

Thionville France

**Urbana Sister Cities Partnership Visit
Memorials, Celebrations, and Charter Signing**

November 15-17, 2019

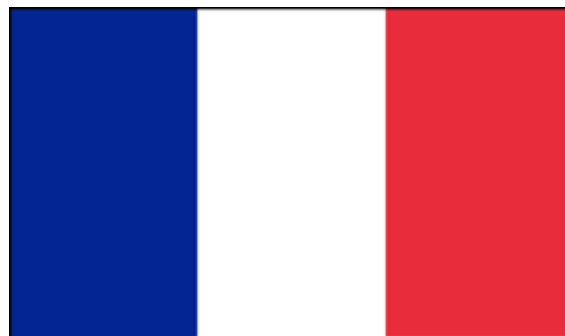
Thionville Entered a Sister Cities Global Partnership with Urbana, Illinois in 2014



A Delegation from Urbana Traveled to Thionville in November 2014



Urbana traveled to Thionville, France in 2014 to help celebrate the 70th anniversary of the city's liberation from Axis occupation. A Sister Cities/Twinning City charter was signed by Mayors Laurel Prussing and Anne Grommerch. Urbana WW II Veteran Kermit Harden joined our delegation and addressed the assembly.



This Summer Urbana Received an Invitation from Thionville to Help Celebrate 75th Anniversary of Liberation



Urbana received an invitation from the City of Thionville to come to France to participate in the 75th anniversary celebration of the of the liberation of their city from German occupation at the end of World War II, with the arrival of the American 3rd Army under General George S. Patton.

Friday November 15, 2019

Informal Gathering for Lunch



We met at Les Sommeliers Restaurant for lunch ...great company, excellent food (we tried the wild boar) and an exotic dessert!

Friday November 15, 2019

Reception in Thionville Town Hall



The first formal event is a reception in the City Hall's wedding chamber. The Urbana delegation meets Mayor Pierre Cuny, the City Deputies, City Councilors, and find it easy to make friends.

Friday November 15, 2019

Reception in Thionville Town Hall



Touring the City Hall, we are shown the “URBANA ROOM.” The Twinning Cities Charter signed in 2014 and books about Urbana are displayed on the sideboard just outside the Mayor’s office.

Friday November 15, 2019

Tour of the City



We tour downtown Thionville, starting with the city building. The façade was decorated with the flags of France and the U.S.A. The window art transforms the building into a giant Advent calendar.

Friday November 15, 2019

Tour of the City



We visit the city's Clock Tower, the Tour aux Pucelles Museum, and St. Maximin Church.

Friday November 15, 2019

Tour of the City



The City of Thionville has dedicated a plaza named after the late Mayor Anne Grommerch.

Friday November 15, 2019

Tour of the City



The Allée Raymond Poincaré has a bike path down the center median, lined with trees.
Cars may park in the median between the trees.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Military Ceremony – Place de Liberté



Saturday morning we attended a ceremonial review of the French military army and air force.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Wreath Laying Ceremony – Malling, France



We then drove to Malling, a town 20 km up the Moselle River, to participate in a wreath laying ceremony in the village square, at a monument to those who perished during the war.

Saturday November 16, 2019

American Football Demonstration



After lunch we watched a demonstration of an American football exhibition match at Jeanne d'Arc Stadium in Thionville.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Members of the Air Force band entertained citizens at the entrance to the Council chambers in the Clock Tower with American Big Band and swing music before the Charter signing ceremony.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



The Council Chamber was packed. Standing room only.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Mayor Pierre Cuny addressed the assembly, followed by the reading of a Proclamation from Urbana Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin, delivered by Alderman Dennis Roberts.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Alderman Dennis Roberts, Mayor Pierre Cuny, and Twinning Cities event coordinator Elise Poillot signed the renewed Charter documents.

Saturday November 16, 2019

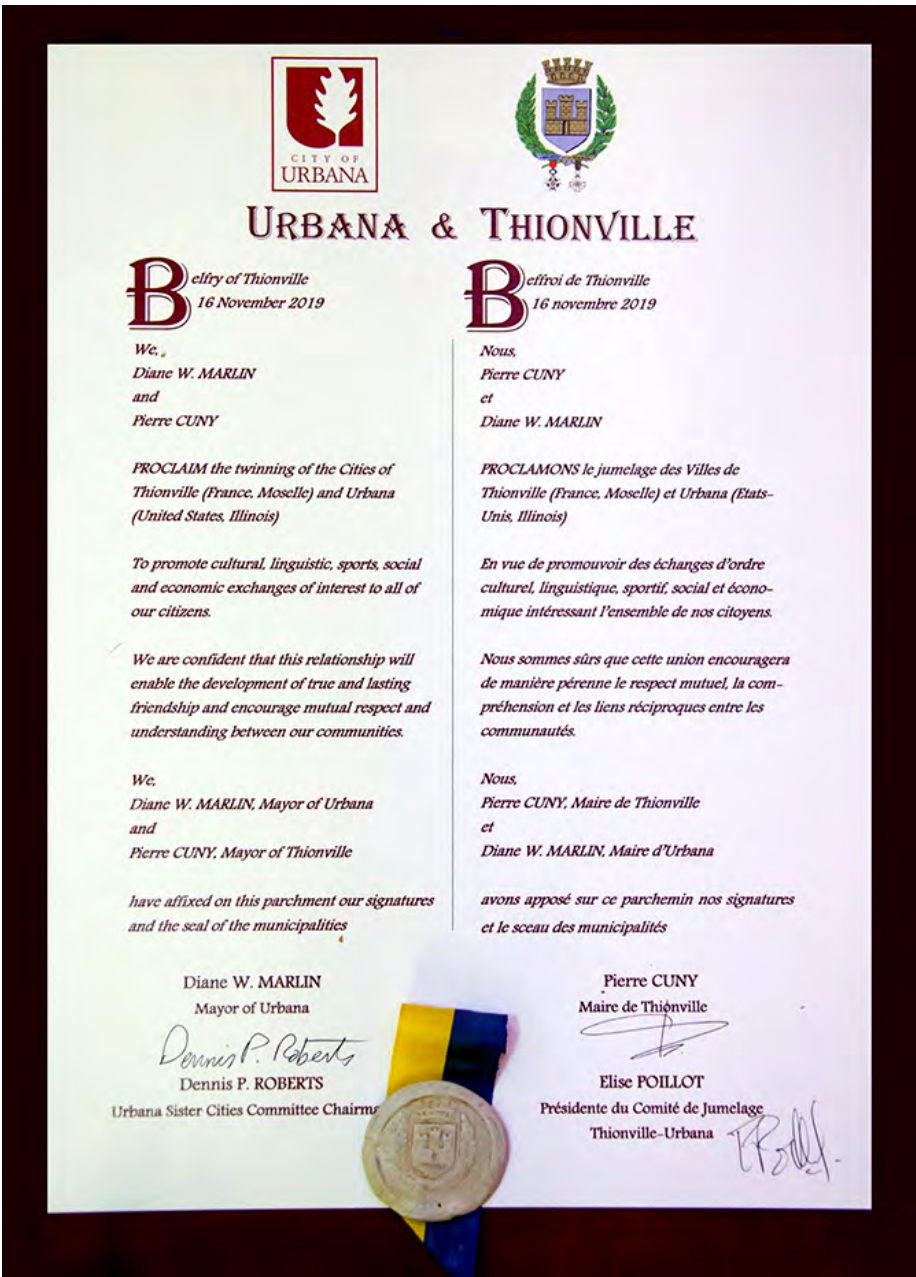
Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Four copies of the Charter, in French and English, were signed.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



The newly signed Twinning Cities / Sister Cities Charter.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



A children's choir sang the United States national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*, followed by the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*.

Saturday November 16, 2019

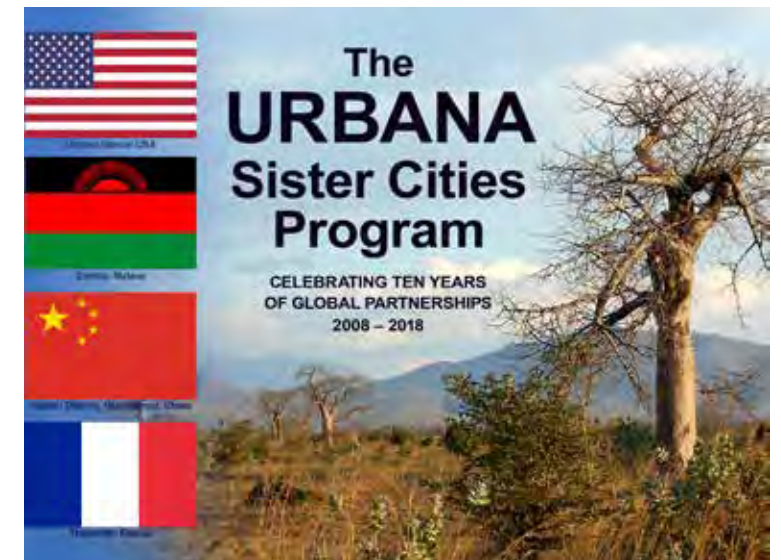
Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Mayor Cuny presented Dennis Roberts and Maryalice Wu with copies of a deluxe edition of the history of Thionville, sending a third copy home for Mayor Diane Marlin.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



Maire Cuny receives gifts from the Urbana delegation – a photograph of the University of Illinois quadrangle, and the ten year anniversary book about the Urbana Sister Cities program.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Thionville Honoring Urbana Veteran Kermit L. Harden



Maire Cuny announced in his speech during this ceremony that the city of Thionville will name a street in the new redevelopment project planned for the east bank of the Moselle River after Urbana's American WW II veteran, Mr. Kermit L. Harden Jr.

Kermit landed on Omaha Beach in August of 1944, and fought under General George S. Patton and the Third American Army.

Kermit was captured at St. Lo and held prisoner for several months. He was one of the few American POW's that were exchanged during the war. After a short hospitalization Kermit was redeployed and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He suffered frostbite on his legs and feet and was hospitalized at Metz, France, 29 km south of Thionville.

Kermit Harden was honored by French President Sarkozy with the Legion of Honor award for his role in liberating France. Mr. Harden passed away at age 94 on June 19, 2019.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Twinning Cities Charter Ceremony



A group picture of all the officials and staff participating in the signing ceremony.

The event was streamed live on Thionville television and is available for viewing via YouTube.com:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz_w3n7aM_o

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



An evening Gala dinner and party was held at Château de La Grange in Manom, France, just a few kilometers outside of Thionville. We were greeted by Music on the stairwell.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



A large crowd attended the Gala. The chateau was a beautiful setting for the event.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



WWII veteran Dominic S. and Jackie Helfgott



Urbana Alderpersons Roberts and Wu.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



Mayor Pierre Cuny addressed the gathering and expressed the importance of having the delegation from America attend that weekend to participate in the commemoration. Elise Poillot and Alderman Roberts also offered comments appropriate for the occasion.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



With presentations and comments over, the band began to play . . .

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



. . . and people took to the floor.

Saturday November 16, 2019

Gala Dinner Party at Chateau de la Grange



This is international citizen diplomacy at its best!

Sunday November 17, 2019

Military Parade on Boulevard Foch



On Sunday morning Thionville held a military parade along Boulevard Foch. Leading the Parade is a jeep bearing "General George S. Patten."

Sunday November 17, 2019

Military Parade on Boulevard Fouch



Many renovated WW II cars, jeeps, and trucks were provided by the reenactor societies that are active in the Lorraine District of France.

Sunday November 17, 2019

Military Parade on Boulevard Fouch



World War II veterans who had traveled from the United States were Guests of Honor at the parade.

Sunday November 17, 2019

Military Parade on Boulevard Fouch



The reenactors fired off a small artillery canon with a loud 'boom' and lots of smoke.

Sunday November 17, 2019

Tree Planted Honoring Urbana



Sunday morning we attended a ceremony dedicating a City square to General George S. Patton. We then walked toward the river. At the Parc Napoléon a pecan tree was planted by the Order of Lafayette Association in honor of the City of Urbana.

Sunday November 17, 2019

Glenn's Swing Band Concert



The Sunday program ended with a performance of Glenn's Swing Band at the Municipal Theatre, with American Swing and Big Band tunes performed by a group dressed in U.S. Army uniforms.

Sunday November 17, 2019

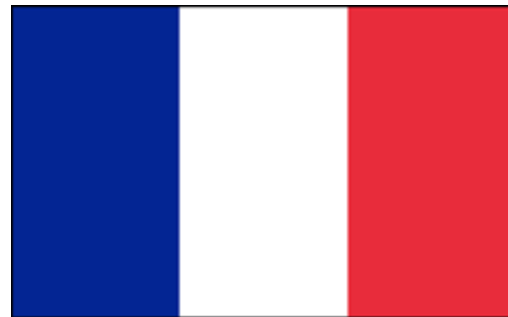
After Concert Party



The official festivities came to an end, but the party was not over. We were all invited up to Brigitte Gailios' and Roger Schreiber's apartment above Les Sommeliers Restaurant for a late dinner and champagne nightcap.

Sunday November 17, 2019

Monday Farewells



Monday was a day of travel to other destinations. Some to Paris, some to Metz, and some home.

Monday November 18, 2019

Au Revoir!



This ends the Urbana Sister Cities Committee's report on their trip to Thionville, France, November 15–17, 2019.