

The LOYTON operation is still an up to date topic .

The tears some of these Veterans shed and the feelings they share are genuine : we're in MOUSSEY (a village in the French departement of the Vosges -88) and the date is September 6th 2013

Ever since 1945 the tragical fate of all those , officers and soldiers who under the command of Lt-Colonel Brian Franks at the head of the 2nd SAS , F Phantom and SOE had taken part in the LOYTON Operation has been remembered and honored.

The aim of that operation , besides supporting the local Rabodeau valley Resistance organisation , had been meant to open US Gal Patton's 3rd army a way to Alsace by the Bruche's valley.

Unfortunately , neither their bravery , nor their determination or their spirit of self-sacrifice could help the 102 British Airborne Commandos to hold their position since they had been left behind , restricted to their own limited ressources . It wasn't until November 22nd 1944 that eventually US Gal Patch's 7th Army reached the objective , although the local Resistance groups had joined battle and thrown in all their forces.

Few of the soldiers escaped , those captured by the enemy died in the most dreadful conditions , most of them were shot but some went through the worst tortures. In retaliation for their help , the population of MOUSSEY as well as the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages suffered an equal martyrdom : 1000 villagers were deported out of whom 700 never to come back , 25 were shot , 2 villages were burnt and laid waste , all of which left 400 widows and 750 orphans.

Accordingly , it's easy to understand why the locals and their British Allies and friends faithfully pay a common tribute in remembrance of all those sacrifices made to restore Liberty.

Next to the many officials and VIPs , both military and civilian , members of the 2nd DB and BB Association of Alsace gathered round one Veteran of their own ranks , in the person of Mr. Pierre Cerutti who joined Gal Leclerc's 2nd DB , following the tanks from the bank of the river Meurthe onwards to the ultimate war days.

The bugler who played the national anthems and all the appropriate calls , both British and French , at this ceremony was Mr. Patrick Kautzmann , garrison bugler of Strasbourg .

Lucy Anne Baneau