

THE GAZETTE

Published for members of the SHAPE/Chièvres, Brussels and Schinnen communities

Benelux news briefs

Summer hire

The Civilian Human Resources Agency Europe Region is accepting applications through May 18 for summer employment across Europe for family members (FM) ages 14-22, with valid FM ID Cards.

The 2015 Summer Hire program runs from June 29 through August 7.

Details and online application are available at the Summer Hire site: <https://acpol2.army.mil/sh/staffing/summer-hire/>.

Chièvres Air Base AAFES

The PXtra is closed on Mondays and the Main Exchange is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Additionally, the main store is looking for laborers. Positions are temporary part-time work schedules. Call DSN 361-5337 or civilian 068-275337.

AER campaign ends soon

The Army Emergency Relief campaign runs through today, but donations from Soldiers and civilians can still be made after that date online. See your unit AER representative or visit <http://www.aerhq.org> to find out more.

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Georges Gabriel, a WWII veteran, salutes at the VE Day commemoration in Ath, Friday, May 8, 2015. At the beginning of WWII, Gabriel travelled from Ieper to Rouen and Cherbourg, France to Plymouth, Britain, to join the "Brigade Piron," composed of hundreds of Belgian Soldiers who escaped to Britain to fight with the Allies. The "Brigade Piron" trained in Britain and its first units arrived in Normandy on July 30, 1944. The brigade was also actively involved in the liberation of Belgium and the Netherlands and was incorporated into the 2nd British Army when it liberated Brussels, September 4, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Cis Spook)

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Trenches to Foxholes

Memorial Day: remembering and honoring those who gave all

By **Tim Clark**

USAG Benelux Public Affairs

“We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke; but we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens. For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue.”

- James A. Garfield Civil War General and future President
May 30, 1868 Arlington National Cemetery

Memorial Day is the most important date on the United States calendar. It is a day of remembrance for those who sacrificed and died in the nation's service.

Originally known as Decoration Day, this holiday was born by local observances of the day in several towns throughout America in the years after the Civil War. Mourners from these towns would honor their Civil War dead by placing flowers on their grave markers. After World War I it became an occasion for honoring those who died in all of America's wars.

In 1923 the American Overseas Memorial Day Association Belgium organized the first Memorial Day Ceremony at the then new Flanders Field American Cemetery in Waregem, which holds the graves of 368 American servicemen who died in Belgium during the First World War.

Today they organize the annual Memorial Day ceremonies at the three American cemeteries in Belgium. They also commemorate and work to preserve the graves of the American servicemen who died in the wars and are buried outside of these cemeteries.

“Today, Belgium and Europe are so secure that most people take their freedom for granted. However, if history teaches anything, it is that freedom can never be taken for granted,” stated Jerome Sheridan the president of the AOMDA Belgium.

“Authoritarian powers and evil ideologies threaten all free peoples today, just as Nazism did in the early part of the 20th century. It is not comfortable for people to admit this, but the reality is that we can lose the freedoms that we enjoy today if we do not remain vigilant. It is the ongoing struggle to defend our liberty today that gives the deaths of those 14,000 Americans who



are buried in Belgium their meaning.”

Asked to share some stories from his 20-years of working with AOMDA Sheridan chose two from last year.

“First, at the ceremony at Henri-Chapelle, 10 veterans of WWII mustered all of the strength that they could to lay a wreath at the ceremony in honor of their fallen brothers-in-arms. As they returned to their seats, thousands of people who were attending the ceremony broke into a spontaneous and sustained applause,” he said.

“Second was at the isolated grave ceremony of United States Army Air Force Staff Sgt. Gerald E. Sorensen, who is buried in the community cemetery in Ganshoren.

Last year, 17 members of the Sorensen family, nearly all of whom had never left the United States before, traveled to Belgium to spend Memorial Day weekend with us and attend the ceremony that we hold each year at his grave.”

At that ceremony, Sorensen's cousin, who was also the maid of honor at his wedding, asked to say a few words. She talked about what Sorensen was like as a person, why he chose to serve, and how grateful she is to the men and women in uniform today who have followed in his footsteps.

On this Memorial Day consider attending one or more ceremonies. Promote the ceremonies and encourage others to attend.

Learn about what the men buried in those cemeteries did for the country. For more information about AOMDA, visit its website at, <http://www.aomda.org>.



Victory in Europe Day Celebrations

V-E Day, May 8, was marked locally by ceremonies in Chièvres, Ath and Brugelette. (Above) WWII reenactors await the unveiling of a monument to resistance fighter Joseph Delgambe in Chièvres. (below clockwise) A wreath is placed at the Chièvres memorial. Marc Duvivier, Mayor of Ath and Lt. Col. John Bivona representing U.S. Army Garrison Benelux pay tribute to war victims in Ath. The U.S. Army Garrison Benelux Color Guard marches in Chièvres. Maj. Cesar Ocasio, USAG Benelux, salutes at the ceremony in Brugelette during the playing of the national anthems. U.S. Army photos by Tim Clark (Chièvres), Cis Spook (Ath), Donovan Abrassart (Brugelette)

