the representation of some of the nation’s leading law firms and accounting firms in malpractice actions and partnership disputes; the representation of corporations, labor unions and individuals in a variety of high-profile

white collar criminal investigations and prosecutions; and many types of tort actions. Such cases were located in various federal and state courts throughout the United States, before various regulatory agencies and in foreign tribunals.

Earlier in his career, Gutman served as a Special Assistant to F.B.I. Director William H. Webster, focusing on counter-terrorism and counter-intelligence; as a law clerk to Justice (Ret.) Potter Stewart on the United States Supreme Court; and as a law clerk to Judge Irving L. Goldberg on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He is a 1980 graduate of Harvard Law School and a 1977 graduate of Columbia University.

Gutman served as an adviser to a variety of Democratic candidates, including assisting in races for President, Governor, Senate and Congress. He assisted the 2008 Obama campaign on constituency work, media and fundraising and was a Trustee on the Obama Presidential Inauguration Committee. He assisted the Gore campaign in the post-election litigation in 2000. Gutman has been a contributor to numerous television and radio programs, including frequent appearances on the Fox News Network during the 2008 Presidential campaign. Gutman appeared in several episodes of the HBO series *K Street*, playing a Washington attorney and has made other movie and media appearances, including playing Tim Robbins’ lawyer in *Noise* and a high school parent in the 2009 release of *Fame*. Gutman has been an Editor of *Litigation Magazine* for more than 24 years and an active participant in the ABA’s Litigation Section. He is a member of the Board of the Washington Hebrew Home in Rockville, Md.



Col. James Drago Jr. *Commander, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux*



Col. James P. Drago Jr. graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1983. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery and attended the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course at Fort Sill, Okla.

He began his active duty career with the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Wash., and served in a variety of jobs in the 1st Battalion, 84th Field Artillery from 1984-1987, with duty in both cannon and rocket artillery units.

After attending the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Ga., he was assigned to the 1st Brigade, 3rd Armored Division at Kirchgoens, Germany, where he served as a Task Force Fire Support Officer and Battery Commander in the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery.

Following Battery Command where he deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, he became the Aide de Camp for the 3rd Armored Division Commander until 1992. He then returned to the United States and attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash., where he earned his Masters in Business Administration. He was subsequently assigned to the U.S. Military Academy and worked in the Directorate of Admissions from 1993-1996.

After completion of the Command and General Staff College in 1997, he was assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Wash., and served as the Executive Officer for 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery until 1999. He returned to West Point in 1999 and served for two years in the Department of Military Instruction as the Field Artillery Branch Representative and Chief of Military Training.

In the summer of 2001, he returned to Europe and assumed command of the 409th Base Support Battalion in Vilseck, Germany, where he was overall responsible for the quality of life for the residents of Vilseck, Grafenwoehr and Amberg. Upon completion of command, he returned to West Point and served as the Director of Operations and Plans for the U. S. Military Academy until 2005 when he and his family relocated to Carlisle, Pa., to attend the U.S. Army War College. His last assignment was with U.S. Army Central/Coalition Forces Land Component Command in Kuwait where he served as the Deputy C3, Operations Directorate from July 2006 to May 2007.

His decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Meritorious Service Medal (five Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (one Oak Leaf Cluster) and the Army Achievement Medal. His badges include the Parachutist Badge and Ranger Tab.



Lt. Col. Henri Badot-Bertrand

Commander, 1st Artillery Regiment, Bastogne



Lt. Col. Henri Badot-Bertrand started his military career in 1982, when he joined the anti-aircraft Artillery Academy in Lombardsijde to train on the GEPARD anti-aircraft system. Until 1986, he was a platoon chief within the 35th Artillery Regiment in Spich, Germany. He later came back to Lombardsijde as an instructor and spent a year training at the Royal Military Academy to become a career officer.

From 1991 to 1993, he commanded Battery D of the 35th Artillery Regiment in Spich. At the time, he was also responsible for the first Belgian MISTRAL battery, a bilingual unit made of elements of the 35th and 43rd Artillery, which was created to support a NATO exercise in Turkey.

In 1993, Jadot-Bertrand graduated from the Air Defense Advanced Course at Fort Bliss, Texas, in the United States.

In 1994, the merging of field artillery with anti-aircraft artillery gave him the opportunity to attend the Basic Course for Artillery 2nd Lieutenant at the Field Artillery Academy, where he served until he graduated from the Senior Officer Course at the Superior Royal Institute for Defense (IRSD). Upon completion of the training, he took charge of the anti-aircraft section of the Artillery Academy, 6th Artillery.

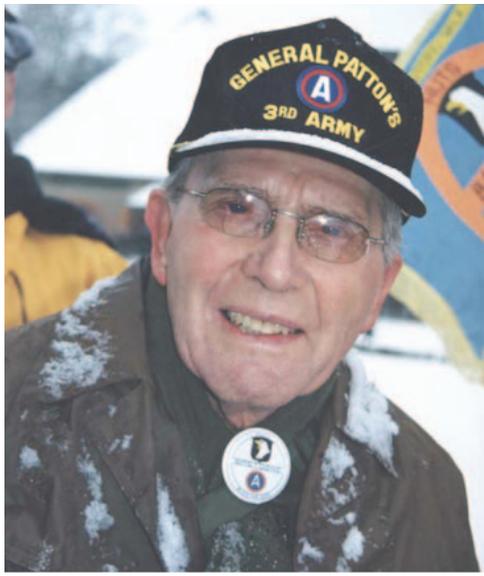
In 2000, he was assigned to the Euro Corps in Strasbourg where he served as the deputy chief of section for Ground-Air Artillery. In that capacity, he participated to the KFOR mission in Kosovo where he was in charge of the Fire Support Coordination Center cell of the Joint Operation Center in Pristina.

As he returned to Belgium, Badot-Bertrand was selected for the Superior Course of the Army Staff within the IRSD within the 118th division and graduated with the Superior Staff Degree. He later became an instructor with the Ground Operations Department of the IRSD, which has since been integrated into the Royal Military Academy. There, he namely taught firing support for the three cycles of the officers training.



Maurice Sperandieu

Bastogne Historical Walk Organizer & WWII Veteran



Maurice Sperandieu was born June 30, 1926 in Leuven, Belgium. His father, who spent four bloody years in the trenches of Flanders during World War I, always impressed upon Sperandieu the need to respect law and order and of the high cost citizens sometimes must pay for liberty.

Sperandieu's first and nearly his last experience with war occurred during the Nazi invasion of Belgium in the summer of 1940. While watching the Luftwaffe attack nearby buildings and civilian refugees on the road, one of the bombs exploded nearby throwing the 14-year-old into the air and knocking him senseless for a few minutes. The bomb killed many civilians.

During the harsh Nazi occupation, Sperandieu continued his studies and found he had a knack for languages, becoming fluent in English, French and German. While young men of his generation were encouraged and sometimes forced to join the German army or the Waffen SS, Sperandieu managed to avoid service because of his studies. He eventually joined the Belgian Resistance. When Nazi forces were driven out of Belgium

in September 1944, Sperandieu signed up at the age of 18 for the new Belgian Army. He was assigned to the 11th Fusilier Battalion and received basic infantry and small arms training from British and American sergeants. He was then attached to Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army, 512th Military Police Battalion. His duties included liaison and translation services, interrogation of prisoners and finding shelter for the military police as they advanced through Germany.

Sperandieu was in the Saarland of Germany in December 1944 when the Nazis attacked in the west for the last time. Patton pivoted his entire army and rolled up into Belgium to break the siege of Bastogne. The German offensive was smashed, and Sperandieu was in the town assisting his command and fellow citizens in January 1945. From there, he went with the Third Army as it cut through Germany ending up at the Czech border when hostilities ceased May 8, 1945.

Returning to civilian life in late 1945, Sperandieu studied at university then became a speculator in precious metals in Antwerp. He retired in 1986. At the age of 49, he began to walk to keep fit and, in 1977, joined with friends and World War II veterans in informal walks around the Bastogne perimeter as a salute to their fellow comrades in arms. Today, at the age of 80, Sperandieu is the last survivor of the original "Bastogne December Historical Walk" group. He still leads the walk which has increased in size from a few dozen walkers to over 1,500.

Maurice is a member of, among others, the American Legion Paris Post 1 and the Royal Canadian Legion.