



**BASTOGNE WAR MUSEUM**  
LIVING MEMORY OF THE ARDENNES



From the spring of 2014 on, a new museum dedicated to the Second World War, the *Bastogne War Museum*, will open its doors, at a stone's throw of the famous Mardasson memorial. The *Bastogne War Museum* will be put up in a brand new building with a daring architecture and contemporary scenography.

The museum recontextualises the causes, events and results of the Second World War in a modern and interactive manner.

The original scenography is filled in by three *scenovisions*, real multi-sensory 3D scenes, which ensure a complete immersion in History!

This brand new museum will be a lively and sparkling place to be with an eat café, a vast terrace and a museum shop, as well as a place for many events and temporary exhibitions.



**Opening date:** Spring 2014

**Surface museum track:** 1600 m<sup>2</sup>

**Number of exhibited objects:** more than 400

**Number of *scenovisions*:** 3

**Visiting time:** 1h30 to 2h (visit with audioguide of the Mardasson Memorial included)

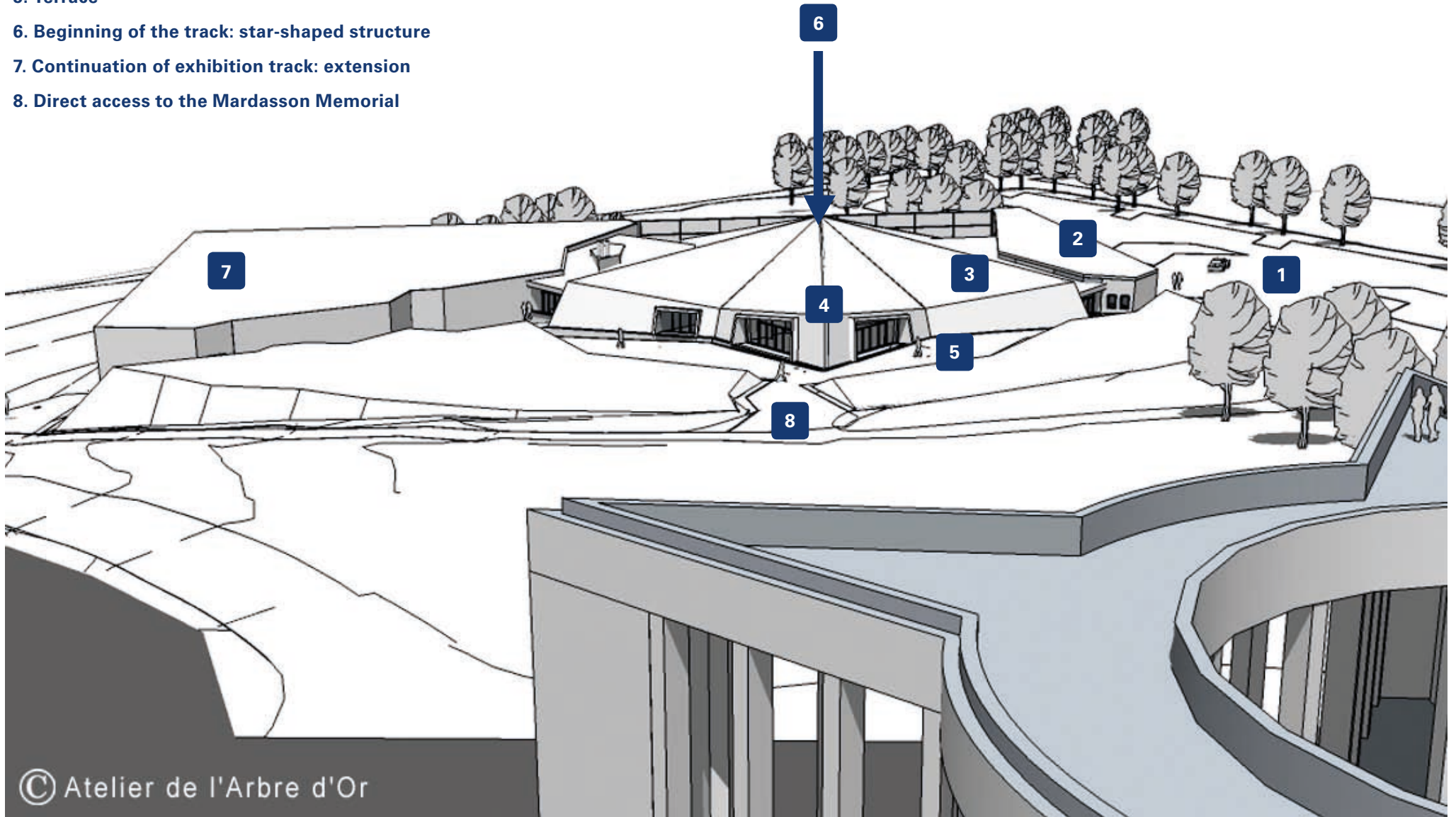
**Languages (track and audioguides):** French, Dutch, English, German

**Kids track**

**Wheelchair accessible**

**Facilities:** museum shop, eat café, vast terrace, free parking

1. Parking
2. Entrance/reception
3. Museum shop
4. Eat café
5. Terrace
6. Beginning of the track: star-shaped structure
7. Continuation of exhibition track: extension
8. Direct access to the Mardasson Memorial



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. *Bastogne War Museum*  
a new identity for a new memorial place
3. Architectural choice
4. Scenographic track
5. Programming of the events
6. Actants
7. Contacts

## I. INTRODUCTION

Located in a natural environment of great beauty, the impressive Mardasson Memorial interprets a story that undoubtedly had repercussions on the outcome of the war. At the foot of the building is a crypt, excavated in the rock and decorated by Fernand Léger, one of the most important French painters of the previous century.

They tell the story of a heroic feat of arms of which there are only few examples in the Second World War: the Ardennes Offensive. The Germans brought in more than 250,000 soldiers for this ultimate large-scale offensive, in which they hoped to turn the course of the war to their advantage. The Americans lost more than 20,000 soldiers – a very high toll. The Ardennes Offensive can be situated at the end of a chain of events of which the American debarkation in Normandy was the first link.

The site of Bastogne with the Mardasson Memorial and the entire network of WWII memorial places in the area seem to be undervalued or unknown for the moment.

However, it has assets galore!

The *Bastogne War Museum* has the ambition to respond to the expectations of an audience that largely did not know the war. This is an audience that in the best case has read about the subject. But often the visitors do not really have an idea and they know the events only through vague images in cinema and on television.

**The point is to turn the “memorial tourism”, of which the memorial fact is less and less present in the collective memory, into a “history tourism” with a clear civil and educational calling.**

With the opening the purpose is to place the assets of the *Bastogne War Museum* and the area in the spotlight. This by clearly positioning this new institution and developing a programme that converts this memorial place in a lively location for the discovery of our history.



# BASTOGNE WAR MUSEUM

## LIVING MEMORY OF THE ARDENNES

### II. BASTOGNE WAR MUSEUM – A NEW IDENTITY FOR A NEW MEMORIAL PLACE

The name *Bastogne War Museum* is composed of three terms which perfectly summarise the identity and the ambition of the new museum institution and which is easy to understand in all languages.

**Bastogne** – This first term represents the location of the institution, situated at the heart of the Ardennes, and even partly introduces the second theme. The concepts Bastogne, The Ardennes Offensive and the Second World War are inextricably bound up and are an important part of our history. And what is more, the name 'Bastogne', more so than 'Ardennes' is internationally known.

**War** – This second term places the famous Ardennes Offensive in a global perspective: that of the Second World War, its causes and consequences.

**Museum** – This third term 'refines' the institution. The visitor does not discover an 'interpretation centre', 'historium' or 'memorial' but a real museum – a modern and interactive museum, outlined by a scientific team and elaborated with all possible scenographic means: historical objects, reconstructions, interactive modules, multimedia, etc.

The baseline Living Memory of the Ardennes gives a more emotional and human dimension to the official name of the institution and underlines that the memory of these events remains well preserved and alive there.

The official logo of the *Bastogne War Museum* consists of a stylised reproduction of the Mardasson Memorial.

**Symbol** – The Mardasson Memorial is one of the best-known monuments in Belgium. It is a real attraction. This is a positive aspect for the *Bastogne War Museum* and the accompanying infrastructure.

**Message** – The Mardasson Memorial and the *Bastogne War Museum* share the same ambition: maintain the memory alive of those who fought for our freedom and defend values such as peace and freedom.

**Place** – In the mind of the visitor, the direct association between the Mardasson Memorial and the name of the *Bastogne War Museum* creates an inseparable connection between the two entities, which form an exceptional memorial place together that is easy to identify.





### III. THE ARCHITECTURAL CHOICE

Without being too dominating, the architectural project frames the existing star-shaped structure and emphasises it.

The first image that comes up with the Ardennes Offensive is a black and white image- an image that is partly determined by the cold and the snow present in the collective memory. To reinforce this impression, the new building is realised in white shades and in that way is in direct contrast with the already existing star-shaped structure that is covered with dark slate.

The second image that one remembers from the Offensive, is the violence of the battles, the chaos and destruction after the battles, the bombings but also everyone's fear and terror, soldiers and civilians alike.

Creating spaces outside their axe, lead-free materials, and the unbalance in the plans constantly create new points of view, which leave the visitor with a feeling of surprise and disorientation.

An opening, a breach in the general emplacement, symbolises the crack that is a clear symbol of the conflict for everyone.

Next to this symbolism the heavy loss of lives is interpreted by the long slate wall, which accompanies the visitor to the Mardasson.



## IV. THE SCENOGRAPHIC TRACK

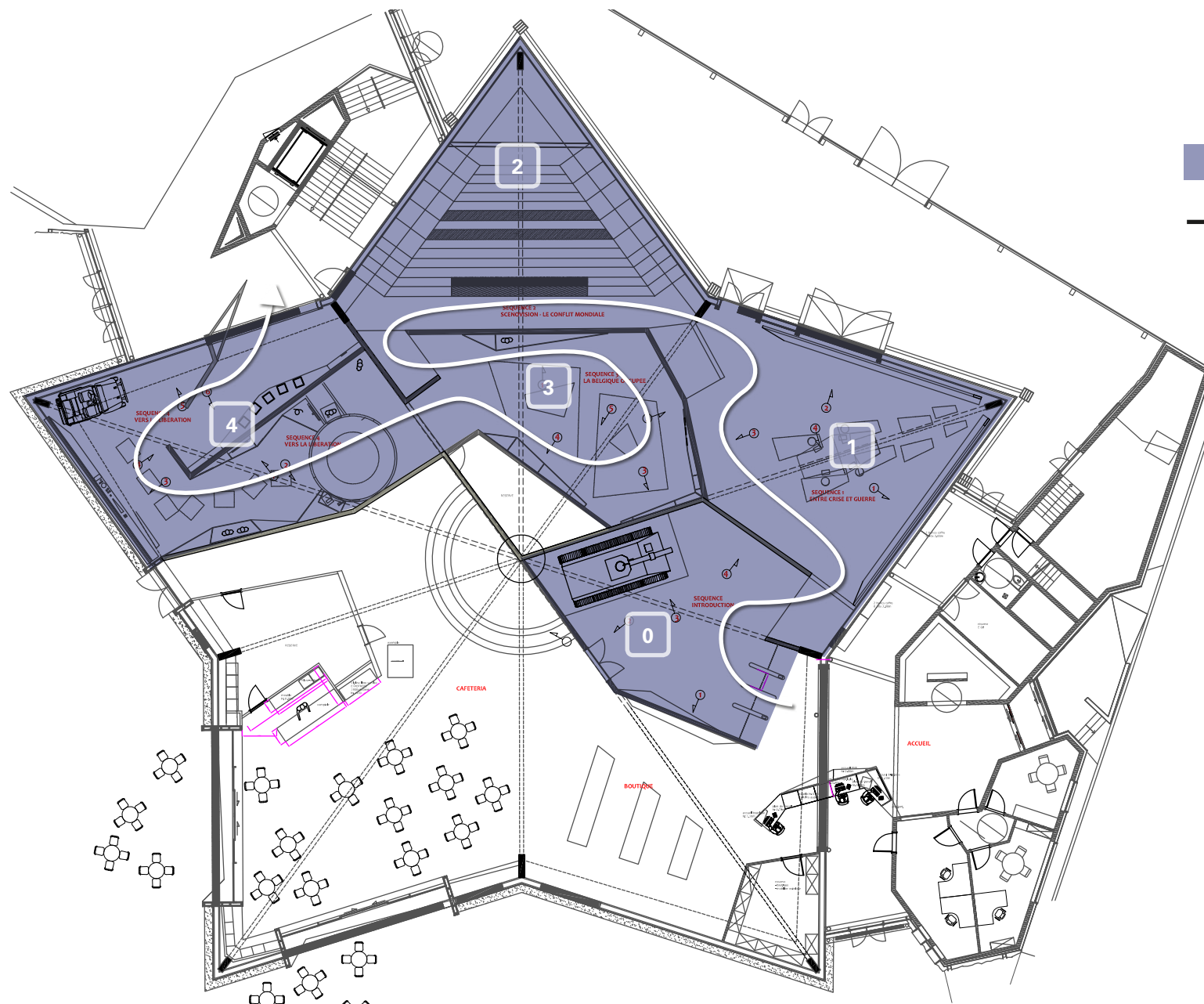
The permanent track of the *Bastogne War Museum* begins at the heart of the star-shaped structure, and then fans out in the new part.

The track that will be entirely autoguided, uses all modern scenographic means (settings, interactive modules, multimedia, reconstructions, etc.). This with the intent to make a concise scientific and historical content comprehensible for the large audience and to place it in the spotlights.

The scenographic track is mainly destined for younger people and therefore is often provided with modules, which are specifically designed for a young audience and schools. They are indicated with a special pictogram.

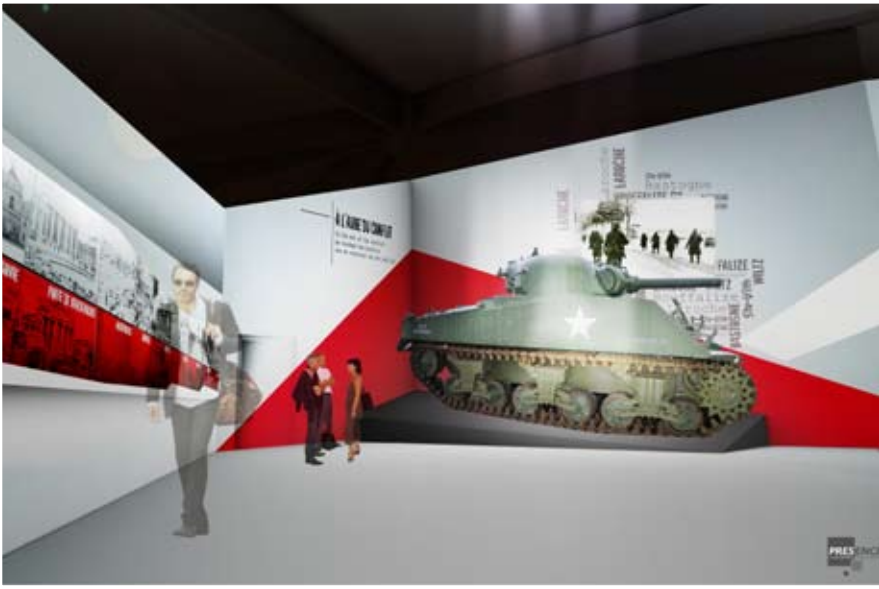
On the track, there are three *scenovisions*. Thanks to these enticing, multi-sensory spectacles, the visitor can follow the stories of 4 people who find themselves at the heart of the conflict.

The combination of a scenographic track and the *scenovisions* guarantees a qualitative visit and a large frame where emotion and information go hand in hand.



Key to symbols

- Permanent exhibition
- Exhibition track
- 0** Introductory sequence
- 1** Sequence 1
- 2** Sequence 2: first scenovision
- 3** Sequence 3
- 4** Sequence 4



### ***Introductory sequence***

The goal of this introductory sequence is to create a breach with the reception area and to form an introduction for the permanent exhibition. It immerses the visitor in an enticing atmosphere. The scenography mainly consists of keywords and a mosaic of images that are projected next to the tank 'Desobry'. This sequence also introduces the 4 people present in the *scenovisions* who will guide the visitor throughout the track:

- Robert Keane, American corporal from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne,
- Hans Wegmüller, German lieutenant from the 26<sup>th</sup> Volksgrenadier Division,
- Mathilde Devillers, a young teacher from the school of Bastogne,
- Emile Mostade, a 13-year-old student from Bastogne.

11



### ***Sequence 1 – Between crisis and war***

This first sequence shows the context of the period between the two World Wars and reminds us of the causes of the worldwide conflict (Europe after the big war, Treaty of Versailles, the stock market crash, the rise of extremism, etc.).



### ***Sequence 2 – SCENOVISION – The worldwide conflict***

**Surface:** 140 m<sup>2</sup>

**Capacity:** 42 seats (+ 4 wheelchair users)

**Duration:** 13 minutes

This first scenovision shows the circumstances of the Second World War and especially the progress of the Axis Powers between 1939 and 1943, which was later constrained by the allied offensives between 1942 and the spring of 1944, in 3D.



### ***Sequence 3 – Occupied Belgium***

This sequence is linked with the first scenovision and situates Belgium in the middle of the worldwide conflict as a country occupied by the Germans (from the neutral position to the occupation, Belgium under German occupation, Belgium under control, etc.).



### ***Sequence 4 – To the liberation***

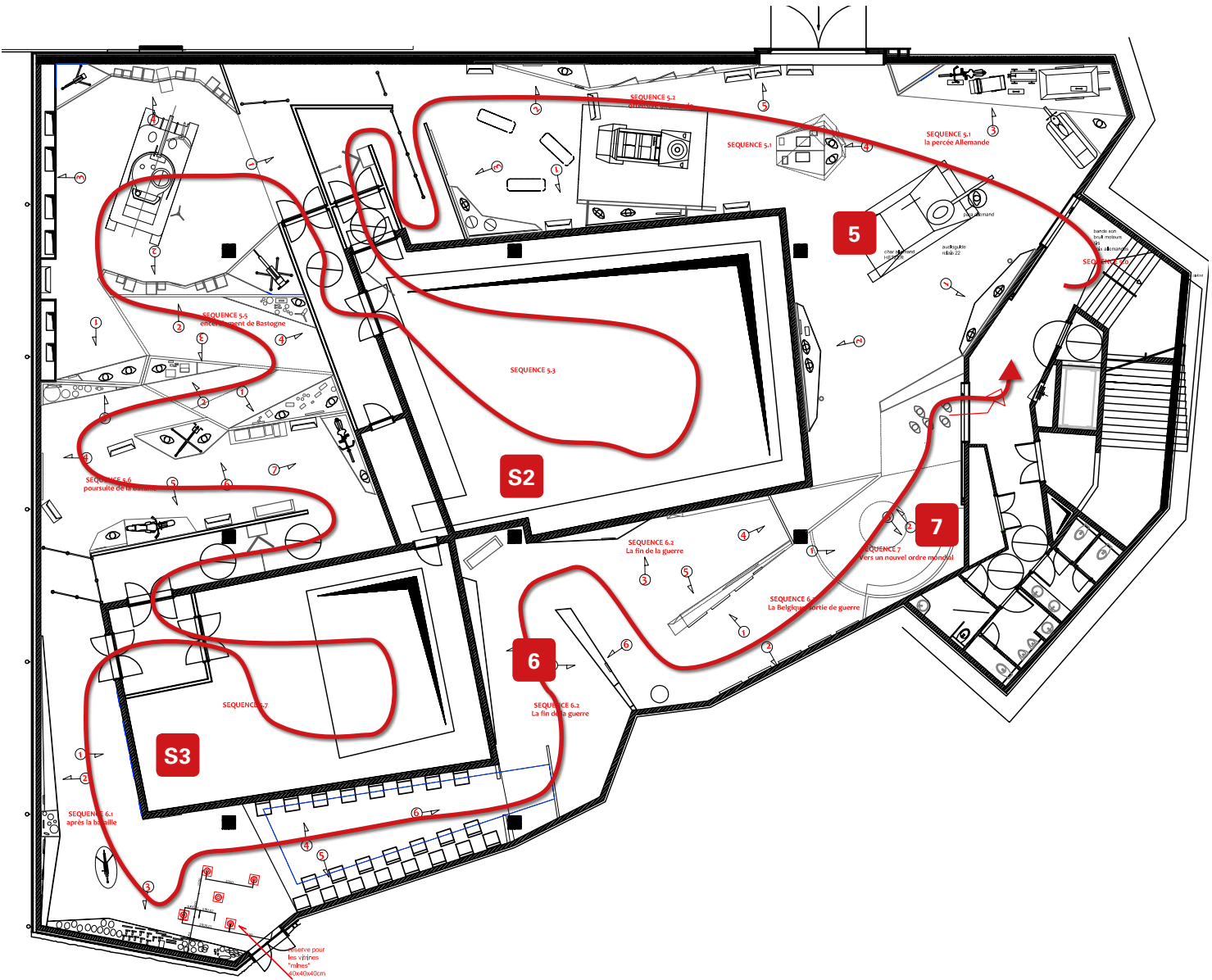
This fourth sequence of the track describes the gradual progress of the allies that led to the liberation of the occupied areas such as Belgium (the debarkation, the march of the allies, etc.).

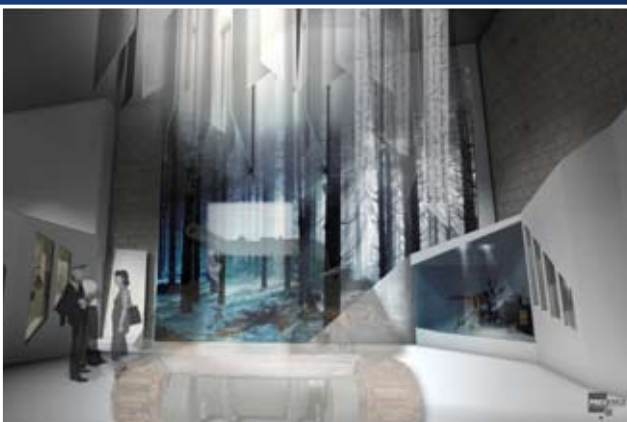




Key to symbols

- Exhibition track
- 5** Sequence 5
- S2** Second scenovision
- S3** Third scenovision
- 6** Sequence 6
- 7** Sequence 7





### ***Sequence 5 – The Ardennes Offensive***

This fifth sequence specifies the different phases of the Siege of Bastogne and the Ardennes Offensive. It tells the story of both the soldiers at the frontline and the civilians. Two *scenovisions* visualise the daily battles at the front and the massive bombings.





### ***SCENOVISION – Bastogne, the offensive (18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> December 1944)***

**Surface:** 195 m<sup>2</sup>

**Capacity:** 40 people can take place on lying tree trunks

**Duration:** 15 minutes

This room is a reconstruction of a forest border in the area of Bastogne. The spectators have the impression to find themselves in a grenade funnel. The soil of the forest is littered with rubbish and is full of holes. Without seeing them, we guess the presence of engraved soldiers who are protecting themselves against the cold and the bullets. At the back and at the sides the very large pictures elongate the setting of the hills in the endless fog. In the middle there are two vertical screens (approximately 3,5 metres high) that are put away, as it were, in the forest. It is on this screens that the battles takes place. Between these screens tree trunks fill the space to give depth to the setting. The ceiling is covered with an uneven grey material on the entire surface of the space. It functions as screen for the images that are projected from bottom to top. These images show the covered or clear sky, as well as the planes, the parachutists or the strewing of pamphlets.



## ***SCENOVISION – The civilians in the battle (22 December 1944 until March 1945)***

**Surface:** 125 m<sup>2</sup>

**Capacity:** 40 people can sit around tables in the tavern

**Duration:** 15 minutes

The trapezium-shaped room has a double setting: a tavern in Bastogne en its basement where civilians are hiding.

The spectators enter the room of recently closed tavern. The bar, tables, chairs and other accessories are still in place. Only tape to close the windows, candles, white sheets on the chairs and a light layer of dust show that the war is indeed present. The spectators are sitting on the chairs and witness the next part of the event. When the bombings on Bastogne on the 22nd of December are recalled, the room is darkened for a couple of seconds. When the light is turned on again by means of a simple oil lamp, the room has changed: we are in the basement of the tavern. After we have spent a couple of minutes with the 4 personae in the basement, the setting of the tavern appears again.

### ***Sequence 6 – The victory of the allies***

This sixth sequence of the track tells the consequences of the battle in three parts:

- the post-battle in the destroyed areas,
- the progressive collapse of the Axis Powers with the victories of the allies,
- the Belgian situation after the conflict.

### ***Sequence 7 – Towards a new world order***

This last sequence portrays the victory of peace, which results in a new world order: the foundation of the UN, the construction of the European Union, the Cold War, and the end of it in 1991 with the ruin of the USSR. The track ends with the audiotour (outside) of the Mardasson Memorial (the road of the Freedom and the symbolism of the Mardasson).



## V. THE PROGRAMMING OF THE EVENTS

One of the keys to the success of the *Bastogne War Museum* will be the ambitious programming of events. This has to keep the institution lively and give it a central place within the network of the European memorial places.

Numerous events and animations have already been considered:

### Two kinds of temporary exhibitions

Large exhibitions that are produced at medium term and with regular intervals, the themes of which – although they have a direct link to the objective of the museum – broaden its intention.

### Some possible themes:

- Science and war;
- War propaganda;
- War reporters;
- War within the war: collaboration, resistance, civil war;
- The life of the soldier;
- Political legitimacy during the war
- Is the war a human fatality?;
- The road of Freedom: Utah Beach – Bastogne;
- Reims and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne.

Smaller exhibitions of pictures or objects of collectors are alternated with the large temporary exhibitions.

### Colloquia and public conferences

These events will take place around certain themes, next to the exhibitions themselves.

The *Bastogne War Museum* will also serve as reception, colloquia and conference space outside its programming.

### The festival of the war movie

The *Bastogne War Museum* could organise an original festival of the war movie, following the model of the American Deauville Film Festival or the History Film Festival in Pessac. With 'war movie' we mean movies with battles on the one hand, such as "*Le jour le plus long*", "*Saving Private Ryan*", or "*Green Zone*", but on the other hand also those movies in which the war or the ideology leading to it plays a role such as "*Une journée particulière*" or "*Papa est en voyage d'affaires*".

In the frame of this festival the programming of archives documentaries, which could lead to debates with historians, could also be considered.

### A sound and light show

The site is ideal for this kind of event, which could be realised in collaboration with Franco Dragone and Luc Petit Créations.

## VI. THE ACTANTS

### a. The carriers of the museum and touristic projects

The city of Bastogne and IDELUX Projects publics are the initiators of this project. Its development is partly made possible thanks to the collaboration with the Commissioner General for Tourism and the Bastogne Tourism Office. The project subscribes in the FEDER-programme 2007-2013 of the structural European funds programme "Competitiveness".

The total investment, of more than 7,5 million euro, is covered by European subsidies, regional and municipal funding.

IDELUX Projects publics ensures the composing of the project from conception to management.

### b. The carrier of the scientific and event project

The NPO "Bastogne War Museum" has the mission to develop the scientific project of the museum (composition of a scientific board, create a network for the institute, partnerships, etc.) and to make the activity and attraction of the place dynamic by participating in the production and funding of the event programming (temporary exhibitions, colloquia and conferences, festivals, etc.).

A local scientific board, which is composed of volunteers passionate of the local history, collectors, writers and guides, was created in the frame of the conception of the permanent track of the *Bastogne War Museum*.

### c. The architect

The architectural practice Atelier de l'Arbre d'Or was selected for the architectural reorganisation of the old building of the Bastogne Historical Center as well as for the programming of the new adjacent structures.

Atelier de l'Arbre d'Or was founded in 1990 and develops, amongst others, projects of large live and office complexes in Brussels, Wallonia and abroad.

### d. The scenographs

The scenography of the new, permanent exhibition track of the *Bastogne War Museum* was assigned to the French agency Présence, supported by La Prod est dans le Pré for the development of three *scenovisions* (enticing, multi-sensory spaces), spread throughout the track.

Since more than 20 years, Présence accompanies semi-public and private organisations in the development of their cultural, touristic and scenographic projects. The goal of this team of 15 people is to realise innovative environmental-friendly projects. The agency Présence has numerous references, as well in France as abroad.

La Prod est dans le Pré designs and realises multi-sensory exhibition modules since almost 17 years: the *scenovisions*. Image, sound, setting and special effects are the ingredients that normally lead to a film production or a lively spectacle. La Prod est dans le Pré assembles these elements in a different manner in order to create a new kind of artistic work that tells a story and causes an emotion. Three exceptional *scenovisions* are realised specially for the *Bastogne War Museum*.

### e. The manager

The management of the *Bastogne War Museum* was assigned to Tempora – Belgian leader in design, realisation, promotion and management of exhibitions and cultural equipment.

Tempora designs temporary and travelling exhibitions ("This is our history!", "This is our earth!" etc.) and museums with an international reputation (Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, Waterloo Memorial, etc.). Today Tempora is proud to be able to organise the management, promotion and reception of the visitors of the *Bastogne War Museum*.



## VII. CONTACTS

### **Bastogne War Museum - exploitation**

Colline du Mardasson  
6600 Bastogne  
Belgium  
[info@bastognewarmuseum.be](mailto:info@bastognewarmuseum.be)

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### **Bastogne War Museum – communication and press relations**

c/o Tempora  
Rue de Suisse, 29  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium  
T : +32 2 549 60 57  
F : +32 2 549 60 77  
[communication@bastognewarmuseum.be](mailto:communication@bastognewarmuseum.be)

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### **Bastogne War Museum – administration**

c/o Tempora  
Rue de Suisse, 29  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium  
T : +32 2 549 60 68  
F : +32 2 549 60 77  
[administration@bastognewarmuseum.be](mailto:administration@bastognewarmuseum.be)

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