



City of Bastogne

Bastogne, December 2013, 30

Subject: Invitation to the Opening of the *Bastogne War Museum* (March 21, 2014), Memorial Day (May 16, 2014) and the 'Nuts' Days (December 13-14, 2014)

Dear veteran,

You know perfectly well the story of the American soldiers who spent the terrible winter of 1944-1945 on the front lines in Europe. The Battle of the Bulge, which took place in Bastogne, is an important part of our History. The amount of American soldiers who died or were injured during the battle was higher than ever and the people of Bastogne will always be thankful to the ones who fought for their freedom.

Nowadays, the historical ties that bind the town of Bastogne and the American people are still very strong. People often tell me that Bastogne is the most American city in Europe and we are very proud of that reputation.

Bastogne always honors every veteran who is coming back to our city, and most of all in the preparation of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

This anniversary will take place next year with 3 major events : the opening of a new museum (March, 21) ; the Memorial Day (May, 16) and the "Nuts" Days (December, 13 and 14).

Will you grace one of these 3 events by your presence?

In March 2014 Belgium will boast a new memorial site with an international scope dedicated to the Second World War: the *Bastogne War Museum*. Located at the heart of a new and innovative architectural structure, the *Bastogne War Museum* will open to public in Bastogne, on the site of the Mardasson Memorial.

The visit of the *Bastogne War Museum* will offer visitors a modern and interactive perspective on the causes, events and consequences of the Second World War. All of this will be presented through the lens of the Battle of the Bulge, a heroic feat of arms in itself of which the Second World War – which wasn't lacking in courageous actions – offers very little evidence.

The *Bastogne War Museum* wants to meet the expectations of an audience of which the vast majority hasn't known war – except from history books or through cinema and television. The *Bastogne War Museum* intends to initiate a shift from tourism through memory, a concept that is inevitably becoming increasingly rare as time goes by, to civil and education oriented historical tourism.

In May, 16, 2014, an exceptional Memorial Day ceremony will also take place in Bastogne, whereas in December next year, Bastogne will become once again the theater of several re-enactments of the Battle.

Of course I remain at your disposal should you wish to obtain any further information that you deem useful about these three events.

I would like to thank you in advance for the consideration you will give to this letter and I beg you, Sir, to accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Benoit LUTGEN  
Federal Deputy  
Mayor of Bastogne