

De l'évacuation à la libération dans La région de Thionville et de Cattenom

*Cantons de:
Cattenom,
Metzervisse,
Sierck-les-Bains,
Yutz.
1939 -1945*

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CATONISVILLA

Preface

After being interested last year in the world of Agriculture, Catonisvilla is devoted in this year 2004, to the sixtieth anniversary of the Normandy landing and of the Liberation, a period going back to the evacuation of the populations of the area of Thionville and Cattenom in 1939 or 1940, at the time of the last world war, to the Liberation by the allies in 1944 and 1945.

After more than four years of occupation, the Normandy landings on June 6, 1944, marked the beginning of the process of liberation of France. After fierce fighting, in the west of the country Paris then felt relieved little by little from the enemy yoke. In September 1944 the Allies arrived in the area of Thionville and in November 1944, where they created at Cattenom two bridgeheads to the right bank of the Moselle, they completed the liberation east of the country, in February 1945.

To mark the sixtieth anniversary Catonisvilla is devoting this period for various celebrations planned in November 2004 in the region with the participation of a number of American veterans from Moselle to be invited especially for the occasion.

A major exhibition is to be provided by the Association in November at the Gymnasium in Cattenom which will display over a thousand photographs, documents, objects and military uniforms relating not only to the liberation of Cattenom but for the pre-war and post-war period and all far beyond the village to cover the wide area around Cattenom in order to attract as many people as possible.

This book, edited by the Association is intended to be a witness to this era and the author, Jean-Paul Paradeis, again deployed all his usual energy and rigor of a historian to collect all the evidence possible from those who lived through this time. It was thus determined to get, among other things, an almost exhaustive study of the evacuees retracing their route of departure and return and take a few photos of all the places around the cantons of Cattenom.

Beyond the text, of which the essential content has already been widely traced by many historians, this book is embellished with numerous photographs, including many unpublished, and a whole series of documents of the era, which increases the interest of this book and makes it truly original. All these documents are local, and with a few exceptions, come from private sources.

Catonisvilla especially congratulates and thanks the author for the quality and richness of the iconographic work and all those who contributed to the development of this work, both in their testimony and by photographs kindly entrusted.

This book is a reminder for people who have experienced this time and a witness document for those who wish to learn of this painful period of black history.

Jean Paul Wonner,
President of the Association

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Thanks

Drastic choices had to be made among hundreds of reproductions and collections which were privileged and whenever it was possible private papers published. All documents are public with the authorization of their authors and their owners. All the generous donors are gratefully acknowledged and those whose documents have not been selected forgive us. It was impossible to integrate thousands of photos and documents.

In this book are pictures of people from the following localities: Amnéville, Angevillers, Apach, Aumetz, Basse-Ham, Basse-Parthe, Basse-Rentgen Basse-Yutz, Haute-Yutz, Berg-sur-Moselle, Beyren-Lès-Sierck and Gandren, Boust, Bouzonville, Buding, Budling, Cattenom and Sentsich, Champigneulles, Clouange, Contz-les-Bains, and Dalstein and Ebersviller, Distroff, Entringe, Escherange-Molvange, Evendorff, Fixem, Freistroff, Froidcul, Garche, Gavisse, Guénange, Hagondange, Halstroff, Grindorff and Bizing, Haute-Parthe, Haute-Sierck, Haute-Kontz, Hettange-Grande, Inglise and Hastroff, Kanfen, Kédange-sur-Canner, Kerling-lès-Sierck, and Koenigsmacker and Métrich, Kirsch-lès-Sierck, Kirschnaumen, Koeking, Launstroff, Malling, Maizières-lès-Metz, Manom, Mondorf-les-Bains, Mondorff, Montenach, Morfontaine, Oudrenne, Rettel, Rodemack, Faulbach and Semming, Roussy-le-Village, Rustroff, Sierck-les-Bains, Soetrich, Terville, Thionville, Valmestroff, Veckring, Zoufftgen.

Similarly there are pictures of localities of evacuee destinations which follow: Amberre, Beaumont, Beire-le-Chatel, Bèze and Reneve, Cherves and La Touche, Craon, Dissay, Jaunay-Clan, La Chapelle-Montreuil, Lavausseau, Montaiguët-en-Forez, Naintré, Port-de-Piles, St George-les-Baillargeaux.



Traveling through Hastroff, near Inglise in front of the Klein house, three ladies probably from Koenigsmacker or Elzange, seeking shelter with acquaintances during the fighting in the area in November 1944.

Thanks to the following families: Barthel, Bemer, Bettenfeld, Bertin, Bestien, Billaude, Bosse, Boudrenghien Boul, Brach, Brandenburg, Briot, Bruant, Chiantello, Cordel, Cosse, Cuny, Czapka, Daga, Dap, Delion, De Selancy, Dicop, Dresse, Einrick, Fabing, Felten, Filstroff, Fischer, Flammant, Fousse, Frisch, Froehlicher, Gall, Gérardon, Gianoli, Goberville, Grislin, Hackel, Harter, Hauptert, Heiles, Hein, Helleringer, Henzel, Herber, Hesse, Hippert, Hirtz, Hoffmann, Hotton, Jolivalt, Jost, Junger, Kaiser, Kauffmann, Kehr, Kemmel, Kerber, Kiffer, Kieffer, Klein, Kohn, Kolata, Kop, Krier, Ledrich, Leguil, Leidwanger, Lenard, Lodi, Maljean, Mansion, Marchal, Marescaux, Marotta, Marx, Max, Menard, Michels, Mougel, Nennig, Noël, Nogarède, Ohmer, Olejniczak, Paradeis, Pevillier, Perrin, Petit, Pier, Pilutti, Reicher, Reiland, Reitz, Retter, Ritter, Rock, Salomé, Schlemer Schmitt, Semin, Simon, Sindt, Star, Steinmetz, Teitgen Terver, Thill, Thiry, Thomas, Thuillier, Totin, Trap, Vatry, Veynachter, Viale, Villem, Vitacolonna, Vogel, Wagner, Wax, Weigerding, Weiller, Welfringer, Weynachter, Wilhelm, Wonner, Zinelli and the association ASCO-MEMO of Hagondange and the association "If I was told Yutz" from the services of the Municipal Archives of Thionville, Cattenom and Fixem. Thanks also to the service ECPAD/France of the French Army for its active collaboration with the association *Moselle-River 44* for providing some very nice pictures and those furnished by W. Rothenberger.

Special thanks to Isabelle and Estelle Paradeis, to Claude Helleringer and Jasmine Essid for the proofreading of the book and corrections. This book could not be formatted without technical skills of Ridha Essid who deserves to be commended.



Evacuation of Thionville May 1940.

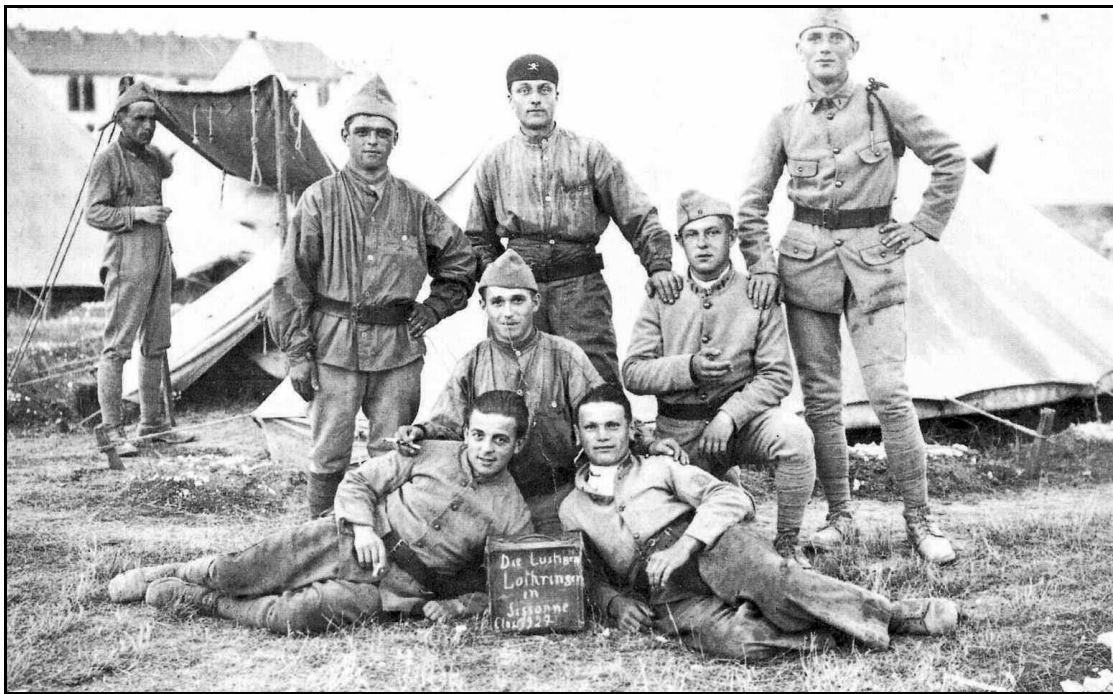
Before the meteoric advance of the German army was panic. In the Rue de Bourgogne, deserted, shuttered, this father of a family saves his bicycle and a small portion of his possessions thanks to a handcart. The distress of civilians is demonstrated. He goes to the station, probably at Beaugard. (ECPAD / France)

Foreword

Last year a chronicle of the farming region of Thionville was proposed, incorporating many photos from private collections and from more than 30 different localities. A consensus about it since was to trace the shift from food crop agriculture for general subsistence at the beginning of the XXth century to a high performance agribusiness beginning with the XXIst century.

This year, the topic addressed is much more painful and still very heavy in the memories of elders who lived through these terrible years. These documents are from a great collection of unpublished photographs, from the years 1938/39 and 1944/1945 in the area of Thionville, consisting not of military or ideological aspects, but on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Mosellans. The latter believed they were protected from invasion behind the Maginot Line, but were attacked and expelled or evacuated, and the territory occupied by Nazi Germany.

This is primarily a work of non-professional writers, with photos not yet published because they come from private collections.



In operation in 1927.

At the end of 20 years, as illustrated by the sign on this photo, taken during military service, many Lorraine citizens, which Totin Mathias, Teitgen Nicolas, Nennig Jean and Weynachter Alphonse all of Cattenom, were still only German speaking or speaking a dialect. This explains why the lukewarm reception some years later, that the local population had toward some Mosellan villages evacuated to Vienne or to Cote d'Or in 1939 and 1940.

I have read books of very comprehensive and recent aspects of the local and strategic Second World War. I also have met with scholars who are passionate on the subject. Undoubtedly the most personable is Philippe Wilmouth, a teacher in Hagondange, who has worked over 15 years with passion and jurisdiction over all the local aspects of the Second World War. It is the soul and body of workers of ASCO-MEMO association which gathered Hagondange documentation unrivaled on the topic. This young scholar, just forty, is already the author of several books very well documented, which have been essential for my process of documentation.

The study I conducted aims to contribute to the preservation, in the collective memory of the tragic events that accompanied the war and its local adventures. It is divided into several main parts. First analysis of the evacuation in 1939 or 1940, as the town was "red zone" or "blue zone" and a summary of the "phoney war" of life in the home regions, before addressing everyday life from 1940 to 1944, and eventually the Liberation and ceremonies that marked 1945. Priority has been given to local photos and detailed captions for these reproductions.

To succeed in this work, it was necessary to increase our efforts with visits for photos, testimonials and anecdotes. Even if the home has always been warm as when studying farming, many witnesses interviewed, and who knew when, could not hide their emotion, even their tears as their memories are still painful. I felt the same reserve and a desire to forget the period for which many Mosellans have some sort of vague sense of guilt.

Sometimes there are probably a few mistakes here and there about dates or places, because with time the memories are less accurate, but no error on the essential nor the drama of these terrible years when brother was wary of brother, cousin of cousin and neighbor of neighbor.

I have had a few meetings where memory was stronger than others, particularly especially the interview with Joseph Krier of Kirsch-les-Sierck who had come to meet a group of high school students working on the resistance in Lorraine. I do not forget my moving visits to Joseph Herber of Contz-les-Bains, Mrs. Steinmetz of Veymerange, to Mrs. Marx Soetrich or to Emile and Marguerite Jolival of Halstroff or my repeated interviews with Mr. Vogel, Deputy Mayor of Fixem.

I sometimes upset the memories of some people who increased their efforts of memory for their testimony to be as accurate as possible. I think this was the case with my own mother or Madams Kiffer and Wonner of Cattenom.

In addition, the hunt for original documents was more complicated than the previous topic because during this era the environment was difficult, few people were taking pictures. Imagine: when only with a few hours to prepare for the evacuation, there was not the idea to photograph the times, especially when the duration of the journey and the destination are unknown and uncertain. Then, back in Moselle, cameras that had not been taken had disappeared, and procuring another was not actually a priority.

In everyday life there was no incentive to photograph the events as a significant occupier, always on guard, under great pressure whose actions may be spied on by members of the local population, sometimes by the collaborators from the region. Better to fade into anonymity without attracting attention!

By their very nature, the actions of the resistance, such as searching or delivering information to Allies, was passed by advertising, especially photographs. It was the same when one slaughtered a pig while one was hiding a deserter or prisoner, or one sympathized with a Russian or Pole deported to the Moselle by the Nazis. All these moments could not be fixed on film!

Finally, among the photographs and documents recovered, many could not appear in this book for the sake of doing harm, or offending someone. Mosellans for their salvation were incorporated into Nazi or auxiliary bodies, and even if they were forced, it would have risked waking old stories and bitterness of 60 years ago. The same, having donned a German uniform could still today be misinterpreted, while in 99% of cases, it was "Despite us" and not voluntary. Despite this censorship, this is a beautiful anthology of the locality contained in these pages.

Documents are due to dozens of generous donors from communities in the vicinity of Thionville and the local cantons of Cattenom, Sierck-les-Bains and Metzervisse. The anecdotes could fill several books, but this is a brief summary of volunteering accompanied by illustrations. For the photographs in this quest, you must thank the work of my brother Christian and his family.

It was also to enjoy the very formal celebration, almost everywhere, of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Mosellans in the autumn of 1944, for this documentation to be made known to young generations.

To all persons who have agreed to help me, by lending their documents and have opened up a few doors of their family intimacy during the Second World War, our thanks are very warmly spread.

Obviously, as in the past, CATONISVILLA, the Association and its members have been privileged to produce this work. It is therefore a little book that will acquaint you with all these people.



Camp Cattenom entry

Great gate of the barracks of the 168th R.I.F, with its mascot, the wolf, shown on the two columns.

Finally I want to dedicate this book to the memory of three members of my family for whom this period was a severe stage of their life and who were permanently affected.

- **My father, Jacques Paradeis, who died in 1982**, and to whom I am indebted for my education and my social mobility, if one being considered a teacher is a success for a worker's son. Born in 1924, he never was, unlike his elder brother, born in 1921, required to work for RAD or be inducted into the Wehrmacht, due to both a fairly serious operation of the parotid gland and severe infection of the hand, which conveniently occurred just before his medical examination. He, therefore, worked from 1940 "reconstructing" the library installed by the Germans at Camp Cattenom. Before the end of 1944 he was hired by the Scholtès Company for about 15 months. Even as a teenager, he was an avid Gaullist. At the time his work served to provide the food for a group of three and then six hidden for almost a year with his mother, from the end of 1943 to November 1944. They were deserters from the German army: his uncle Jacob Watzky, his elder brother Paul Paradeis and his cousin Robert Sünnen, to which were added later Peter Totin, Leon Goberville and Francois Peiffer. Every Day, the whole family could have been deported, especially as there were several visits by the Gestapo to the home. Imagine then the trauma felt by them upon meeting Americans, arrested early in 1945, and shipped to a camp of prisoners near Cherbourg. He was eventually acquitted in the spring of 1945, permitted to return to Cattenom after verification of his personal history, and cleared of all suspicion.



Deserters hiding at Cattenom.

In the fall of 1944, the 6 "in spite of ourselves" German army deserters hiding in Marie Paradeis' Cattenom home begin to revive and did not hesitate to take pictures in the backyard of the house. In this case the photographer is Robert Sünnen, and Jacques Paradeis not concerned because he was not fit for service, standing right, appears in the company of five others hidden for nearly a year. Standing from left to right: Paul Paradeis, Leon Goberville, Francois Peiffer, Jacques Paradeis: 1st row: Jacob Watzky and Peter Totin.

- **My paternal grandmother, Marie Paradeis, we all called her "Granny", died in 1981** just a few months before her son. Although a widow with children still in charge and provided with no income, she hid and fed three and then six for almost a year in 1944. Among the deserters so hidden, there was certainly her brother and a son and a nephew, but also three other people who had no Cattenom link or kinship with the family.



During the "phoney war" at Cattenom. In 1939/40, during the "phoney war," many officers and even some simple privates were lodged in the villages near the Maginot Line. They slept in barns with their equipment and their fighting equipment and were sometimes invited by the locals for lunch. This is the case with Maria and Margot Paradeis.

- **My maternal grandfather, Joseph Weiller, who died in 1983.** His verbal imprudence caused him to be denounced and arrested in September 1943 at his place of work, sent to the famous "Carlshütte" and then taken to the Metz prison Queuleu without even being able to notify his family. Fortunately, a neighbor who saw the column of prisoners, escorted by armed men board a German truck in Thionville, warned my grandmother of his arrest. From Metz, my grandfather was taken to the camp at Schirmeck then Natzwiller, antechamber at Struthof. He underwent several months of incarceration and forced labor before being released on the eve of Christmas 1943, following the intervention of an Ortsgruppenleiter. He came to the farm at Cattenom to raise money for the SA and other official bodies related to NSDAP. As he was surprised that the lands were not yet plowed, my grandmother recounted the arrest of her husband and told him that she was alone with five children, the eldest of the boys, aged only 14 years, was still too young to replace his father. This visit and the supplications of my grandmother justified his release for Christmas 1943, but on the express condition that he be used in the passive air defense of Yutz, by wearing a German uniform. Three months of hard labor without adequate food and a stay in a prison camp infested with lice, were cause for the man who willingly or unwillingly finally agreed to perform the duties required at Yutz, sometimes recorded several days and nights without being able to go to Cattenom. He had kept hatred of the Germans, which warmly recommended to us never to address the subject. During family gatherings or dinner with "grandpa", we never mentioned the Germans or their qualities.

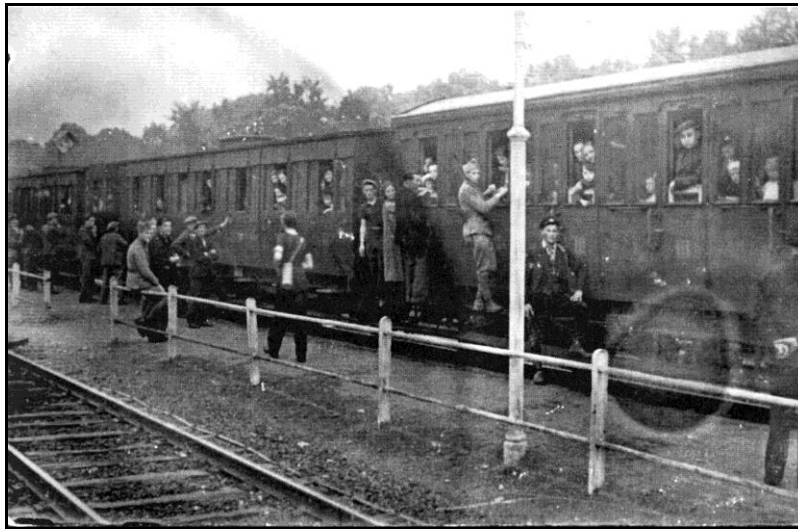


Joseph Weiller early 1944 in German uniform.
The picture shows him during service in anti-air defense for the protection of civilians in Yutz. A three-month stay in Natzwiller labor camp force, until Christmas 1943, because he refused to wear a German uniform, and an obligation to support his family (wife and 5 children) caused him to submit or risk deportation to a concentration camp.

The evacuation of the Mosellans in September-October 1939 and May-June 1940

Browsing the many studies devoted to these local sad months of 1939 and 1940, baptized the "phony war", we realize that all stories of Mosellan villages, beyond the adventures, or dramas of individual families, that the routes followed are similar and have some common significant features.

First there were two waves starting by order of the French state and orchestrated by the administration with the help of humanitarian organizations and religious congregations such as Catholics or the Red Cross.



The departure to Vienne by residents of Sierck-les-Bains.

Station in Sierck-les-Bains, September 1, 1939, the inhabitants of the locality are evacuated. The train is crowded but these are passenger cars which take the inhabitants to Vienne and not freight cars. The whole canton of Sierck-les-Bains is evacuated in early September 1939, but not all will have the chance to arrive 3 days later as the inhabitants of Sierck, or take the train to the same locality.

- 1) The first wave started the first week of the war, September 1939, when the war in Poland started.**

The initial order is given on 1 September, 48 hours before the start of the war, and this first wave of evacuation ends in November 1939. According to a discretionary plan of 20 years and refined after the construction of the Maginot Line in 1938, it is the first villages and agglomerations situated between this line and the Franco-German border that must be evacuated. This is the so-called "red zone".

The Maginot Line was built for defensive purposes, works were generally ten km inside the borders, so as not to strike outside the national territory and therefore not to appear as the aggressor. So, it was to evacuate all localities (mainly villages) located between these structures and boundaries with the enemy.

A detailed plan of evacuation centers existed and was created for collection with a triple role: ensuring the collection, sorting and grouping of evacuated and organize referrals to reception areas providing in the meantime, the temporary lodging and meeting material needs of refugees .

Each center was designed to accommodate thousands of people, all in coordination with the military and prefectural services. Hagondange, Clouange, Vitry-sur-Orne, Gandrange, Richemont, Rombas, Maizieres-les-Metz and Moyeuve-Grande were the centers of interest in the area of Thionville, Cattenom, Metzervisse and country of Sierck-les-Bains. It was expected that the removal would be done to the departments of Aube and Haute-Marne before the refugees are routed to the final place of residence in the Charente and Vienne.



Evacuation Family

A family in the region of Thionville anticipates its own evacuation. This is often the choice of farmers to limit losses, except those who were evacuated in early September 1939 and were taken back. The departure is for the Metz region or even further the Meuse or Meurthe-et-Moselle, leaving before the arrival of the Germans in June 1940. The scene takes place before the old garage currently in the Gardin supermarket. Those who were motorized, but they were rare, did the same. (ECPAD/France)

Despite all the detail of the plan, there were big failures, errors and omissions sometimes. The mayors were not notified of the evacuation order of their community but a few hours before the deadline and people had very little time to prepare their backpacks and 50 kg baggage allowance per adult or 30 kg per child. It is also interesting to note that, in the collective memory, only the number of 30 kg has been selected and it is often cited that they were children before the exodus. Necessarily, because as a child at the time, they remembered the 30 kg and not the 50 kg baggage allowance for their parents.

In the communities, at the first moment was disbelief (there had already been an evacuation order after the annexation of the Sudetenland by Hitler and the Munich meeting in October 1938, a quickly canceled order), when the population ran. Over 80% of people went with the communal convoy. This was still painful sometimes accompanied by crying. Then began the first heart-breaking: what to do with farm yard animals (poultry, pigs and cattle and horses especially)?

This dilemma explains why many farmers finally decided to go with the help of the community and organized themselves with the immediate family, often to the region of Metz . In this case, they go taking cattle. The horses are harnessed to the cart loaded with furniture, eatables and children of the family. Cows follow led by a young family member. Pigs and all the small farmyard animals in contrast are released and become masters of the village streets. In some municipalities, nearly 30% of the people chose the individual solution, in others it was much less.

At the same time the inhabitants of the "red zone", many Jewish families, during the fall of 1939, went to France's "interior" as it was then.

Among these families, some shipped their goods by train to Vienne and some of these trains remained in stations unattended after arrival, so they were looted and these families lost everything.



Preparation of mattresses.

At the station in Beaugard, families with evacuees throughout their village prepare mattresses in order to provide a minimum of comfort during the train ride. They soon learned, as was often the case that because of the shortage of rail cars, that they will be sent in freight cars. Some were designed for the transport of animals. Often people concerned spoke exclusively and improperly of the "cattle cars". In any case they must sleep on straw and often for a long ride with a capricious itinerary.



A convoy of evacuees at station Hagondange.

It is a village in the canton of Sierck-les-Bains, whose convoy stopped at station Hagondange. This is proof to me that the evacuation often occurred in some freight cars which were cattle cars. Here there they are well marked "Men" and "Horses".

In total, the majority of the evacuated rallied to a collective solution, even farmers. It was an ordeal for mayors and most of them managed the challenge with skill, others demonstrated a manifest incompetence.

Most of the time, the small livestock was abandoned in place and all the big cattle was taken to a place agreed to in advance with the authorities in closed parks. For example, those evacuated from Halstroff, Grindorff, Bizing left their cows at Kirsch-le-Luttange, the entire livestock being lost before return. There was a veritable convoy of villagers on foot, in carts, bicycles or more rarely a truck or bus, which got under way. They headed to either the station Thionville, Beauregard or as was most often the case directly to the collection center for the community in the general area of Hagondange, Maizieres-les-Metz, Moyeuvre-Grande, Rombas or Clouange. They used for itineraries secondary roads as main roads were reserved for military convoys.

Thus the communes of Launstroff, Rémeling and Waldwisse go with their annexes through Metzeresche village evacuating to Hagondange and abandon carts and carriages around Fléville. Other villages as Rodemack, Evrange and Roussy-the-village are trucked to the station of Hettange-Grande, through the intervention of Robert Schuman, General Counsel of the canton of Cattenom; the departure goes directly through the collection center according to the evacuation plan.



Crossing of Hagondange in cart drawn by oxen.

Some villages had not been sent to the collection center in a planned truck and must find their own way to get there. This is a frequent case for small villages in the canton Sierck-les-Bains. Here is a family of this canton at Hagondange with a team drawn by oxen or cows. This team must be abandoned at the station to come up with the minimum of luggage in the train to Vienne. When it is a village that uses this kind of vehicle you can imagine the crowd on the roads and byways.

One can easily imagine the plight of these people, ordered to leave their homes in a few hours, not knowing what to save or leave or anything. Besides, it is useless to close the houses or to completely lock cabinets. Everything was open and looted in the weeks that followed the start, despite the presence of border guards left behind. And looting was essentially the work of French troops and their allies, Canadians for example in the area of Kerling-lès-Sierck! the rest was often taken by dishonest people not evacuating villages in September 1939 or by some early Mosellans returning to the village, as scouts, before the rest of the evacuees in 1940. We can thus assume that some movables suffered only transfers from one village to another or just one house to another within the same village for the benefit of dishonest people.



Departure of Malling evacuees from the station at Clouange.

September 3, 1939 the people leave from Malling for Vienne in 3rd class cars for passengers and goods. Confusion is visible in some of their looks as it is a start to the unknown for an indefinite period.



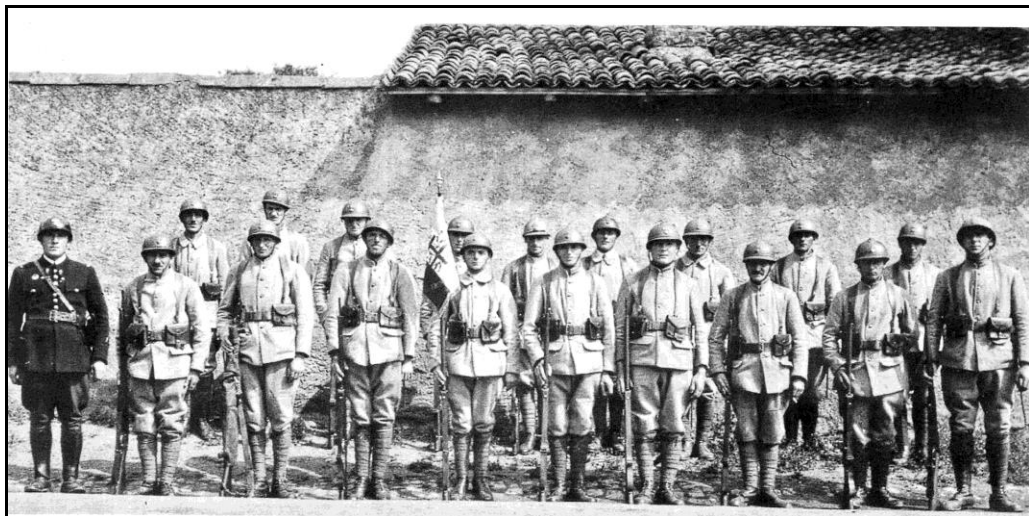
Loading mattresses and stoves by the French army at Bouzonville.

During the evacuation of civilians on requisitioned vehicles available to ensure the start of persons and their property, which the party is to receive in Vienne. Certain regiments also improved their living conditions with the goods of evacuees, especially when the cold first arrived at the end of October 1939.



Official ceremony in Gavisse, July 1939.

Welcoming ceremony with solemn pomp, by civil and military authorities. Border guards at Gavisse in 1939. Robert Schuman recognizes and welcomes General Couse, Commander of fortified area of Thionville. The village is dressed like the 14th of July and the associations of villages and townships are present. At the same time the civil, military and religious personages. These guards are reservists from villages around the Maginot line mobilized on site and supervised by professionals from the Mobile Republican Guard.



There were large inequities affecting those evacuated from September to November 1939. Those who had to go on 1 September and the following days suffered the most, as was the case throughout the canton of Sierck-les-Bains. They could not anticipate and therefore lost their property, with rare exceptions. By contrast, those who were evacuated in October had the time to take the necessary steps to put furniture and even livestock sheltered with family or friends in the region of Metz. Only the poorest of these communities suffered inconvenience because they did not have a cart to move their assets and put them in a safe place.

Arriving in a few hours or several days at the center of collection, the evacuees then gave up their bulky goods and their vehicles on the spot close to the stations or in the meadows close to the station. They were then transported by train and reached the departments of Charente or Vienne in four to five days, after two or three days waiting at the collection center. The transfer time was explained by the number of the tracks where military trains and others had strategic priorities. The trains consisted of evacuees in third class carriages and freight wagons including cattle cars. They were crowded, ran mostly at night and stopped more often during the day, in the shelter of a forest. The route was long and sometimes very funny, some through the Paris area and others in Lyon. Sometimes there were inexplicable detours by northern France, for example, or stops in the wilderness for several hours without explanation.

This was a test for the nerves of adults who were not always able to read the location, the signs being in hidden places. We were constantly in search of water (especially when one eats a snack of smoked ham) or milk an obsession and tragedy for mothers with infants. What about promiscuity and lack of amenities! For the adolescents however, carefree, this was an exciting time that they did not consider the severity or the challenge, the boys even saw a golden opportunity to woo more easily than normal the girls in the same convoy. As for the youngest, it was an opportunity for them to play exotic and exciting games for hours, enjoying the dismay of parents, sometimes synonymous with laxity in monitoring their games.

In this first wave of departure was the Canton of Sierck-les-Bains, evacuated on the evening of Friday 1 September or Saturday 2, to collection centers provided: Hagondange, Moyeuvre-Grande, Rombas and Clouange, where a rail convoy routed the population via Lyon or Paris-Juvisy, Poitiers and Châtellerault. Sometimes all the inhabitants of a village could not board the same train and were thus separated. If mayors knew the department assignment from the start of the train, the final destination of evacuees was still negotiated as to the route and mayors and priests struggled to avoid separation of villagers or even worse families.



Arrival of people from Sierck-les-Bain at station of Jaunay-Clan.

September 4, 1939, after only three days travel, which was little, the removal from Sierck-les-Bains and arrival in Vienne, with baggage on a small cart.

Officials were often overwhelmed and there were huge errors in routing, rates as spectacular as 6 weeks of wandering through Champagne where the victims were residents of Budling of Kemplich of Monneren of Helling and of Veckring. Other villages as they began with carts and belongings on September 1st but reached their assignment in October. October 11, people of Kemplich reached Laille and Bouze having travelled by train to Arcis-sur-Aube. On October 9, those of Veckring and Budling finished their journey at Villiers near Vienne, people of Veckring moved up to Vouillé. In the interval, they had to traveled 300 miles in twelve days from 2 to 13 September through Moselle, Meuse, Marne and Aube with carts and belongings, and often were unwelcome and poorly fed.

After a stay of three weeks in Dampierre they forsook all their belongings and were conveyed to Arcis-sur-Aube and transferred by train to Vienne where they arrived in mid-October. The same thing for the people of Monneren who got up at dawn went by the Aube passing through Meuse and Marne. After a few weeks they sojourned at Heiltz-le-Morupt and especially at Mery-sur-Seine, they sold their belongings. They were then transported by train to Romilly-sur-Aube then around Poitiers to the locality of Chalandray in late October 1939 and eventually Bois-Baudry in November 1939. Analogous situation for the people of Budling who travelled to Méry-sur-Seine in 6 weeks, or 350 km on carts drawn by horses, then by train to Frozes in Vienne. Klang residents, meanwhile, travelled to Nogent-sur-Marne in 3 weeks which is 250 km with teams of horses or cows; much livestock died en route.

Plan for movement of evacuees in September 1939 according to Directive from 1 May 1938. (this work is the reproduction research by Philippe Wilmouth in his book published in 2003)

Collection Center	Commune evacuated	Number of persons concerned	Date and hour Of arrival
Moyeuvre-Grande	Oudrenne	434	2nd day at 1:35
	Kerling-les-Sierck	326	2nd day at 4:30
	Kirschnaumen/Obernaumen	462	2nd day at 8:00
Clouange	Koenigsmacker	832	1st day at 22:55
	Ritzing	150	2nd day at 6:55
	Sierck-les-Bains	1024	2nd day at 5:00
	Rustroff	340	2nd day at 5:20
	Manderen	323	2nd day at 8:15
	Montenach	330	2nd day at 5:30
	Hunting	210	2nd day at 4:15
Vity-sur-Orne	Rettel	570	2nd day at 5:45
	Berg-sur-Moselle	82	2nd day at 0:45
	Gavisse	200	1st day at 22:45
	Sentzich	360	1st day at 22:45
	Mailing	288	2nd day at 1:15
Gandrang	Apach	510	2nd day at 6:00
	Merschweiller	170	2nd day at 9:00
	Kirsch-les-Sierck	252	2nd day at 6:30
Richemont	Puttelange-les-Thionville	416	2nd day at 2:45
	Beyren-les-Sierck	282	2nd day at 2:05
	Contz-les-Bains	398	2nd day at 2:55
	Haute-Kontz	308	2nd day at 4:25
	Fixem	176	2nd day at 0:45

Length of stay in the collection centers should not exceed three weeks and it is expected that 5-10 people should be confined to a common area. The beds should be reserved for children, the sick and the elderly. Others must be housed in barns or attics or in common rooms, bedding made of straw.

2) Then there is the evacuation in May 1940, and in haste, for localities behind the Maginot Line and its vicinity.

This was because of the panic from the attack of the Germans in the Ardennes on 10 May and their quick movement. Refugees from Belgium and Luxembourg already were cluttering the routes. The German airplanes, mistresses of skies, were causing panic in villages not evacuated from the area of Thionville and individual departures multiplied. It is estimated that the city of Thionville had fallen from more than 14,000 inhabitants to less than 10,000. To explain this drop in the number of inhabitants, in addition to these individual departures, there were also those specially mobilized and its affects (eg 1940. Already as in 1939, evacuation of minors had not been reported to the interior departments of the country, which made difficult both the maintenance of their income and the making available of decent housing for their families). The Jewish community anticipated events by visiting the interior

departments several weeks earlier (not without losing some of their property once again), which also contributed to bringing down the number of inhabitants.



Evacuation of a Hastroff family of farmers.

In May 1940 began a Second wave of evacuation under the pressure of the advancing enemy troops. Many families then anticipated an order to leave and chose a family solution and not a collective evacuation.



Here in Hastroff, next to Inglange, this is the case of the Klein family and their neighbors. This solution avoided abandoning the cattle, which was taken care of by security in the Metz area and did not evacuate to the area of the Meuse, and enabled them to take their most valuable furniture.

We then evacuated the localities near Thionville, with the same delay, very short, as in September 1939. This time it is the departments to Haute-Marne, Saone-et-Loire, Côte d'Or or even Allier which

must accommodate the refugees. The Germans are already two steps from the Maginot Line from Audun-le-Tiche up to Bouzonville through Kerling-les-Sierck. Many families expect an almost certain evacuation and drawing the lessons of what happened in September 1939, put their most precious possessions at the shelter. The authorities also react differently.

Thus, a person in the family, a teenager generally, will remain in the village to lead the horses on the day agreed to a meeting place a day or two later, the same operation takes place for cattle. This will avoid traffic congestion for trucks and buses to evacuating the residents. Yet even then these animals will be lost or shot by the soldiers. The Petain regime or the German authorities most often replaced, at least partially, livestock lost in 1940 or 1941, as war reparations. There will be some, and with a great fanfare of publicity, distribution of plows and machinery to livestock farmers, from the Germans, in the fall of 1940.



The vicinity of the station Beauregard in May 1940.

During the evacuation of the villages on the Maginot Line in May 1940, disorder and distress prevail. All rolling stock, buses, trucks, vans, were used to motivate people to evacuate the station. In some villages, however, they must fend for themselves.

Beauregard Station and its surroundings were constantly crowded with buses, trucks and evacuees with their luggage. Agents of the Red Cross take care of young children as they leave the bus. Soldiers are storing luggage and bedding along the tracks. (ECPAD / France)



On the 10 and 11 May 1940, all that remained in Aumetz was evacuated then the other cantons left in turn in the following days. Residents of Koeking, Garche, Basse-Ham or Elzange arrived on May 17 at Clouange, Rosselange or Moyeuivre while Thionville was evacuated on 19 and 20 May 1940. Evacuations were held at night because of the possible attacks of enemy aircraft. Finally, columns of refugees in turn left the stations Hagondange, Rombas, Rosselange, Clouange, Vitry-sur-Orne, Moyeuivre-Grande and Moyeuivre-Petite. Sometimes villages had a chance to entrain them very close to home, like the inhabitants of Boust or Zoufftgen and Hettange-Grande which were evacuated to Vienne. Again a large minority choose to leave on their own to save more goods, collected into a convoy and moved towards the Departments of Moselle, Meuse and Meurthe-et-Moselle. In some villages a majority that rejected the collective solution, disengaged and rallied friends or acquaintances to the Meuse. For example, there are only 80 people from Garche to evacuate and only 30 from Koeking. At Buding no farmer left with the convoy of villagers on Friday, May 17, 1940. Most of them went to Pagny-sur-Moselle or Thiaucourt by their own means, taking horses and cows. Even the mayor was in the number and it was his assistant who accompanied the 120 that was evacuated from the station at Hombourg-Budange for departure to La Palisse in the Allier and stayed near Montaignet-en-Forez. The village that was just deserted, was soon looted by franco-scottish troops encamped nearby. Stolen victuals gave rise to a binge for several days before the movable property was carried away by the departing troops.



A crowd during the second wave evacuation of Thionville.

Under the supervision of French troops, trying to calm helpless civilians, they embark adults and children with their luggage and Gas masks on their shoulders. In lines formed for leaving to Cote d'Or or Haute-Saone. They feel much fear of not being allowed on the train as the car seems full and they scramble to get in. (ECPAD / France)

This was done in the confusion of the second wave starting with the German troops on their heels. Several localities remained blocked from the collection center for over a week or they were dispersed in different convoys. Along the way, many of the evacuated went to the Department of Côte d'Or, not to Vienne, as originally planned. We also note that the inhabitants of Thionville, embedded in seven different trains from the Beauregard station, are separated: the neighborhoods of St Pierre and of Beauregard find themselves near Rochefort, in the Department of Charente-Maritime (it was called Charente-Inférieure) and other areas in Côte d'Or. Normally Thionville and Basse-Yutz would have to go through Moyeuve, but the trains were routed directly to Metz train station and the evacuees were housed in barracks, before their departure to centers planned for their temporary stay. Residents of the neighborhoods of Koeking and Garche on the other hand, evacuated May 17, were luckier and regrouped safely south of Dijon May 27, 1940. Soon, the railway line between Thionville and Metz is cut off at Uckange, which reduced the evacuations.

Despite the panic in surrounding areas, note another example of the absurd rigidity of the Directors of Yutz in evacuating Basse-Yutz and not Haute-Yutz. Some residents of these localities lived long on the same street that separates the two municipalities and the area evacuated was limited. Many inhabitants of Haute-Yutz took refuge by their own means in the city of Metz. The French authorities

had still to resolve evacuation from the combat zone the last inhabitants of Upper Yutz, 14 June 1940. As for the population of Basse-Yutz, evacuated May 20, 1940, they went to host villages of the Côte d'Or and Saône-et-Loire.



The distress of the evacuated.

Leaning on the army and the presence of officials of the Red Cross, there are harrowing scenes. Here, this soldier waits for the mother of the baby to return with it in his arms. No doubt she is looking for milk for her infant, a crucial problem to solve due to evacuation in a hurry. In addition they often had to abandon part of the baggage on site. Toys, the most valuable to young children were often the victims of these drastic choices imposed by the authorities. (ECPAD / France)



Not only had they to be evacuated in haste, Mosellans from 92 municipalities, but also manage refugees from Luxembourg between 10 and 15 May 1940. Some were motorized but the majority were in carts, bicycles or on foot, and they had to move also to Côte d'Or.

My parents were part of the second wave with their village of Cattenom. Both paternal and maternal, nobody anticipated events. Their fate, however, was very different and perfectly illustrates the disparity of treatment and differences in losses.



Train stop at Station in Champigneulies, evacuees from Cattenom.

Even in 1940, the families have no means of personal transportation had no alternative but to wait and follow the evacuation order for their village. This is the case of the small village half of Cattenom evacuated to Côte d'Or. Several families of the village are recognized the families Steinmetz, Paradeis, Pissinger, Boui, Star, Jaeger and Nennig.

My mother's family had planned their departure, May 11, 1940, before the one organized by the municipality. While leaving by their own means, as most farmers of the commune, they gave up any allowance as a result.

The daily 10 francs per adult and 6 francs per child were indeed reserved for those evacuated by the French administration. The Weiller family gained Uckange with a cart drawn by cows and with accumulated food and provisions, furniture, effects, clothing and other personal objects. The old cart was followed by the working cows. The journey lasted a day, but not without having suffered an air attack near the railway station at Uckange (this is the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time). After two or three days of halting, they started for Woippy where they had to stop almost a week, cows with bleeding feet. The reception was excellent from the company Moitrier, a food canner, which housed the whole family, seven people, during this week, in a sort of large meadow. They offered

them shelter in the same house, inhabited only by women of the family, the men having been conscripted by the French army. Then an uncle came from Gorze to get my grandmother and her children while my grandfather was waiting for the cows to heal then went to Gorze and joined the rest of the family.

My father's family, composed of a widow with five children, two still receiving schooling, had no other choice but to leave with the convoy organized by the municipality, as about half of the people in the village. The departure for Clouange was organized in May by the mayor and the secretary of City Hall who did their best, also a teacher, and trucks of all sizes took the people to Clouange. Arriving in the evening, they passed the night on straw prepared in the community hall of the locality. The next day they had to abandon most of the luggage carts and other vehicles and most bicycles. Then the train with passenger cars and not cattle, travelled to the Cote d'Or with forced stops and lengths. Half of the inhabitants of Cattenom were directed to Reneve, the other party to Beze, where the reception was quite cold because evidently, nobody had really prepared for their arrival. Things however became normalized and their stay went well from May to August 1940. Compensation paid allowed them to live with the extra small jobs not declared. On return, there was nothing or almost nothing in the family home.

3) The more complex cases

Among the unusual situations that are difficult to classify, there is the case of mining communities such as Volmerange-les-Mines, Escherange-Molvange, Entringe or Hettange-Grande. The evacuation of residents is complex to study as there are individual cases and the fate of the mining towns should be distinguished from the villages themselves.

For cities, miners, often Italians or Poles are specialists that were needed and who were given a special assignment.



Badges of fortress troops.

SOCIÉTÉ DES
ACIÉRIES DE LONGWY

Société Anonyme Capital : 156.250.000 Frs.
Siège Social à MONT-ST-MARTIN (M.-et-M.)
Registre du Commerce BRIEY B 62

THIONVILLE, le 194

EXPLOITATION DES MINES & USINES
DE LA
SOCIÉTÉ LORRAINE MINIERE
ET METALLURGIQUE

TELEPHONE: 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, THIONVILLE
Adr. Télégraphique: LOMIMETION-THIONVILLE

Prière d'adresser toute la Correspondance à
SOCIÉTÉ DES ACIÉRIES DE LONGWY
EXPLOITATION
DES HAUTS-FOURNEAUX & ACIÉRIES
DE THIONVILLE
à THIONVILLE (Moselle)

Toute contestation qui surviendrait à l'occasion de la présente sera de la compétence des
Tribunaux de Metz, même en cas d'appel en garantie ou de pluralité de défendeurs et ce malgré toute
clause contraire imprimée ou manuscrite figurant sur les lettres, factures ou autres documents de nos
correspondants.

Direction - E/CX-

Je soussigné, DIRECTEUR DES HAUTS-FOURNEAUX ET ACIÉRIES
DE THIONVILLE, de la SOCIÉTÉ DES ACIÉRIES DE LONGWY, certifie
que Monsieur *Gall* *T. et Z.* (affecté spécial, à no-
~~tre~~ société est autorisé à se replier avec sa famille en rai-
son de l'évacuation de nos usines.

Il devra nous aviser dès son arrivée de sa nouvelle adres-
se et se tiendra à notre disposition et rejoindra dans les
délais les plus brefs le poste que nous lui assignerons.

Thionville, le 18/5/40

SMM



Example of Trust in Yutz.

In several locations such as mining towns or those with specialized workshops as Yutz City, there were evacuations at several times. First, early departures with a special assignment for miners, steel and railway workers. Often the rest of the population waited months for their turn to evacuate. Here workers in Yutz railway workshops were sent to Bordeaux in September 1939 while the rest of the area was not evacuated at that time. It was not until May 1940 that the rest of Basse-Yutz received the order to evacuate even if a significant portion of the population had already anticipated the departure date.

In September 1939 transferring a number of them to another area and their movement was accomplished. Others remained in place. It depended if the mine ceased working or not. Thus at the Volmerangeles-Mines, the work ceased in September 1939 while it continued until May 1940 at Hettange-Grande, which means two different treatments for miners. These were either maintained on site at Hettange-Grande, for special coal affected collieries in the North or dispersed to several mining sites in the Massif Central region of Lyon or the Pyrenees. There is even the case that the French government conscripted or pressured some Polish to join a Polish Corps to assist the troops of the Maginot Line. This battalion also valiantly fought near Léning, Puttelange-au-Lac and Dieuze in June 1940. I must say that the Polish army was reconstituted at Coëtquidan at the end of 1939 with soldiers and officers of Polish nationality living in France who were able to flee their country and join. In May 1940, the 1st Division of Polish grenadiers, with more than 16,000 men, was organized in Moselle, the Saar and the defense of the Maginot Line.

As the villagers themselves, some from Volmerange-les-Mines, were evacuated in September 1939 while others left in May 1940. This was the case of Entringe, evacuated to the Puy-de-Dôme instead of Vienne (Champigny-le-Sec and Varennes) or Charente-Inférieure (Bourcefranc) as expected. This was also the case of Hettange-Grande, delivered mostly to the Côte d'Or in May 1940, when a small portion had already been evacuated in September 1939 to Vienne.

Many families, anticipating the general evacuation order given after May 10, 1940, had themselves organized evacuation to the Meuse or Meurthe-et-Moselle. Sometimes, in extreme emergency, some people did not go very far, as at Lommerange or Algrange or before the German advance and fighting around the forts of the Maginot Line. We better measure the diversity of situations and uneven trauma. The people were on the alert since the fall of 1939 and their worry turned to panic when the first shells fell on communities in May 1940. Their evacuation rather resembled a flood.

With the victory and the German occupation, the situation was equally complex. The military discovered, on the return of the population, the different scenarios they faced. Among the Italians, they realized that some came to the Moselle to escape the fascist regime and others were supporters of Mussolini. Obviously the two categories were not treated the same way.

It was the same with the Polish. Some were born before 1914 in what was then German Poland and had German nationality and even military decorations for bravery during the First World War. Others had left Poland after 1918 with free Polish nationality and were anti-German. Again two different treatments were reserved for them. Finally, there were those of Italian and Polish origin who had acquired French citizenship but who could not be treated as the Mosellan strain. In short, a beautiful puzzle for an occupier concerned with clarifying the status of individuals. But for the Germans, the most important thing was to get a skilled workforce to work the active mines, they exercised a certain pragmatism in dealing with individual cases.

The plan for the movement of municipalities evacuated in May 1940 according to the directive of May 1, 1938. (this work is a reproduction of Philippe Wilmouth research published in his book in 2003).

Collection center	Municipality evacuated	Number of people
Moyeuvre-Petite	Thionville	1000
Moyeuvre-Grande	Thionville	10000
Rosselange	Basse-Yutz	6000
Clouange	Hettange-Grande	1200
	Cattenom	970
	Basse-Ham	660
Vitry-sur-Orne	Elzange	130
	Inglange	180
	Valmestroff	110
	Tianjin	420
	Koeking	230
	Hettange-Grande	600

They were expected to evacuate the military cantonments and store food for the evacuees.

4) In total we evacuated more than 300,000 Mosellans, close to half the population of the department.



Evacuees from Sierck-les-Bains to Vienne.

Solidarity was at least for the first few days after arrival. They worked to prepare meals or to cut wood are common facts.

Between Friday 1 September 1939 and November 1939, an estimated 210,000 Mosellans, from 214 municipalities were evacuated. Approximately 100,000 left to the Charente, 84,000 to Vienne, the rest to the Aube, Haute-Marne, the Côte d'Or and to other departments. It should be remembered except for miners who had been dispatched to the Pas-de-Calais, where they underwent a second exodus, to the Pyrénées.

Over 50 communities in the region of Thionville were affected by this first wave, most of which were completed in mid-October. They belong to the cantons Cattenom, Aumetz, Metzervisse, Bouzonville and Sierck-les-Bains.

For the district of Thionville, 127,000 civilians have been displaced, nearly 22,000 people from what was then the canton of Thionville, almost 6,000 from the canton of Cattenom and a little more than 8,000 from Metzervisse. Those evacuated remained in their home town until August, sometimes until October 1940, others did not return to Moselle at the end of the war. Between Friday, May 10 and Monday, May 27, 1940, approximately 93,000 additional were evacuated from 92 other municipalities (including 42 from the district of Thionville) were added to the first contingent. In total, 68 of the 73 municipalities of the district were affected, about 148,000 people, 60 in September and October 1939 and 15 May 1940, except for special assignments.



*Two families from Cattenom
Stayed in Renève in Cote d'Or
between May and August
1940.*

*The Paradeis Family in full
force with several Totin family
members before their housing
with their affects.*



Housing for the family of Paradeis at Renève.

There were still some localities evacuated to Charente, to Vienna or the Deux-Sevres, but it was mainly the departments of Haute-Marne, Saone-et-Loire, Côte d'Or, which received the bulk of new refugees. There were also a few isolated cases shipped to Allier or to other departments such as the Massif Central or Corrèze. Often, people had been transported to other localities than those initially provided for by the plan of 1938, as Basse-Ham to Côte d'Or instead of Chiré-en-Montreuil and Cissé to Vienne, Garche and Viéville to Côte d'Or. But instead of Cuhon and Massognes to Vienne or Cattenom

to the Côte d'Or, instead of Lencloitre and Cernay to Vienne. Others were not evacuated as Kuntzig or Luttange, others could not be as Distroff.

Several localities included in this second wave of departures were back in Moselle in July 1940 as Basse-Yutz for example. Others returning in early August, and even those who remained evacuated until September 1940 were often repatriated to villages before the first wave. Indeed, their abode was closer to the Moselle, repatriation was therefore easier to organize once rail traffic was restored.

In each village, there were early returnees, through byways, from some homes who were brave or unaware of the danger. Farmers were the first to return, sometimes a whole month before the other villagers. They had indeed chosen to leave individually and stayed in Metz. By July 1940 they put their house in order before the return of others but I can imagine their strange feeling entering a deserted village.

In total it is estimated that 45% of the total population of the department were evacuated, more than in Alsace (1/3 only). In all 764,000 Mosellans and Alsacians had to leave their locality. From French statistics there were 300 municipalities of Mosellans and 302,732 inhabitants. The Germans published in 1941, slightly different figures, citing 301 municipalities and 314,000 inhabitants but their publication is accompanied by propaganda, stressing the importance of routing errors and the looting done by French troops.



Families Kleffer and Beving of Beyren-lès-Slerck in La Badinière.

In Vienne carefree children have found the usual games with backyard animals and do not consent to war.



Dock at the Beaumont, La Tricherie station in August 1940.

Returning residents to Halstroff or Grindorff and Bizing after a stay of 11 months in Vienne. Many bring a bicycle purchased with savings since many had found employment.



Returning Mosellan inhabitants of Cattenom.

Arrival in front of the station of Dijon, late August 1940, a portion of the evacuated from Cattenom that are preparing to take the train to Thionville. In front we recognize Margot Paradeis..



Return of the village of Basse-Ham in August 1940.

Since May 1940 a lot of people staying in Beire-le-Chatel in Côte d'or are gathered here on the main square of the village with their luggage while waiting to board the trucks designed for men and luggage to load and drive to the station in Dijon. Then back via train to Thionville and then again by bus and truck to Basse-Ham.

5) Summary Table of Commune evacuees with dates and locations of evacuation and return. (This work owes much to the research of the Abbe Dicop, Henri Hiegel and Philippe Wilmouth, all supplemented by my own research)

To find the exact dates of departure and especially those of returning, we had to consult both

- * Monographs devoted to a particular locality,
- * Synthesis work already published on the subject,
- * When the municipal archives have preserved traces of the event,
- * Departmental archives

and more meetings with actors of the era to compare the opinions and confront memories.

The frailty of human memory here and there was very quickly realized, despite the precautions taken and the checks carried out, there are then inaccuracies and errors of a few days. There are also differences between what was planned and what actually happened, especially in May 1940 and it was a mess and several planned evacuations were canceled.

When there was a specific day for the date of departure for the evacuation organized by the municipality the inhabitants were transported most by often by truck or more rarely by bus to a railway station, before rejoining at their collection center to take the train to the Department of destination. Private and voluntary departures like farmers, who generally had opted for family, took place a little before. This date is not the special date for miners or steelworkers, often leaving to the north or to the center of France much earlier, or some employees of railways transferred before the start of their village.

Where there is marked "Commune not evacuated " does not mean that no one in this town is gone but on the contrary many left on their own initiative and anticipated the evacuation order. But this means that the municipality did not receive the order to evacuate or that this order was not reported as was the case May 23, 1940 at Distroff or partially as in Kedange-sur-Canner where people were still in the village when the Germans arrived in late May or early June 1940. At Haute-Yutz for example there was no order to evacuate, the limit being the road between Basse-Yutz and Haute-Yutz, but many people arrived in the Metz area on their own and were housed in the area between Friday, May 24th and Friday, June 14, 1940, during the fighting, some were in Illange, others in Bertrange-Imeldange or Guenange.

Regarding return dates it was the same: it was the date of return of evacuees by commune farmers, family parties from the region of Metz, Meuse or Meurthe-et-Moselle, and people who were sheltered by voluntary departures came in before other people, as well as some specially assigned. Generally the returns, taking into account all these cases, were spread out over two or three months in most municipalities.



Cleaning Berg-sur-Moselle.

The return of the population to the abandoned villages several months or even a year later, there was a great cleaning which was sometimes under the control of German troops. Here the scene is Berg-sur-Moselle, and we see a group of women volunteers to clean the church.

a. Thionville and neighboring towns:

Commune	City of evacuation	Date of departure	Date of return
Basse-Yutz	La Rochelle et region de Jonzac (Charente inferieure), St Bonnet de Joux et Tournus (Saone-et-Loire), Arnay-le-Duc, Cussy-le-Chatel, Izeure (Côte d'Or)	From Saturday 18 May to Monday, May 20, 1940	July to end August 1940
Haute-Yutz	Community not evacuated		
Manom	Villefranche d'Allier, Montmarault, St Priest-en-Murat, Viplaix (Allier)	Sunday 19 May and Monday 20 May 1940	Late August and Early September 1940
Thionville, Beauregard	Rochefort, St Agnan, St Nazaire-sur-Charente, St Coutant-le-Grand, Moragne, Puy-du-Lac, Montierneuf, St Jean d'Angle. Port-des-Barques, Soubise, La Gripperie-St Symphorien, Lussant, Fouras, Cabariot, Muran, (Charente inferieure)	Sunday 19 May and Monday 20 May 1940	Late September and Early October 1940
Oeufrange	Saint Antheme, (Puy de Dôme)	Monday 13 May 1940	September 1940
Terville	Community not evacuated		
Veymerange	Community not evacuated		
Illange	Community not evacuated		



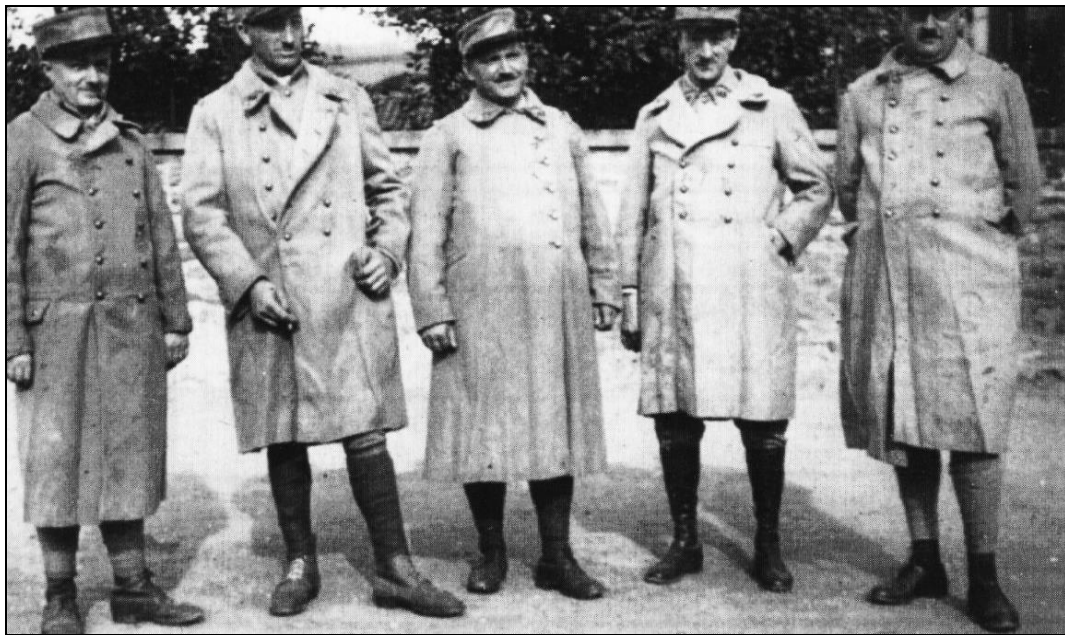
Cattenom patriotic ceremony in July 1939.

Ceremony at Cattenom, July 14, 1939 near the church and before the memorial for the dead, for the reception of troops from Camp Cattenom and implementation of border guards.



Group of guards at Zoufftgen border.

Reservists are often older than 35 or even 40 years are conscripted and take position in barracks built in a hurry. There were 27,000 in all.



Group of border guards near Uckange.

The same phenomenon is reproduced in the whole area of Thionville and here we see older people mobilized with Terver Clement of Cattenom. Their instructions were to monitor borders, movements of the enemy and safeguard the evacuated villages. Their retreat was planned in case of war.

b. Cattenom Canton:

Municipality	Place of Evacuation	Date of Departure	Date of Return
Basse-Rentgen and Haute-Rentgen, Preische	Savigny-sous-Faye (Vienne)	Wednesday, October 18, 1939	Late September 1940
Berg-sur-Moselle	Craon (Vienne)	Wednesday, 13 September 1939	Late September 1940
Beyren-lès-Sierck, Gandren	Orches (Vienne)	Wednesday, 13 September 1939 for Gandren and Tuesday, October 17, 1939 for Beyren	Tuesday, October 1, 1940
Boust. Bass-Parthe, Haute-Parthe and Usse Iskirsch	Doussay (Vienne)	Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 October 1939	July and Late August 1940
Breistroff-la-Grande, Evange, Boler	Antran (Vienne)	Wednesday, October 18, 1939	Wednesday 2 October 1940
Cattenom	Renève, Bèza and Mirebeau-sur-Bèze (Côte d'Or)	Saturday, may 18, 1940	August 1940
Entrange Entrange cité	Saint Antheme and Marsac-en-Livradois (Puy de Dôme)	Monday, May 13, 1940	From June to Monday 5 August 5, 1940
Escherange-Molvange	Marigny-Brizay (Vienne)	Monday, May 13, 1940	September 1940
Evrange	Verger-sur-Dives (Vienne)	Wednesday, October 18, 1939	September 1940
Fixem	Amberre and Mirebeau including the hamlets of Bournesseau, Ambrette, Clouzeau (Vienne)	Sunday, September 17 1939	Wednesday 2 October 1940
Garche	Viéville Beire-le-Châtel (Côte d'Or)	Departure Friday, May 17 1940, arrived Monday, may 27	Friday, August 2, 1940
Gavisse	Charrais (Vienne)	Wednesday, 13 September 1939	End of September 1940 and early October 1940
Hagen	Cheneche (Vienne)	Wednesday, October 18, 1939	End of August-beginning September 1940
Hettange-Grande Soetrich	Cherves, Neuville of Poitou, Yversay and Vendevre of Poitou (Vienne) Ste Sabine (Côte d'Or)	Monday, September 4, 1939 and Friday, May 10-Tuesday May 14, 1940	From July to September 1940
Kanfen	Blaslay (Vienne)	Thursday, October 19, 1939	Late August 1940 and September 1940
Koeking	Bèze and Viéville (Côte d'Or)	Departure Friday, May 17 1940, arrived Monday, May 27	Between Saturday 3 and Thursday, August 8, 1940

b. Cattenom Canton:

Mondorff	Chabournay (Vienne)	Thursday, October 19, 1939	Monday 21 September 1940
Puttelange-lès-Thionville, Himeling, Halling	Sérigny, Mondion and Naintré (Vienne)	Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 October 1939	October 1940
Rodemack, Faulbach, Esing, Semming	Mirebeau (Vienne)	Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 October 1939	October 1940
Roussy-le-Village	Mirebeau	Wednesday 18 October 1939	October 1940

c. Canton of Sierck-les-Bains:

Municipality	Place of Evacuation	Date of Departure	Date of Return
Apach	Cierzac (Charente inférieure) Rouillé, Ingrandes, Cellefrouin (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	Tuesday 1 October 1940
Contz-les-Bains, Rudling	Dissay (Vienne)	Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 September 1939	Sunday 22 and Tuesday 24 September 1940
Flastroff-Zeurange	Montamisé Chasseneuil (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Halstroff, Grindorff, Bizing	Beaumont and The appendices La Tricherie (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Haute-Kontz	Naintré Cenon (Vienne)	Sunday 3 and Wednesday 13 September 1939	September 1940
Hunting	Naintré (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Kerling-lés-Sierck, Haute-Sierck, Fréching	Les Ormes (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	Monday 2 and Tuesday 3 September 1940
Kischnaumen, Obernaumen, Evendorff	Naintré (Vienne)	Saturday 2 September 1939	September 1940
Kirsch-lés-Sierck	Port-de-Piles (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	Thursday 26 September 1940
Laumesfeld, Kalemberg	Saint Cyr (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Launstroff, Scheuerwald	St Gervais-les-Trois-Clochers, St Cyr (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Malling	Leigné-sur-Usseau Vellèches (Vienne)	Saturday 2 September 1939	September 1940
Manderen, Tunting	Colombiers (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940

Municipality	Place of Evacuation	Date of Departure	Date Return
Merschweiller, Kitzing	Dangé (Vienne)	Saturday 2 September 1939	September 1940
Montenach	Dangé (Vienne)	Saturday 2 September 1939, arrive Monday 4 September	Thursday 26 September 1940
Rémeling	Usseau Vaux-sur-Vienne (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Rettel	Thuré (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Ritzing	Montamisé (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Rustroff	Les Ormes (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Sierck-les-Bains	Chasseneuil-du-Poitou, St Georges-les-Baillargeaux (Vienne) Jarnac-Champagne (Charente)	Friday 1 September 1939 arrive Monday 4 September	September 1940
Waldweistroff	St Gervais-les-Trois-Clochers (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	September 1940
Waldwisse, Flatten, Gongelfang, Betting	Ingrandes (Vienne) St Fort-sur-le-Né et Cierzac (Charente)	Saturday 2 September 1939	September 1940



Badges of the 168th R.I.F. and all of the Maginot Line



[Evacuated Localities
All Pillagers will be brought before Military tribunals
Under Pain of Death]

d. Canton de Metzervisse:

Municipality	Place of Evacuation	Date of Departure	Date of Return
Aboncourt	Commune non évacuée		
Basse-Ham	Beire-le-Châtel, Petit Beire, Arceau, Arcelot, Fouchanges, (Côte d'Or)	Sunday 12 to Friday 17 May 1940, arrive Monday 27 May	Saturday 5 August 1940
Bertrange- 1 meldange	Commune non évacuée		
Bettelainville, Bousse	Commune non évacuée		
Buding, Elzing	Latillé (Vienne) Montaignêt-en-F orez (Allier)	Friday 17 May 1940	Friday 4 September 1940
Budling	Frozes (Vienne)	Depart Saturday 2 September 1939 and arrive October 1939	Tuesday 3 September 1940
Distroff	Devait être évacuée mais ordre rapporté et seulement des départs individuels	Thursday 23 May 1940	August 1940
Elzange	Béruges (Vienne)	Sunday 12 May to Monday 20 mai 1940	August 1940
Guénange	Commune non évacuée		
Hombourg-Budange	Le Donjon (Allier)	Friday 17 May 1940	August 1940
Inglange	Vouillé (Vienne) et surtout Veuvey-sur-Ouche, Pont d'Ouche et Bligny-sur-Ouche (Côte d'Or)	Sunday 12 May 1940 and Friday 17 May 1940	1 and the 15 August 1940
Kédange-sur-Canner	Ayron (Vienne) mais évacuation stoppée en cours d'exécution	Monday 20 May 1940	August 1940
Kemplich, Klang	Latillé et Bouzé (Vienne)	Depart Friday 1 September 1939, arrive Wednesday 11 October	September 1940
Koenigsmacker, Métrich, Petite-Hettange	Benassay, Lavausseau, La Chapelle-Montreuil (Vienne)	Samedi 2 September 1939	Lundi 23 September 1940
Kuntzig	Commune non évacuée		
Luttange, Kirsch-lès- Luttange	Commune non évacuée		
Metzeresche	Commune non évacuée		
Metzervisse	Commune non évacuée		
Monneren, Ste Marguerite	Chalandray et Bois-Baudry (Vienne)	Depart Friday 1 September 1939, arrive October 1939	Sunday 1 ^{er} September 1940
Oudrenne, Lérnestroff, Breistroff-la-Petite	Maillé, Le Rochereau, Vouli lié-la-Bataille (Vienne)	Friday 1 September 1939	Sunday 22 September 1940
Rurange-lès- Thionville	Commune non évacuée		
Stuckange	Commune non évacuée		

Valmestroff	Thorey-sur-Ouche (Côte d'Or)	Friday 10 May to Monday 20 mai 1940	Dejuin à August 1940
Veckring. Helling	Vouillé-la Bataille, Villiers (Vienne)	Depart Friday 1 September 1939, arrive Wednesday 11 October 1939	Mardi 3 September 1940
Volstroff, Vinsberg	Commune non évacuée		



Residents of Sentzich in La Touche.

The Salome family stayed almost a year in Vienne with other evacuees from the village. Relationships with locals were good and Mosellans were organized. To feed everyone, even the children were welcomed especially for gardening.



The "phoney war" in the region



Poster for Mobilization: Saturday, September 2, 1939.



Parade with band.

Everywhere military processions multiply in the area of Thionville in 1938 and 1939 as one crisis follows another. Here is the 168th R.I.F which makes a demonstration in Hettange-Grande.



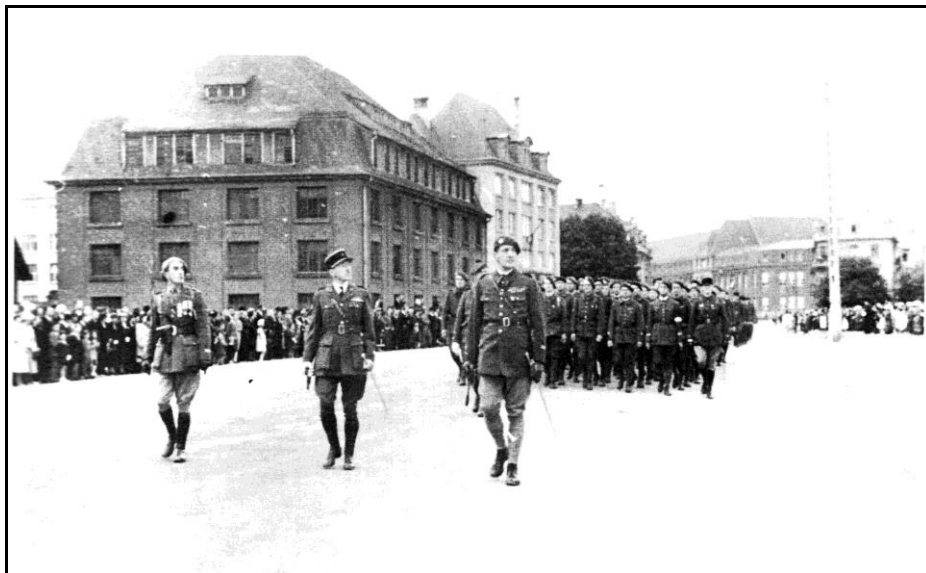
Home station in Thionville of General Niessel.

The General, as Chairman of the Federal F.N.A.S.O.R chairs the seventh congress of Association of reserve NCOs in the sixth region, held on 8 and 9 July 1939 in Thionville. He is greeted at the main station by a group of Thionvilliers in traditional dress.



Visit of General Niessel downtown.

The General, hosted by General Cousse, commander of the fortified sector of Thionville, is driven in the limo personally by Arsene Hotton's father, to the Place de la Liberte, where a parade was planned.



Photos of the military parade.

Among the troops are marching two future mayors of Thionville: Mr. Schwartz (mayor from 1945 to 1960) and Mr. Ditsch (mayor from 1960 to 1977). In the parade where the sub-reserve officers are civilian Mr. Schwartz is in the first rank on the left, in which the troops are uniformed Mr. Ditsch is first plan right.

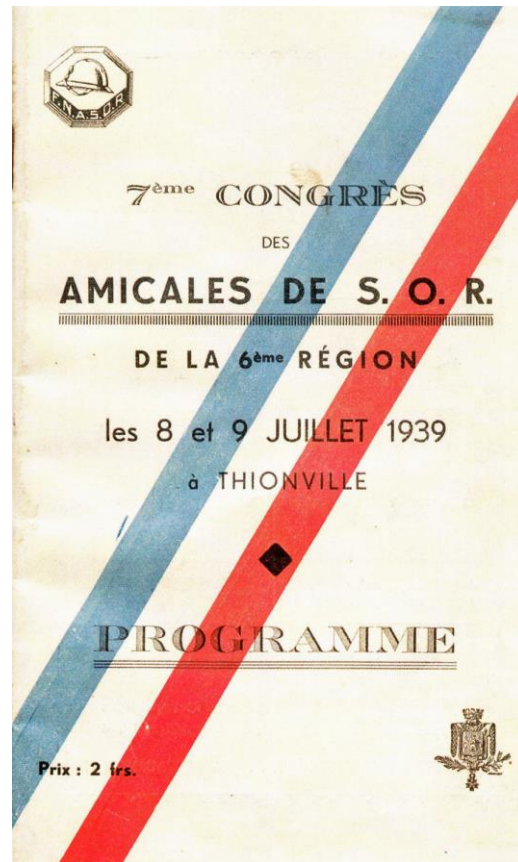


Official photo of the Congress as it exits St Maximin

With the mayor, Mr. Leonard and the sub-prefect, Mr. Durocher, we recognize among officials General Niessel, General Cousse, Colonel of the Couëdic Kergoaler and Georges Ditsch, commissioner general of the congress.



Badges of the troops of the Maginot Line.



Official brochure of the Congress of Thionville.



Departure of soldiers on leave at the Cattenom station near the Hackel Establishments.

The first alerting of French troops was the recall of certain reservists which took place in September 1938 during the Sudetenland crisis. The Munich Agreement, during the meeting of Hitler and Mussolini with Chamberlain and Daladier ended the first alert and accredited the idea that we could avoid fighting.

In September 1939, after the invasion of Poland by the troops of the 3rd Reich, France and The United Kingdom declared war on Hitler but both allowed the German army to destroy poor Poland in 28 days. And contrary to the military convention signed by Gamelin in the name of France in May 1939 when Poland and France pledged to begin within 15 days of the outbreak of hostilities major military operations against Germany. There had been attacks but not offensives as should have occurred.

1) **The fighting in September and October 1939.**



Reception and flags of the border guards at Roussy-le-Village.

In 1938 and 1939, everywhere in Moselle, we activated the border guards and often a solemn ceremony was organized for the occasion. The Roussy-le-Village ceremony was presided over by the sub-prefect Durocher on the left in uniform at his side the Comtesse Marie-Louise de Bertier, Colonel Du Bois of Maquillé, Comtesse Sylvie de Bertier and Robert Schuman Councillor of the Canton of Cattenom.

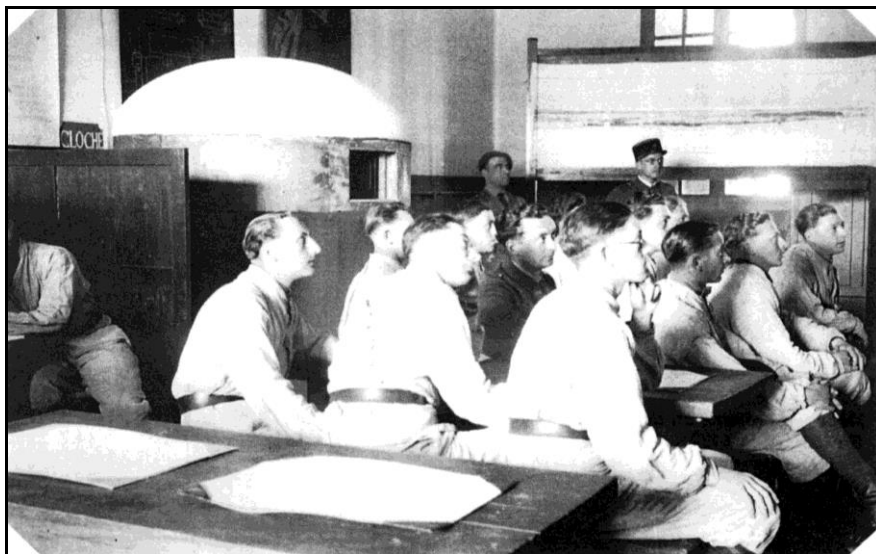
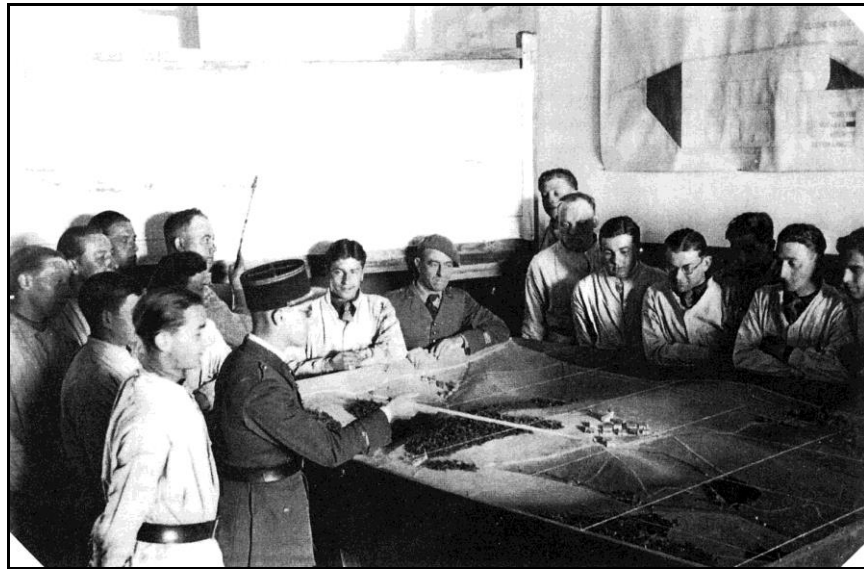
It was necessary to do justice to the French troops who fought in September and October 1939, inaction beginning on 18 October 1939.

September 1939 all of the area from Forbach to Montmédy, about 150 km, was the responsibility of the third French army of General Condè. This army, composed of three army corps, 10 infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade and a division of British infantry (in reality many Scots including those who fought under the command of General De La Porte's Theil forming a brigade in the 42nd division between forest Bouzonville and Sierck-les-Bains), received only one mission: to defend the fortified area of Metz.

The area in early September in Germany between Bitche and Sarreguemines was busy but it was riddled with mines, including in homes, therefore this conquest was useless and no serious offensive depth was considered. On 5 October 1939, about 50 localities in Germany were temporarily occupied

and 200 km² of conquered enemy territory, the order to retreat was given and we went back to the drawing board on 17 October with the German counterattack.

The same on 8 and 9 September 1939, between Elzange and Ritzing and in the region of Sierck-Les-Bains, French troops entered German territory and the withdrawal took place on 10 September, there was fighting up to the end of the month and mines were laid on both sides when the enemy advanced.



Recruit training at Cattenom.

While the international climate darkened in late 1938 early 1939, crew training work accelerated. The instruction issued to the 168th R.I.F at Camp Cattenom used models of the surrounding villages and even reconstructed a bell tower to give a more concrete content to the training.



Relaxing at the cafe Sindt-Mompert.

Soldiers from Camp Cattenom are customers at the best inns in the village and attend on weekends Café Sindt-Mompert where dances are regularly held in the large room at the rear.



Official insignia of the Maginot Line

The order of withdrawal beyond the Maginot Line was given in early October and then abandoned to the enemy a strip of land two kilometers wide between Apach and Launstroff.

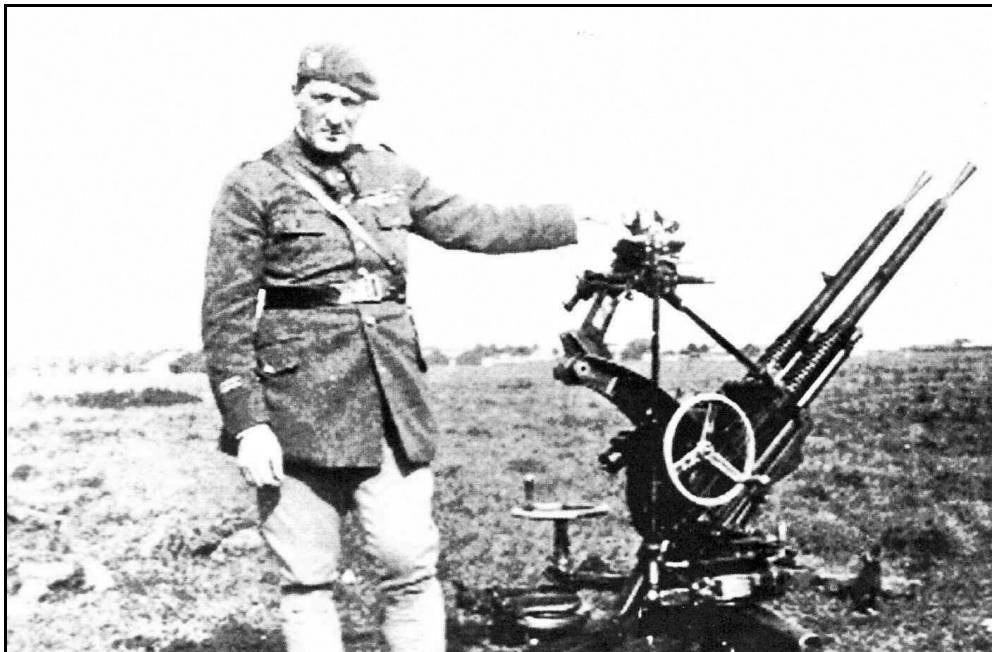
The troops then settled in the interval between the fortifications and their officers stayed in the villages in the surrounding area homes.

Many villages welcomed French officers for months and even the troops with their fighting equipment, their "kit" and "field kitchens" for meals.



Training Polish soldiers.

In the summer of 1939, while threats multiplied against their country, Polish soldiers came to do an internship on the Maginot Line, near Thionville. Poland was an ally of France, do not forget.



Air defense Yutz.

Provisions for the protection of airfields were taken and it was in this context that 25mm twin barreled anti-aircraft guns were installed near the Yutz Aerodrome by the French army in 1939.



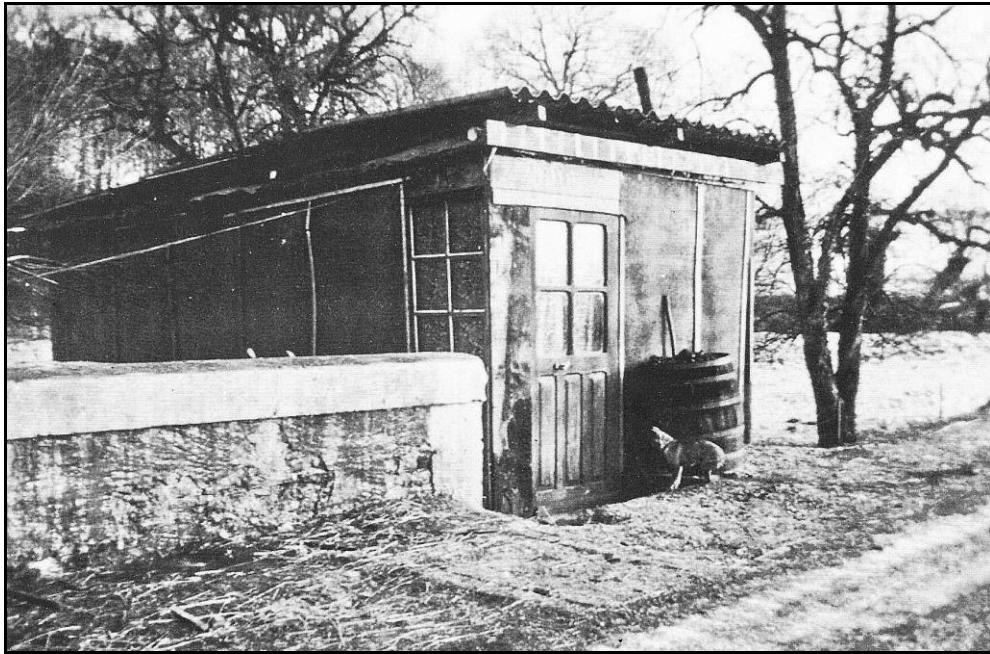
The soldier John Wanner at his post.

Traffic restrictions were put in place in 1937 in eastern France as at Audun-le-Tiche, where the road to Luxembourg was closed to vehicles.



Troops from Fort Illange.

Men assigned to Fort Illange in 1939 including Louis Delion of Cattenom the first on the left.

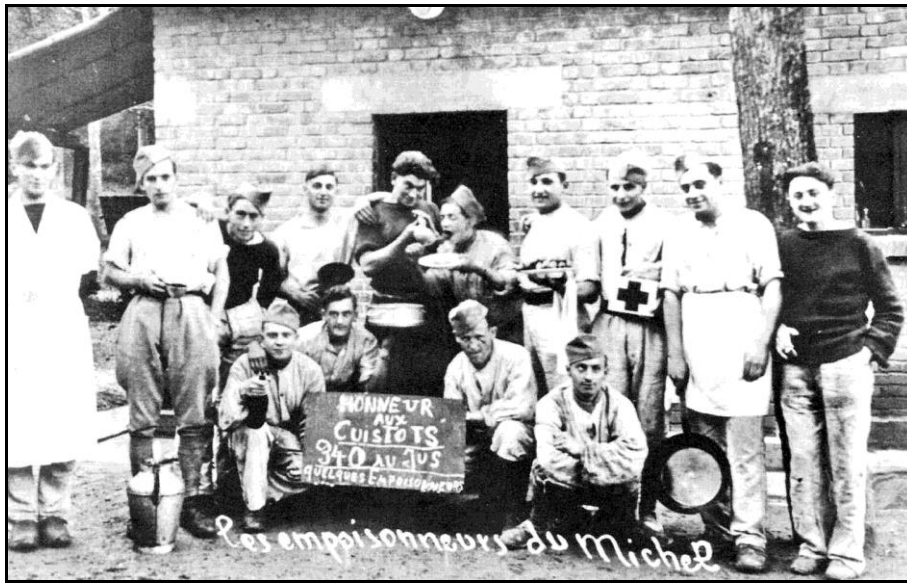


Border Post hut at Apach.



Border and sentinel on guard duty.

In the fall of 1939 reservists are called up and the borders are monitored as here at Apach. The sentry is posted in front of the hut that serves at a very rudimentary border crossing.



Atmosphere in the barracks.

The atmosphere in the barracks was childish as if nobody really believed in war and at Dalstein-Ebersviller or Michelsberg, as elsewhere, barracks jokes of questionable taste, are always news.



French soldiers installed at Koeking.

Soldiers shivering with cold in front of the Max farm in the autumn of 1939. From the end of October the weather was rigorous. During the "Phoney War", many officers were housed with inhabitants in the region of Thionville and works of the Maginot Line that were close to villages, the troops then often frequented localities particularly cafes.



Junger family with soldiers sheltered in their barn.

Many families were also asked either to lend a barn for shelter for the Renault "caterpillars" of the French army, or to house soldiers. Here is the Junger family of Cattenom posing with the gunners of equipment stored in their barn.



Requisition of horses.

The French army was insufficiently motorized and requisitioned horses, as is the case here, this was widely practiced in 1939 to deliver material to the emplacements. (ECPAD / FRA NCE)



Haute-Kontz housing.

Officers and their orderlies requisitioned houses in the villages and built shelters, protecting the entrance to the cellars with wood.





Slaughter of animals and food of 24 December at Café Weber in Malling.

Border guards, including gentlemen Klein, Wittwe, Schmitt and Michels, all four of Malling, after killing goats on December 18, 1939, and finding the wine and champagne or sparkling wine, On Christmas Eve celebrated in Café Weber with soldiers billeted in the village. Even in times of war, we will celebrate Christmas.



Tracked vehicle in Hettange Grande.

*Modern equipment existed in the French Army and certain models are even very powerful in particular these support vehicles familiarly called “caterpillars”.
Here a group of soldiers from the barracks in Hettange-Grande in late 1939 pose in front of one of these devices.*



Troops of the intervals

Soldiers from a regiment securing an interval between the various forts of the Maginot Line in April 1940 in the Thionville region.



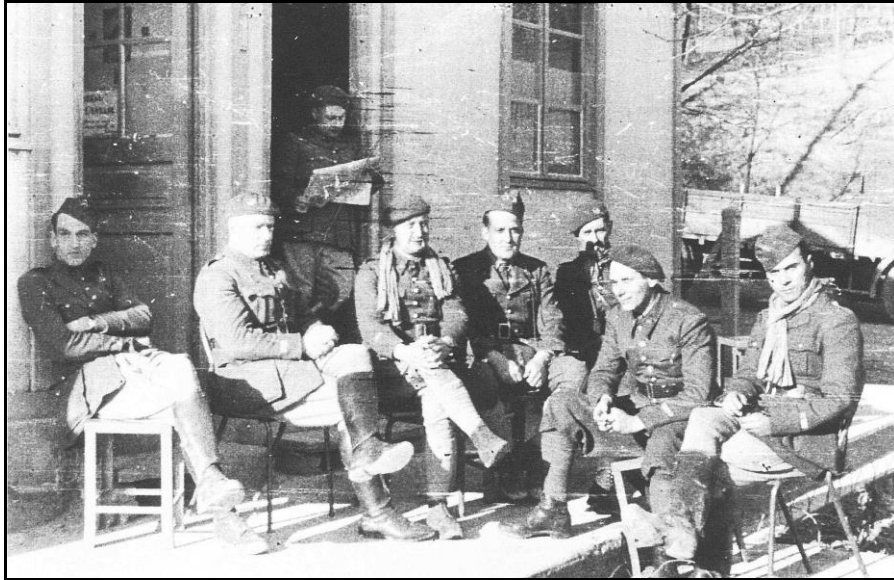
Barracks and shelter in the interval

From autumn 1939 to summer 1940, wooden shelters were built in the forests near the Maginot Line, and near Veckring here.



Chore turned into a game.

Soldiers idle during the "phony war" are having fun while doing chores in spring 1940 in the region of Veckring.



Officers and management staff working on the Maginot Line.

These officers seem as casual as troops and this photo taken in the fall of 1939 at Michelsberg of Dalstein demonstrates not only a lack of feverish activity or intense military preparation when conflict threatens, but the routine of peacetime.



Ceremony of presentation of decorations at Gandren.

Decoration of the Military Cross for Captain Travelot member of the squadron of horse GR 44, at Gandren in March 1940. (ECPAD / FRANCE)

2) The period of inactivity until late April-early May 1940.

We speak of the "phoney war" to describe the seven months of inaction and procrastination of French troops mobilized but inactive behind the Maginot Line and the country's borders. The term "phoney war" is used by Roland Dorgelès of one of the newspapers "Gringoire" October 26, 1939 when the Germans invented in December 1939 the term "Sitzkrieg" and the English called it a false war or "The Phoney War".

Certainly there were skirmishes for several months, operations of harassment of the enemy but no real major battle before May 1940.

In fact it was above all a war of observation to test the opponent's will and gather news of military artillery and patrol activities when they do not just say "R.A.S".

In addition the climate deteriorated rapidly that year and, after a very rainy month of October there was an early winter with frosts in November. In the region between Apach and Manderen there was talk about the Siberian cold, temperatures of - 20 ° to -25 ° at night were frequent during the months from January to March in particular during the winter of 1939/40, and a number of fighters had frozen feet. They needed to warm up the meat and bread on the charcoal to remove the ice.

But the bottom line problem was that, in purely military plans, the French army was not ready and especially not sufficiently equipped. We lacked above all, to the chagrin of Colonel De Gaulle, battle tanks. Furthermore there was a lack of motorized and numerous artillery which was still drawn with the help of mules or horses, often requisitioned on the spot at that. Modern and high-performance material was built in small quantities and dispersed through all the regiments.

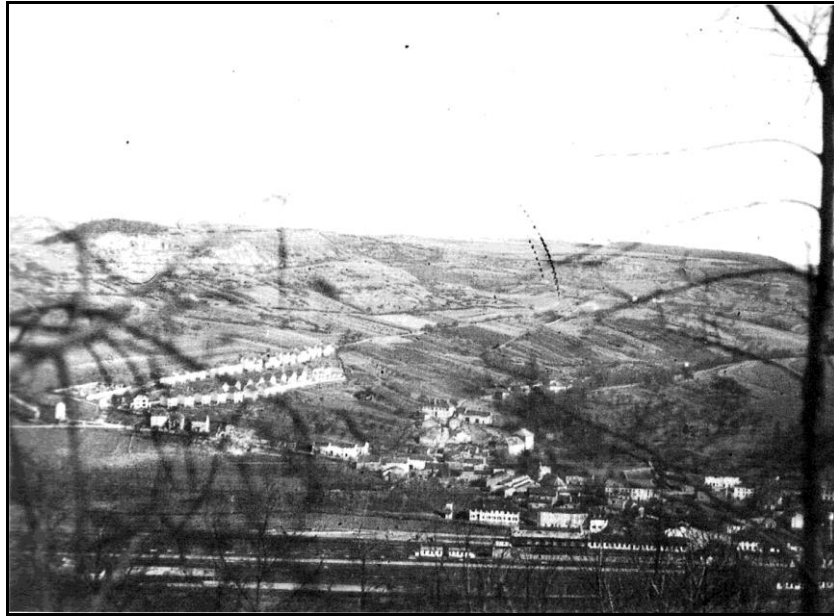
We mobilized about 3.8 million men, but we could equip at most 1.2 million by September 3, 1939. Others mobilized were allocated to munitions factories and were responsible for keeping the warehouses. There were also a part of those mobilized to guard borders and evacuate villages in the company of mobile guards. We even called men 40 to 48 years from reserves.

We simply ensured a rotation in the front line of all French troops in contact with the enemy to accustom them to the danger, multiplied the tours of inspection such as that of December 1939, that of February 1940 by Gamelin in person in the fortified sector of Thionville between Oeufrange and Roussy-le-Village, or that of April 1940 to assess the speed of progress of the work of the engineers.

During all these months, the main part of the efforts indeed consisted in reinforcing the Maginot line by building concreted outposts, light shelters in the Interval, networks of trenches or by multiplying the barbed wire and the entanglements, the anti-tank devices by digging ditches or by depositing thousands of mines. We also completed the installation of power lines between the various structures, some were not even buried and therefore were cut by the enemy at the first serious attack. I must say that the weather did not help matters as the need for example for braziers in pouring concrete. Also noteworthy is the lack of materials and the blame on the failures of the French production unit.

Meanwhile, the Germans began to concentrate troops in November 1939, the entire area between Volmerange-les-Mines and Forbach, despite the mud and wet soil that prohibited large displacements. The low ceiling prevented air operations. The enemy was organized in depth and delivered many vehicles while carefully preparing for the offensive in May 1940. During all these months no German

steel-works in Saarland were touched and all the German trains could circulate freely. Concentration of their troops, and toughened arms production intensified smoothly. On the French side the persons in charge multiplied the meetings without continuation and were satisfied to counter the German raids or to harass their front lines with artillery and small ambushes. The high command had decided to fight on the Maginot line and not on the border, this was the case!



Observation Post at Haute-Kontz.

The "phoney war" even gave rise to exchanges of gunfire and fighting even though most of the time was spent observing the enemy from here as at an observation post in Haute-Kontz held by the 70th R.A.M.F.





Battle stations during the winter of 1939/40 at Angevillers.

During the winter 1939-1940, battle stations as at Angevillers here, where the military was responsible for the air defense, greeted airmen from Malzéville, who had to become accustomed to the repeated bad weather. The winter was very rigorous with the Siberian cold during whole weeks. Troop capability was very low, each seeking above all to keep warm.

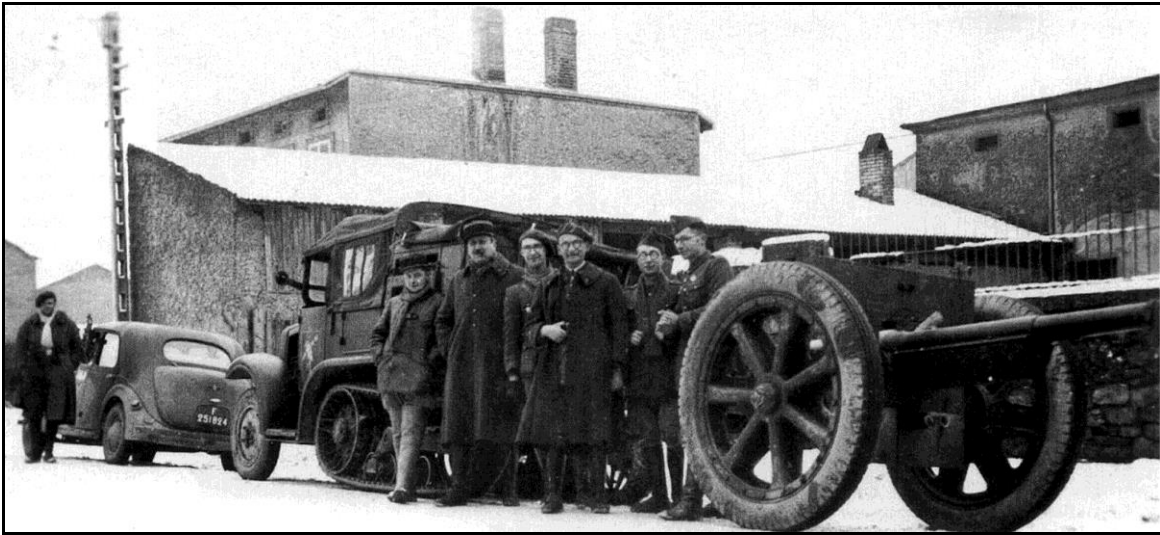




70th R.A.M.F troops and weapons in the village of Garche.

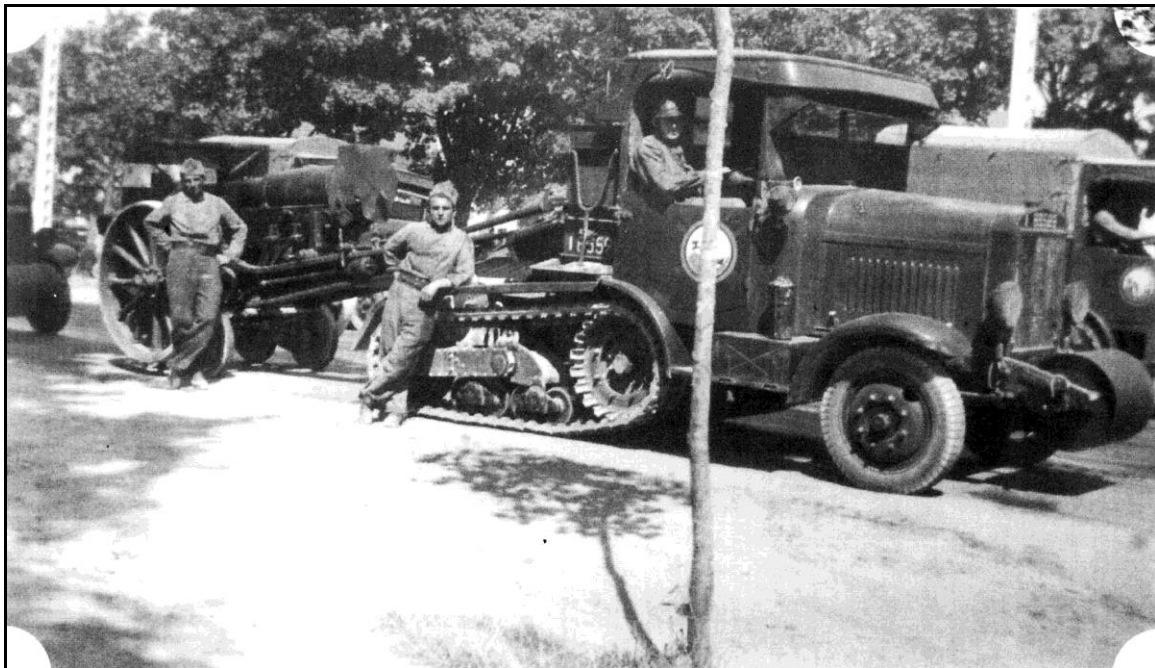
During the winter 1939/40, the troops settled in the village with their guns "75" towed by Unic-Kégresse tracked vehicles, they had to brave the storms of snow to exercise regularly and maneuvers required by the Command. The 5th battery was under the command of Lieutenant Andre Thuillier and this battery, as a good part of the regiment itself, refused to surrender after the armistice in June 1940 and fought for a whole week.

When the French soldiers were finally captured by the Germans, they shipped all the enlisted troops to Germany and officers were sent to Oflag in Silesia. They stayed longer than 6 months enduring deprivations, including severe dietary restrictions. In spring 1941 they were repatriated to Hayange where the Germans needed, for the steel industry, the engineering expert Andre Thuillier. The spring of 1941 to the summer of 1944, Andre Thuillier worked in the old factory of De Wendel in Hayange and always found a way to escape the training courses or had an excuse not to be sent on mission work in Germany. He even managed to avoid the shutdown of blast furnaces in 1944, during the German rout, mobilizing workers in Moselle for this purpose, which earned him the official gratitude of the De Wendel family at the end of the conflict. He then performed a brilliant career ending as head of the sales department of the factory in Hayange then operating under the name Sidelor Sacilor. In parallel, the French government awarded him the Legion of Honor military.



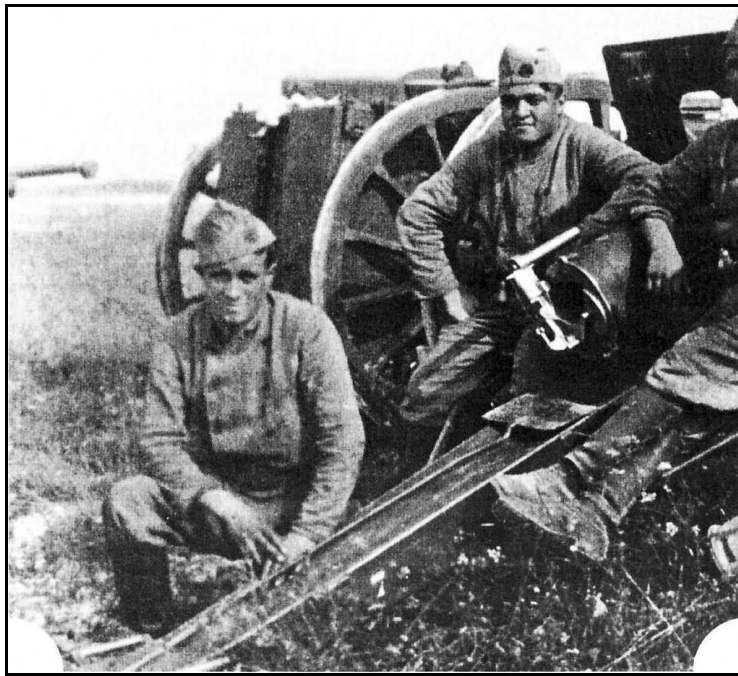
Battle positions in the Forêt de Garche.

Every day they had to go to battle stations at the edge of the forest where camouflage nets protecting the batteries were installed.



French troops in frontline positions at Mondorf-les-Bains.

On 10 May 1940, after the invasion of Luxembourg by the Germans, men with their guns go to the front and set up their artillery on the heights of Mondorf-les-Bains. It is a short barrel 155 towed by a Renault caterpillar.



Guns in firing position.

Among the crew of this 155 mm piece set up at Mondorf-les-Bains, is Mr. Hubert Hump of Fixem. Unfortunately, less than 48 hours later, the Germans are masters of the situation and the French troops repressed.



At Garche, positioning of a "75" mm cannon.

The crew of this cannon set up in the Forest are preparing to spray the enemy in spring 1940. Among the men is recognized Lieutenant Andre Thuillier, commanding the 5th Battery of the 70th R.A.M.F .



Troubleshooting a tractor of the French army at Freistroff.

Elsewhere one quickly realizes the doubtful state of the French military equipment of which reliability is precarious since it is necessary to repair a tractor using horses here. Vis-a-vis a completely motorized enemy or almost, the importance of the animal haulage in October 1939 within the French Army is shocking because it reveals a colossal delay in preparation for the conflict.

From October 1939 to May 1940, there were accounts of small raids made by patrols on both sides, mostly at night, which are in the military reports.

Thus in the sector under the charge of the English and Scottish between Waldwisse, then in the hands of the Germans, and Sierck-les-Bains or through Monneren or Budling and Kédange the German irregular forces surprised several times in January, March and April 1940 the British defenders that recorded dead and prisoners and needed to create a makeshift hospital and a cemetery at Luttange.

Between Ritzing and near the Luxembourg border close to Contz-les-Bains, Haute-Kontz or Gandren and at a depth ranging from Evendorff and Kirsch-les-Sierck up to Koenigsmacker and Elzange, Moroccan and Tunisian soldiers as well as other colonial troops had been situated in the middle of the French troops and these men particularly suffered from the cold, while experiencing frequent attacks and serious skirmishes between October 1939 and April 1940. To give an idea of the severity of the weather during these battles, we must remember that it was snowing again in late March 1940 and a storm had torn trees and cut power lines.

In this area military officials failed properly to interpret the preparations made by the Germans in April 1940 in the region of Perl and Apach, namely creation of footbridges and prefabricated bridges across the Moselle, a prelude to the invasion of Luxembourg. In the same way the 2nd office of the fortified sector of Thionville laid out, from 11 April 1940 and even more in early May 1940, photographs showing unequivocally precisely the creation of many bridges downstream of Saarbrücken

on the Saar and the multiplication of landing stages on the Moselle close to Perl and of preparedness for a major attack from the German side, yet a state of alert was a time set up for late April and leaves of absence for soldiers was restored. General Condé even noted in his diary that there was calm on May 9, 1940.



Pontoon bridge over the Moselle or the Saar.

German soldiers prepare a bridge of boats in April 1940 to lead to the invasion of Luxembourg. The intelligence services were warned in Thionville of German preparations by their counterparts in Luxembourg, but the news was deemed unreliable and no lasting concern was given to the information received.



Exercise on the Moselle.

Bank scaling training exercise in creating a landing as soon as possible. In May 1940, it was the final preparation before the German invasion of Luxembourg.



Into position to bombard the French positions in the region between Apach and Montenach in May 1940.

Very quickly the Germans were superior and the fringe border was abandoned to the enemy by the French army to a depth of 2 km in autumn of 1939.

Anti-aircraft battery



Light tanks for air defense



Rehearsal before the attack.

Members of a German anti-aircraft battery train in 1940 during the "Sitzkrieg." Others get into position to fight wearing their gas masks.

3) The Maginot Line turned into an advertising tool while the indiscipline of the French army was obvious.

During this time and since autumn, especially in the area of Thionville, the army decided to make an advertising showcase of the Maginot Line, including works around Hettange-Grande and especially the famous Hackenberg at Veckring. The sector was divided into several sub-sectors under the command of General Poisot. He was charged with accommodating the famous journalists and visitors to whom he wanted to show the impassable character of the fortified line. Among the famous visitors, besides Roland Dorgelès who was back with his famous formula "phony war", he received writers, ministers such as Paul Reynaud and Joseph Chamberlain, foreign ambassadors, Australian generals and twice the King of England: first in December 1939, when General Poisot accompanied by General Condé to welcome King George VI, who was visiting the area of Veckring and British troops of that sector and then in March 1940 but this time in the company of Winston Churchill.

These official visits were intended to reassure and yet they hid the serious problems of indiscipline and even blatant vandalism.

At first indiscipline with officers was repeatedly abused, including in Thionville where the commander decided to create a journal: "The echo of Betonville" to occupy the soldiers and avoid excessive alcohol consumption and endless card parties.



French troops in April 1940 during the "phoney war".

For these soldiers installed at Sargé in the Sarthe and in which we can see Eugene Kop of Cattenom, relaxation and good mood are set after the fighting in April 1940. The term "phony war" finds its full justification.



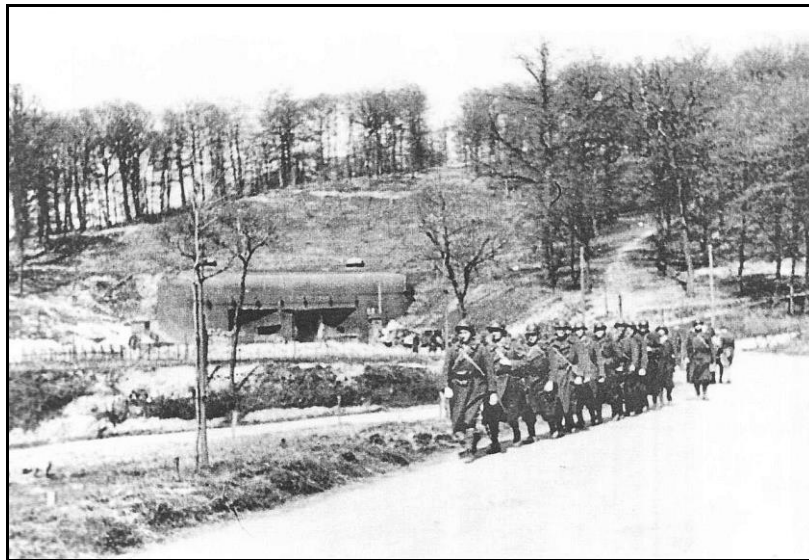
The degradations followed: indeed with the decline in October 1939 on the Maginot Line, the soldiers involved moved into empty houses. And 400 were consigned to Rémeling in December 1939 and others at Kirsch-lès-Sierck where they put sandbags in the openings and created loopholes for shooting. By settling in these villages, they devastated homes deserted since the fall of 1939 and organized banquets with the recovered food and domestic animals captured and then slaughtered. Pigs, chickens, ducks, rabbits and others disappeared in a few weeks. We know for example that the communes of Sierck-les-Bains, Kirschnaumen, of Evendorff or of Koenigsmacker were sacked by the Zouaves (aptly named in this case) of the French army. . The work of looting was completed and sometimes preceded or accompanied by the non-evacuated residents, with or without the complicity of some border guards. Many houses were emptied of their furniture and their furnaces, even the beautiful linen was taken away, and in several villages near the fortifications, houses were simply occupied by the officers and NCOs of anybody's army who used their contents at their discretion. That is to say if posters punishing death to looters had been effective!

We know for example that the official services of the army intercepted, alone in September and October 1939, packages shipped to their families by the soldiers on the front line, and that this represented 70,000 tons of goods which was furniture and clothes recovered from deserted houses. This tonnage then was theoretically forwarded to the municipalities of evacuation of the Moselle, after the discovery of the real traffic. In May 1940, in an inspection tour in 50 villages evacuated, Robert Schuman, accompanied by the prefect Bourrat, was frightened by what he discovered, and it was decided to censor the importance of the real rampage.

French troops, consisting often of southern French, cited two justifications for their behavior: the names and locations of German military portraits hung on the walls of the rooms in the villages looted. Actually municipalities in the region had German sounding names between 1871 and 1918 and the Mosellans had indeed served in the German army, which explains the "spiked helmets" on the pictures on the walls, but was that enough to clear officers who supervised these troops? That the simple soldier believed he was in Germany and behaved as if in a conquered country, is one thing, but an officer still must know where he is, even if in Catalan or Aquitaine.

In any case, the looting continued and much livestock, gathered in locations agreed upon during the evacuation, was shot dead. Parcel shipments to families continued.

The military leadership responded, however, at least locally. First chores were organized to enforce the digging up of potatoes that beet farmers had not had time to do. Then other chores were to be done threshing of grains, including wheat, oats and rye, until May 1940. The grain had been gathered in the summer of 1939 but threshing did not take place due to lack of time. Some of these crops were then shipped to the Charente and Vienne as well as part of the herd. These remittances did not mean that the recipients received the food because in many cases even the luggage taken in September and October 1939 and routed by special trains did not arrive at their destination.



Marching troops in the Interval at Sentsich.

For the French troops occupying the Interval in which the spirit of discipline was poor, the command conducts exercises and marching by the ammunition entry of the works of Galgenberg at Cattenom-Sentsich in April 1940.



Private Joseph Felten sowing cereals in the region of Sentsich and Gavisse.

In the autumn of 1939 and on behalf of the villagers evacuated to Vienne, soldiers sow plots. This successful initiative was too limited and a number of villagers discovered fallow fields on their return from evacuation in August and September 1940.



Slaughter of a pig by French soldiers.

The soldier Jean-Pierre Kiffer of Gavisse and his comrades have slaughtered a pig belonging probably to the villagers evacuated at the end of 1939 near Morfontaine. Moreover they are border guards who shoot pigs in the street left on their own considering the hurried evacuation of several villages.

Command was locally sufficiently effective to order the plowing and sowing of the fields, in particular around Elzange and Inglange or in the area between Sentzich and Berg-sur-Moselle. It is estimated that 7,000 acres had been planted with oats or planted in potatoes but that was still very little. If those evacuated in May 1940 had lost some crops, it was not the same with those parties in autumn 1939 which often lost two years.

4) The defeat of May-June 1940 became a debacle.

When the German attack began on 10 May 1940 in Sedan, then there was 33 days of fighting before the request for an armistice signed in Rethondes June 22, 1940. France had roughly 60 divisions well equipped, of 86 divisions formed to oppose 150 German divisions, so we fought one against three. Even with 10 British divisions to reinforce the disproportion of numbers it was overwhelming for the country's political leaders. There were between 110,000 and 130,000 deaths and 250,000 wounded persons on the French side (that is more than in Verdun in 1916) against 45,000 deaths on the German side. During eight months the Maginot line had nevertheless played well its official role: avoiding a surprised attack and allowing a general mobilization during the peace and the implementation of a war economy.

The "Phoney War" ended May 9, 1940 when we learned from the sub-prefecture of Thionville that the Germans had invaded Luxembourg: "Sitzenkrieg" became "Blitzkrieg". Refugees arrived on the

Luxembourg Moselle roads, the Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg and the Government took refuge in France, the Luftwaffe began its raids in Moselle triggering panic among civilians not removed behind the Maginot Line. Strategic bombing against railroads, factories, ammunition depots and local airfields intensified day by day. While the main attack took place in the Ardennes, that did not mean that the Maginot Line in the Thionville sector was not also a target of the bombing and the troops being harassed. First it was the department that was covered in late May 1940 and early June in the most poorly equipped area between the Nied and the Saar, and the Thionville sector in turn was concerned.

At the announcement of the invasion of the Grand Duchy, the French troops managed to gain a foothold in Luxembourg by Roussy-le-Village or Mondorf-les-Bains but were quickly suppressed and on 12 May, the first line of border communities, especially in the area of Sierck-les-Bains was in the hands of the Germans. Several large-scale offensives regularly pushed the front to the works of the Maginot Line between 12th May and early June 1940 and in the passage localities were burnt as Rodemack or Breistroff-la-Grande. On June 12, the French high command, to evade by retreating and partial withdrawal made the decision before the rapid German advance in Champagne, to withdraw troops from the east to the *Canal de la Marne au Rhin* a retirement of 250 km, to avoid encirclement. Many officers agreed to obey these orders under threat and were outraged. Lack of transportation and the inability to use the railways often cut by enemy aircraft, this retreat turned into debacle and there were countless materials, food and even weapons abandoned. Gradually between mid-May and early June 1940, more than 500,000 men were ordered to retreat in daylight and under fire from the German Air Force masters of the air in the direction of a line Haguenau - Sarrebourg - Epinal - Dijon as if 30 or 40 meters of canal, in an open field, would be a decisive bulwark!

The retreat was largely made on foot and then by train in sweltering heat between 13 and 18 June 1940. There had of course been orders and counter-orders, blunders as theft and drunkenness, not to mention a few fights and outrageous derelictions of duty, as Captain Peter Laudenbach alias Pierre Fresnay leaving his men to slip into Toulouse with his girlfriend Yvonne Printemps. In addition, a good portion of these troops during retreat were captured by the Germans along the way and without a fight.

On June 14, while the Wehrmacht was already entering Paris, the Maginot Line of the Moselle was again violently attacked by the Luftwaffe bombing and sending a deluge of fire on the main works. At the same time infantry units penetrated into France, first in the region of Saarbrücken and also St Avold, Sarralbe, Dieuz, Sarrebourg; German victories succeeded so that the Germans entered Metz on June 17 and from June 18th the fortress of Metz surrendered.



Malzéville airbase.

A key element of weakness of the French army was the lack of planes and the dispersion of these aircraft between regiments along the borders. Here the unit appears very fragile and still very close to planes of the first World War. Soon in 1940 the mastery of the heavens belonged to the Germans and this



Installing a German mess near Haute-Parthe and Boust and tasting rations served.

Meals were prepared outdoors and distributed at the time. Ration seems tasty, if we judge by the mood of the soldiers who take it into their bowls.



Requisition of a barn in Haute-Parthe.

This is the Wax house in Haute-Parthe, German meals were prepared here. The same barn served first the French, then the Germans and then the Americans for the same purpose.

In the forts, there were only 150,000 men roughly the crew of each fort, for the elements of security and to position the artillery. The troops left behind were instructed to hold until June 17, 1940 and then to sabotage the works and retreat if possible in a few days. German attacks repeated from June 15 formed both frontal attacks and flank attacks. German losses in frontal attacks were huge and by June 25, the enemy had seized only 4 of 39 structures and 12 of 102 pillboxes in the fortified area of Thionville, infantry and artillery being a failure. And yet the French soldiers' morale was suffering from the radio call of June 17, by Pétain demanding a stop to the fighting. It was death to the soul that officers had to surrender fortifications on the night of June 24 to 25, the effective date of the armistice signed on 22 June 1940. There was heavy fighting until the end of June in Thionville and Fort Veckring, flagship of the fortified line sector, which went on until 28 June 1940.

General Von Witzleben had conquered Lorraine in record time, except for the Thionville sector that withstood despite its encirclement, showing clearly the strength of the Maginot Line. Civil authorities, the head prefect, were so surprised that there were no formal instructions for either military or civilians for the future. They sought to avoid the total exodus of civilians. We even forgot to give formal instructions to sabotage the works which then fell almost intact into the hands of the enemy. The defeat destroyed the political and military leaders.

To maintain as long as possible morale among the civilians, moral shaken by enemy bombardements at long distance (firing on Metz or Hagondange with cannons emplaced 45 km from there or Thionville with 35 km range guns) and ultimate evacuation between 17 and May 23, we still held in early June 1940 the school certificates and the diplomas even if the school had stopped since May 17. However, in mid-June the newspapers the Republican Lorrain and " Metzzer Freies Zeitung" stopped and there was also the administrative debacle.

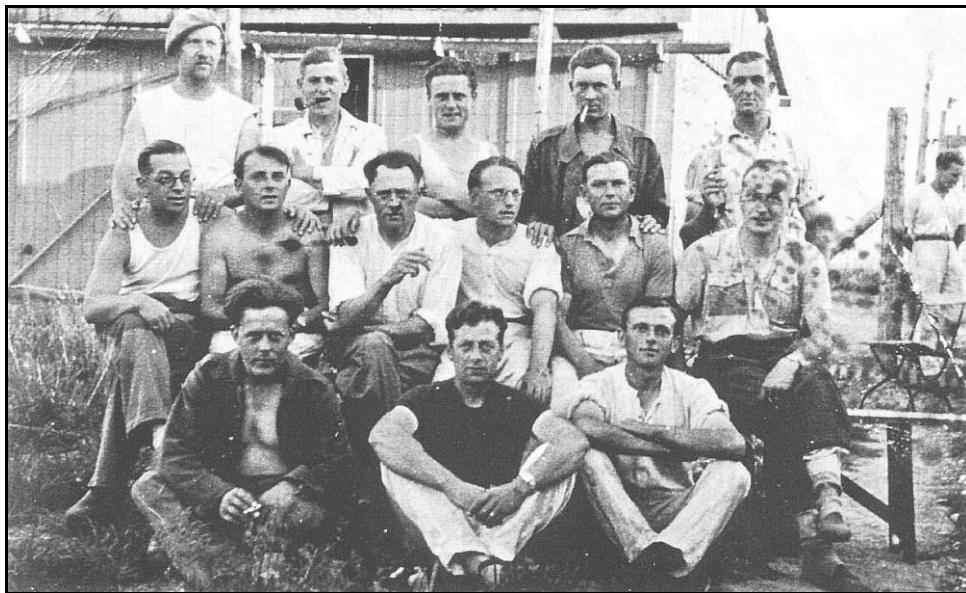
Pro-Nazi collaborators already dared to appear in cities like Thionville while between June 30 and July 4 the troops of the Maginot Line were shipped to Germany.

The time of the captivity began for tens of thousands of combatants as well as hundreds of thousands of affected mobilized people in factories or warehouses. It is estimated that more than one and a half million French soldiers went into captivity in Germany. And that the fighters hoped to return to their homes after receiving military honors ... Drive back to reality!



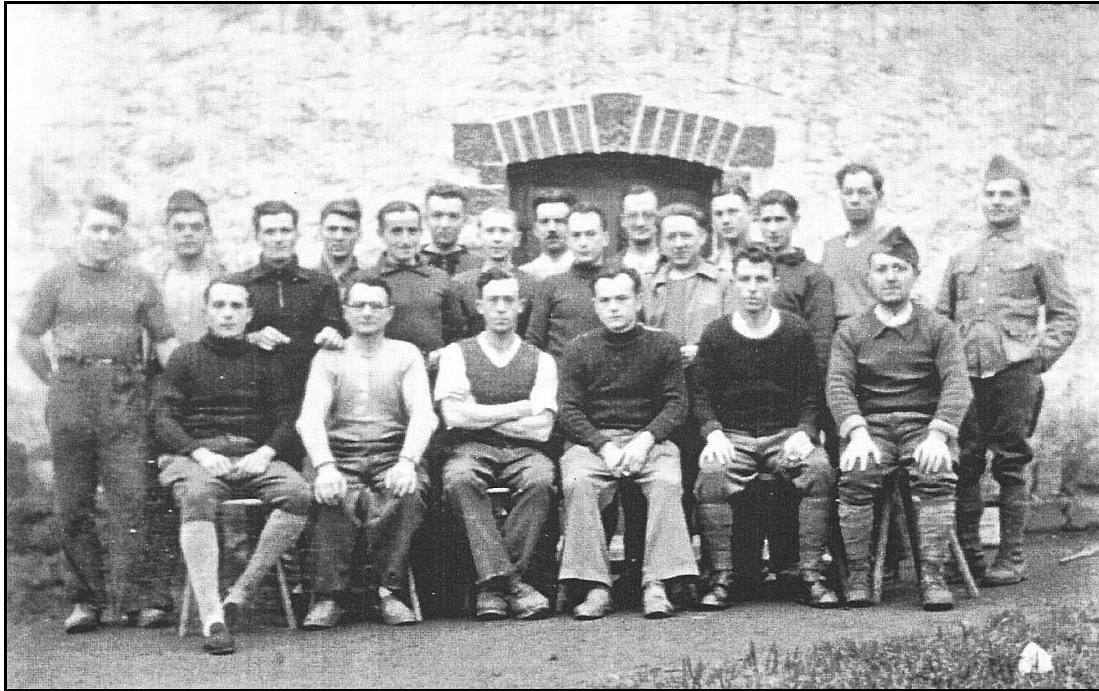
Surveillance of streets.

The Moselle is annexed by the omnipresent German army. Here to monitor a bank in the valley of the Orne.



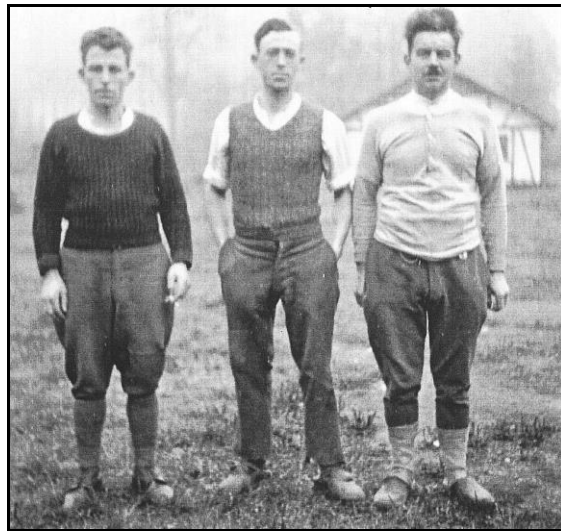
In captivity in Germany.

French soldiers of the Maginot Line, including soldiers from Veckring in captivity in a Stalag in Moosburg, Germany, in April 1941.



A stalag in Germany.

French soldiers of troops of the Interval of the Maginot Line with soldiers from Sentsich, of which the young Zinelli, captured and taken into captivity, in a Stalag in near Dortmund, Germany.

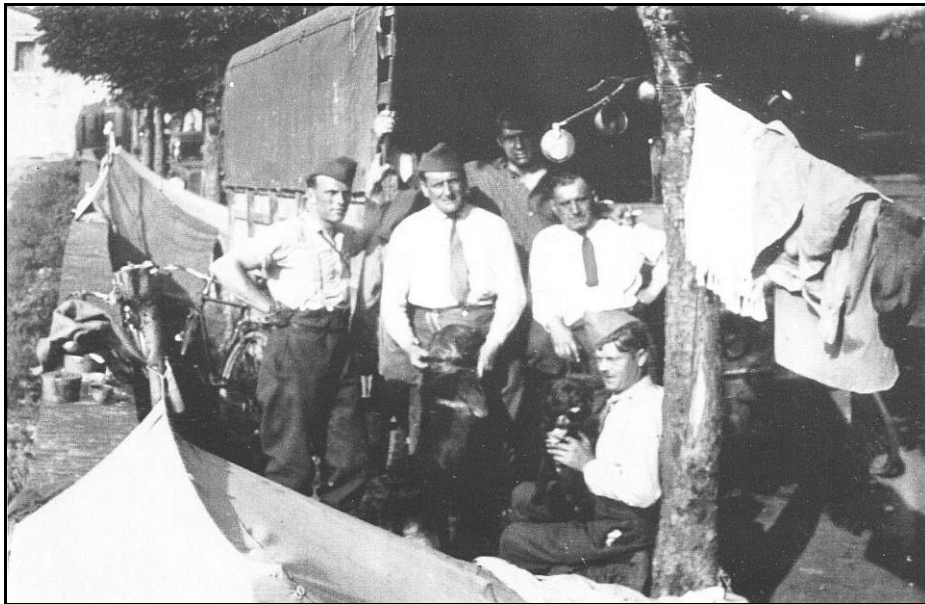


Moselle soldiers in captivity in Germany.

Three French detainees including Louis Zinelli left at Stalag XII near Dortmund. Only Mosellan strain are rapidly released.

Only those of Alsatian and Mosellan strain were released to undergo other duties in the near future. Others spent years in captivity with a variable fate, despite the introduction of the "Relève" or STO (labor service) by the Pétain regime. Some prisoners who were assigned to work in specific agricultural farms near their German "Oflag" or "Stalag" confessed, however, to have had a "good time". Not all of course. Those who worked in factories were also doing variably well. In all they were forced exiles, and deprived of liberty.

The greatest cause of their bitterness was returning in May 1945 in anonymity and, except for their families in general indifference. In 1945, it was time to celebrate the victorious hero, they were resisted by all whether French or American or British troops, no honors to troops defeated in 1940, especially as the defeat was humiliating. They did not have the honor their behavior in some sectors of the Moselle front should have earned them.



Pause on the way to the exodus.

In June 1940, Mosellan civilians working in Verdun for the French army were responsible for moving equipment and archives to safety in trucks to Tarbes. To avoid trouble in case of arrest by the Germans along the way, these civilians were dressed in military order of the High Command uniforms. Thus they were not likely to pass for plunderers of military equipment.



The Germans occupied the works of the Maginot Line as at Soetrich.

Forts of the Maginot Line often fell into enemy hands almost intact. At Soetrich even overhead power lines are still in working condition and German troops settled into the works as of the summer 1940.

Gau Westmark



Map of the German region to which the Moselle was annexed.