

Trenches to Foxholes



Eric Daniel

40,000 gather to honor 'Battle of the Bulge' veterans

(Clockwise from top) Front row: Bastogne Mayor Benoît Lutgen, Their Majesties King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of the Belgians, and U.S. Ambassador Denise Bauer throw nuts from the town-hall balcony along with other officials Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014. • King Philippe lays a wreath at the Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe monument. • Belgian Soldiers from Base Bastogne and USAG Benelux Soldiers pay their respects at the Gen. George S. Patton monument. • A joint Belgian/U.S. Color Guard and Soldiers march toward Patton's monument. • U.S. veterans pose for a group photo at General McAuliffe square.



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The city of Bastogne welcomed more than 40,000 people for the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Saturday, the highlight was the visit of Their Majesties the King and the Queen of the Belgians and a U.S. delegation to honor the 40 U.S. veterans in attendance. The veterans made a special trip to the Belgian Ardennes that they helped liberate 70 years ago. The official parade stopped at the Gen. George S. Patton and Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe monuments where there were wreath-laying ceremonies. The parade ended with the traditional throwing of the nuts. The custom commemorates McAuliffe's famous reply to the German appeal to surrender and, at



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the same time, commemorates the Nuts Fair, dating back to the 19th century and where farmers hired their servants for the coming year. The servants who were hired would offer nuts to their sweethearts. **Continued on next page.**

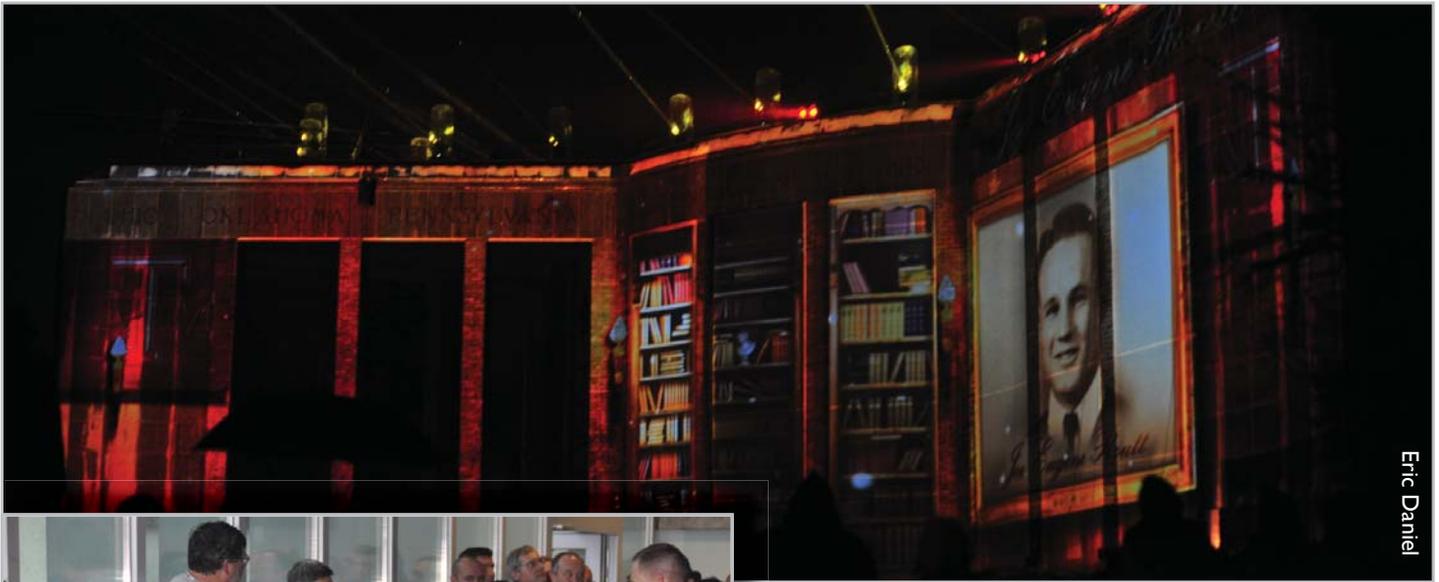


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Bastogne commemorates 'Battle of the Bulge' | continued



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Among the other events held to commemorate the 70th anniversary was the 37th annual Bastogne Historical Walk, a sound-and-light show at the Mardasson Memorial that highlighted the main events that occurred during World War II as well as the fate of the five Texas Aggies who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, a display "From Texas to Bastogne," which will be accessible through Aug. 31, 2016, and a War Book Fair.

All of the events accomplished their objective of saluting the men, women, Soldiers, resistance fighters and civilians for their courage and the sacrifices they made so that the Belgians could live in peace since 1944.

(Clockwise from top) The sound-and-light show on Saturday night highlights five students from Texas University who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. • Participants in the commemorations dress up in World War II civilian and military attire throughout the week-end. • Re-enactors ride in a WWII M-8 tank in the Bastogne area. • U.S. service members led by USAG Benelux Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Carter and USAREUR Command Sgt. Maj. David S. Davenport Sr. participate in the 37th annual Bastogne Historic Walk early morning on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014. • Bastogne Mayor Benoît Lutgen and Their Majesties King Philippe and Queen Mathilde express their gratitude to the American veterans in attendance.



Tim Clark



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