



Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Southern Arizona Chapter #53



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Subject: Article for The Bulge Bugle

Start Article Text

On August 24, 2011, Southern Arizona Chapter 53 was honored to have Roland Gaul, Founder and Curator of the Musée National d'Histoire Militaire (National Museum of Military History) in Diekirch, Luxembourg, visit the chapter with his very charming partner, Patricia. Before coming to Tucson, Roland requested an opportunity to lay a floral tribute at the BOB Monument and meet with the Chapter members while he and Patricia were vacationing there that week.

At 10:00 a.m. Chapter members and visitors gathered at Presidio Park, site of the 2009 VBOB National Convention wreath laying ceremony. George McGee, President of Chapter 53, opened the ceremony with a greeting after which David Powell, Chapter 53 Chaplain, said the invocation. The group of about 15 veterans and visitors recited the Pledge of Allegiance and George introduced Roland.

Roland was very gracious in his remarks noting with some humor the contrast of the 100° weather in Tucson compared with the freezing conditions during the Battle in the Ardennes. He expressed the gratitude of the Luxembourg people for their liberation to the 28th Division, 109th Regiment, stating to the amusement of the audience that he would, otherwise, "...not be here or I would be wearing a German uniform." He reassured the veterans that museums and the military in Luxembourg go to great efforts to educate their youth about the liberation and to preserve the memory of the Battle of the Bulge and the men who fought in it. "...we need to make sure the torch of remembrance is continued."

Roland recalled that the Luxembourg government invited veterans to participate in the 60th and 65th anniversary ceremonies held in Luxembourg commemorating the Battle. Now there are plans being made for the 70th anniversary.

He closed his remarks by stating, "...you will always, always be welcomed in Luxembourg and I can make you the promise that it will never be forgotten." (A transcript of Roland's remarks follows and a DVD is enclosed with video and pictures of the event.)

Roland then very graciously asked that veterans in the audience join him with the laying of a floral wreath on the BOB monument.

George McGee presented Roland with a Certificate of Appreciation for his "tireless dedication and conservatorship in preserving the history of the Battle of the Bulge and the memory of those who fought in it."

After the ceremony Chapter members and guests went to The Hotel Arizona for lunch (location of the 2009 VBOB National Reunion) and to visit with Roland, Patricia and other visitors. Roland and Patricia departed for Luxembourg the following morning. It was truly Chapter 53's honor to have such a distinguished historian and compatriot like Roland offer such a thoughtful tribute and spend time visiting with the Chapter members.

End Article Text

Respectfully submitted,
George W. McGee President

Transcript of Roland Gauls' Remarks

"It's definitely a great, great honor and a pleasure to be here. The time is particularly fitting for a Battle of the Bulge related ceremony. I'm talking about the weather. (Smiling, pointing to the blue skies.)

I had the honor to be here in 2009 on the occasion of the National Reunion here. I was present when we placed the wreath here on this monument and I fell in love with the country. I fell in love with all the veterans and you fine folks and I made myself a promise to come back. Today we're staying at the White Stallion Ranch and we're discovering the other aspects of the locale not [military] related because I also have a significant other that needs to be taken care of. (Smile.)

None the less, I'm from Luxembourg, I'm Roland Gaul, I was born in 1955 and since I'm an only child I became accustomed to locally related stories. So the parents and grandparents always told me of the Nazi occupation until September, 9/11/1944. That's when my hometown got liberated by elements of the 5th U.S. Armored Division. Then, unfortunately, we had some unwelcomed visitors come back again in December which led to the Battle of the Bulge and then you fine folks liberated us and brought us back to freedom.

We have not forgotten, Luxembourg has not forgotten. I am certainly not an isolated case. There are many, many of my generation who still believe in you, we love you folks and what you have done. You brought us back freedom, otherwise, I would not be here or I could be wearing a German uniform. So thank you very much for that! (Chuckles from the audience.)

In the 60th and 6th Anniversaries, my government has made a number of national commemorations where some of you were invited to participate. Now with these large ceremonies over, we're rolling gradually to the 70th anniversary. It is our duty, the museums in Luxembourg, the military organizations; we need to make sure that the torch of remembrance is continued. And, therefore, we are setting up programs

with the museum of which I am the Curator, where we go to the schools and, for instance, talk to children and occasionally have an American veteran or Luxembourg veteran talk to a school class so we make sure this [remembrance] is going on.

So, again, you will always, always be welcomed in Luxembourg and I can make you the promise that it will never be forgotten. Thank you very much."