



THE BELGIANS REMEMBER THEM

Rue St-Marcoult, 14 - 7830 SILLY - +32 68/286.466 - belgian.remember@gmail.com

Mister the Representative of His Majesty the King of the Belgians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, our association has been busy on several fronts at once. At the end of April, we worked to organize the inauguration of a memorial in Givry, Hainaut, dedicated to the crew of a Lancaster bomber that fell in this town in 1942.

On May 4, we organized at short notice a commemoration of the Allied Victory of 1945, which was followed by the overflight of Rebecq's Memorial by the last Lancaster in working order in Europe.

By this last-minute operation, the Royal Air Force intended to show its gratitude for the efforts of the association "The Belgians Remember Them" to perpetuate the memory of its airmen who fell in Belgium during the 2nd World War.

I was personally impressed by the number of participants in this event.

I could have told myself that this large audience had only come to see this mythical aircraft.

And by this, fear a consequent disaffection for today's commemoration. Looking around, I see that this is not the case.

About thirty federations, sections and patriotic associations are represented here by both their leaders and their standard-bearers.

It seems obvious that remembering the heroic deeds of our elders is normal for our memory groups.

But it is becoming a necessity due to the uncertainty in which we live about the future of our country and our institutions.

A moment ago, the Mayor spoke of the dangers of the rise of the extreme right in Europe.

Let us not hide our faces, our country is facing the same threats. I will not be playing politics from this rostrum, but I think I share the concern of most of us when I ask myself what will happen at the end of next year both in Belgium and in Europe.

Will we have to deal with regimes or systems that we disapprove of today?

We see every day that the filthy beast of Nazism is not dead and that, on the contrary, like a cancer grown by its metastases, it proliferates on an already propitious ground.

I do not want to be alarmist, but it is essential that each of us must keep a constant awakening of great democratic vigilance. The future of our young people, of the future of our peoples, is at stake.

As we go to make an Act of Remembrance in front of this Memorial, let us remember those who eight decades ago refused to make a pact with the "Beast".

Let us also know that it is probably soon our turn to demonstrate that it is intolerable for us to link ourselves to those who advocate separatism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and the rejection of others.

I also think that today's remembrance event is a step in this fight against oblivion and the refusal to admit that the tragedy initiated by the Nazis plunged our world into absolute drama.

Wilfred Burie,
President
Rebecq, May 17th, 2023