Establishing a
“Sister Cities”–“Twinning City”
relationship between
Urbana, Illinois and Thionville, France

November 15-17, 2014

Thionville, Urbana's new Sister City, is located in NE France along the Moselle River, 16 km south of Luxemgourg City, 18 km north of the City of Metz.

Thionville City Hall

Mayor Prussing, Député Mayor Anne Grommerch, Councilman Stéphane Mockels,
evening of November 14, 2014

Les Conseillers de Thionville

Dinner at an excellent restaurant overlooking Thionville

Morning tour of the city

Thionville has many distinctive buildings in the downtown area.

Loseffe
L'Optique du BEFFROI

Thionville's
Citadel-Museum
is called
"The Flea Tower"

Citadel and fortifications that were once part of the old city wall

Gateway into the old city

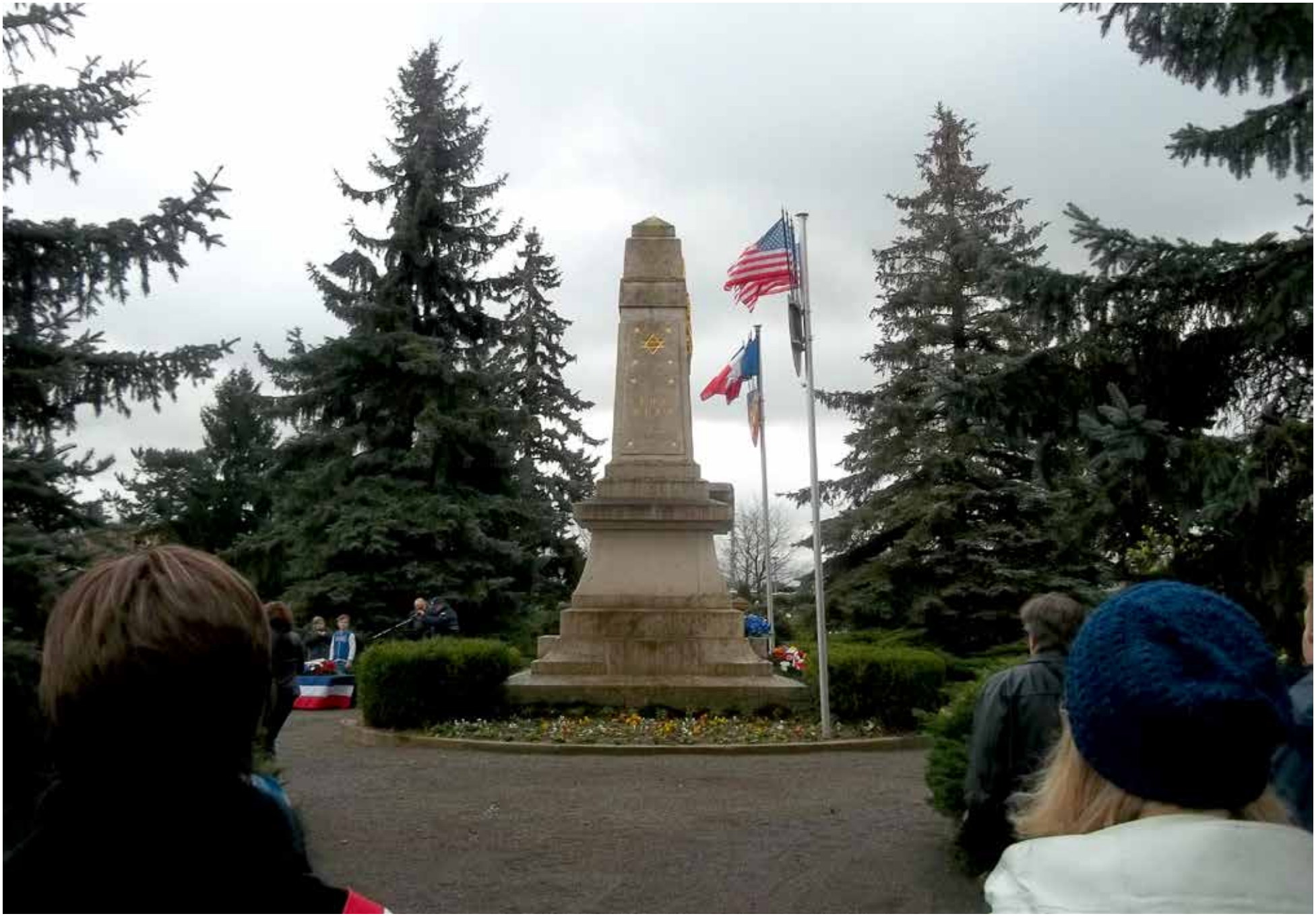
City clock tower's foundations date from 1239. Thionville was part of the fiefdom of the Count of Luxembourg.

Delicacies served in local shops: fine cheeses, pastries, and paella

Owner of a local bakery donates fresh crossionts to our group and speaks with WW II veteran Kermit Harden.

Stéphane Mockels and his big smile

Fort de Guentrange – This German fort was built in 1899 as part of Germany's fortifications against France. It passed to France following the Armistace of 1918 and has not been used since.



Memorial in the cemetery dedicated to foreign veterans of war

Thionville Mayor Anne Grommerch and WW II veteran Kermit Harden

Laying the wreaths at the memorial

Tribute from Urbana and Thionville

Stéphane Mockels, Mayor Grommerch, Dr. Evelyn Underwood, Kermit Harden, Ann Harden, Mayor Laurel Prussing, ana Michael Kilcullen

A meal at another fine restaurant. Specialty: Wild Boar in scalloped potatoes, and an apricot dessert.

Celebrations Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of Thionville from Axis Occupation by Patton's Third Army, November 10, 1944.

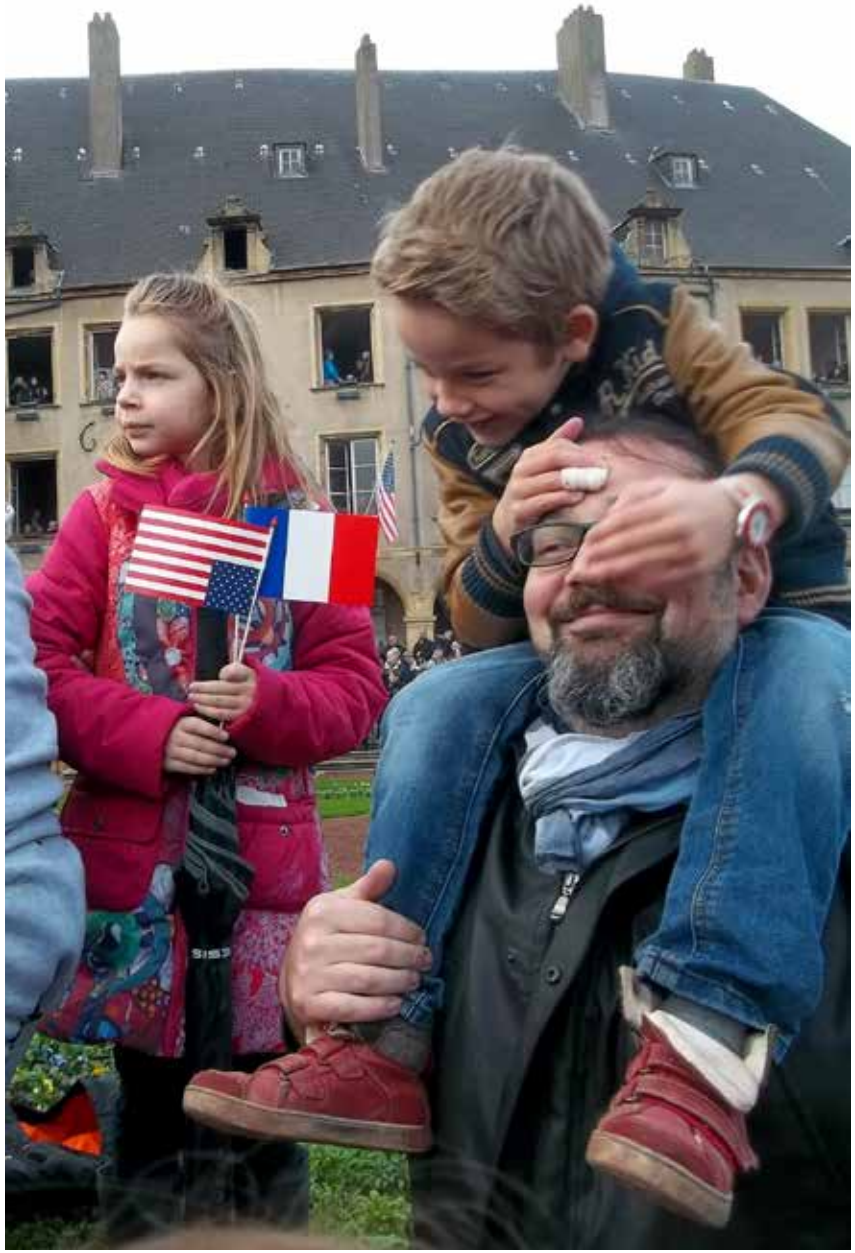
Historic photographs of the arrival of the Americans are seen throughout the city.

A street in Thionville following the retreat of the German army. The clock tower is in the distance.

Decorations for the 70th Aniversary Celebrations.

Saturday, November 15: The re-enactment of the arrival of Patton's Third Army and the crossing of the Moselle River.

Crowds gathered in front of the City Building.



Thionville's citizens await the re-enactors

Re-enactment: Arrival of the American troops into Thionville

FRERES
MIKA.L
Coiffure
Coiffure
Dépil Tech
ASSU
Henri

Rebuilt and revovated army vehicles and detailed military costume made the re-enactment clubs' appearance very realistic.

Re-enactment of battle that occurred between American and German forces at the bridge across the Moselle River.

The celebrations continued into the night on the main plaza.

These women re-enactors remained in character while enjoying the music from the dance stand at the city plaza.

Woman next to WW II era motorcycle.

An evening program honored Urbana WW II veteran Kermit Harden.

Kermit speaks of his experiencs with Patton's Third Army in Thionville 70 years ago.

Signing of the Sister Cities / Twinning Cities Charter between Thionville and Urbana

Twinning Oath

between the cities

of Urbana and Thionville

We, the undersigned Mayors, declare the twinning of our two cities of Urbana (USA - Illinois) and Thionville (France - Lorraine - Moselle) as "Sister Cities". By this declaration, we hope to build a common relationship of both friendship and solidarity.

We are proud and honored for this day as it celebrates our two communities as "twins" and "sisters". We express our sincere desire and hope that this signing event will be the first step towards a friendship which will turn out to be beneficial, precious, and endearing for all involved.

Fully aware of these specific interests, needs, and values of this relationship between our respective populations, we are confident that cultural, social, touristic, educational, and economic exchanges will develop. All of these, are in order to build a deep, active and long-lasting relationship.

We are also committed to protecting the quality of life of our citizens, which will be a heritage for our future generations to come.

We solemnly declare, in the name of the citizens whom we represent, that we wish to develop mutual understanding, respect and friendship between our two cities.

Thionville, the 15th November

Anne Grommerch
Deputy-Mayor of Thionville

Laurel
Laurel
Mayor

Serment du Jumelage

entre les villes

de Urbana et de Thionville

Nous, soussignés Maires, proclamons le jumelage des municipalités de Urbana (USA - Illinois) et de Thionville (France - Lorraine - Moselle), scellant ainsi une relation commune d'amitié et de solidarité.

En se félicitant mutuellement de la réception de ce jour qui consacre le jumelage de nos deux communautés et en exprimant leur désir sincère et l'espoir que cet événement soit le premier pas vers une amitié qui s'avérera utile, précieuse et des plus agréables pour tous.

Conscientes de leurs intérêts particuliers, du besoin et de la valeur des relations personnelles entre leurs populations respectives, nous espérons avec confiance voir se développer des échanges culturels, sociaux, touristiques et économiques dans le but de nouer des relations profondes, vivantes et pérennes.

Nous nous engageons également à préserver pour nos administrés une qualité de vie dont hériteront les générations futures.

Nous déclarons solennellement au nom des citoyens et des citoyennes que nous représentons, vouloir développer la compréhension, le respect et l'amitié entre les deux communes.

Thionville, le 15 novembre 2014

Anne Grommerch
Députée-Maire de Thionville

Laurel Prussing
Laurel Prussing
Maire de Urbana

An exchange of presents included a sign made by Urbana's Public Works Department honoring our "Twinning Cities" partnership with Thionville.

Banquet with re-enacters following the ceremony

November 16, 2014 – Military Ceremony honoring the Veterans, on the Plaza of Liberty.

In the break following the military ceremony I give Thionville Counseillor Claude Gandecki my City of Urbana lapel pin.

Afternoon review of the troops representing the American army. Participants come from re-enactment clubs up and down the Moselle River Valley.

Left: French Revolution re-enactors.

DECHETS AVANT
DE JARDINER!
VOUS TROUVEZ
CA NORMAL?
STOP AUX
DECHETS SAUVAGES
20280350
20570627-S

Re-enactors fire a canon as part of the demonstration.

Parade of 600 Flags – representing the many districts along the Moselle Valley.

World War II Veterans from America and France.

Below left: This elderly resident of Thionville shared her personal story. As a 12 yr. old, she had been told by her parents to go out and gather their potatoes from the field—perhaps the first person to see the arrival of the American forces. A photograph of her in pig tails, taken by the Americans, was shown.

We attended a concert in the evening by the U.S. Air Force Band. Thionville was their first stop on their European tour. The program featured the music of Glen Miller.

We enjoyed the music and songs of Glenn Miller. As a final encoure the audience was invited to come up and dance on stage.

Later on Sunday we drove into the countryside around Thionville

Malbrouck Castle

Malbrouck Castle was rebuilt from ruin after ten years of restoration, based on historic photographs and original plans.

Stéphane takes us on the tour of the Castle

Stéphane Brugreaux and John Dimit

Charlie Smyth and Dennis Roberts explore the castle.

Sister City Friends gather at the hotel as we prepare to leave Thionville.

Au Revoir!