

Clerveux, 27.04.1997

Mister Kramer,

It is a great honour and privilege to me, as President of the "enrôlés de force" to express to you our hearty welcome and sincere appreciation for your coming

to attend on these ceremonies as representative from the Embassy of the United States of America.

It was the second time in recent history that American troops brought freedom back to Luxembourg. In September 1994 we commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Grand-Duchy. Nobody at that moment in 1944 suspected that terrible sacrifices layed ahead, that the American troops would soon have to suffer again in order to block off and finally reject the last desperate enemy offensive, from December 1944 to January 1945. But the war was not yet over! During weeks and months of struggle, land had to be reconquered, mile by mile, village by village, town by town until the enemy finally capitulated, and the armistice was signed on that 8th of May 1945.

Also for the forcefully conscripted, "enrôlés de force" it was the liberation from the nazi dictatorship, but unfortunately not for everybody the immediate repatriation. On the contrary, many of them had to wait weeks, months and even years in prisoner of war camps before seeing the homeland again.

Nevertheless, our deeply felt expression of gratitude goes towards all this men and soldiers.

They had come from a land far away, to fight a war they did not start, in a place they did not know. For they knew in their hearts that tyranny has no borders and freedom cannot be preserved in isolation.

In the hallowed grounds of Hamm five thousand seventy-five valiant heroes rest peacefully under the watchful eye of their commander, General George S. Patton.

The commemoration ceremony we celebrate today reminds us, once more, of the great debt of gratitude we owe to all this American soldiers who paid with their lives the liberation not only of our homeland but also the liberation of the "enrôlés de force" in the nazis armis.

More than fifty years after having recovered our democratic rights to be free, the feelings of gratitude expressed by our people, towards its great ally the USA have not lost their strength. And this also and especially by our generation "la Jeunesse sacrifiée".

As time flows and new generations rise, it is getting more and more difficult to convince people of the necessity of vigilance and strenght in face of possible and yet existing conflicts. Therefore I feel certain that, even as the older generation, we all have tasks to accomplish:

First: Not to forget those who gave their lives for their homeland, for freedom and liberty.

Secondly: To educate the younger generations to the historical truth and of respect for democracy and human rights.

I would like to take this opportunity to express to you

*Mister Kramer* on behalf of all the "enrôlés de force", their gratitude for your assistance on these ceremonies and so doing help us in our tasks.

Let's not forget the thousands and millions of GI's who fought for freedom and all those who gave their lives for their homeland also for our freedom and our liberty.

Steve Weston,

It is a great honour and privilege to me, as President of the "enrôlés de force" to express to you our sincere appreciation for your coming

to attend on these ceremonies as *representative* from the Embassy of the United States of America.

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