**RBL at Hotton, 5 May 2024**

Dear members and friends of the Brussels Branch

Mrs Martine Schmit, burgomaster of Hotton, and members of the council, invite us to the town on Sunday, 5 May 2024, to commemorate all those who lost their lives in the Second World War.

After a service of remembrance at Hotton Church, the Brussels Branch of the RBL will lead a commemoration at the Commonwealth War Cemetery. We will be honoured by the attendance of senior military personnel and diplomatic representatives. Delegations from the US 23rd Engineer Battalion, whose forbears held the bridge over the River Ourthe during the Battle of the Bulge, and the St Andrew Scottish Guard, will be present. The 7ème Compagnie de Ravitaillement & Transport (Marche-en-Famenne) will provide a guard of honour.

**The programme**

9.00-9.30: welcome coffee or drink at the Café Le Jacquemart, opposite the Church. Parking is available nearby.

9.45: Service at Hotton Church led by Père Herman Kusola and Reverend Canon John Wilkinson, Royal British Legion Chaplain.

10.30: Wreath laying outside the Church, followed by a procession to the Commonwealth War Cemetery led by La Fanfare Royale des Joyeux Travailleurs.

11.15-11.45: Commemoration at the Commonwealth War Cemetery.

12 noon: Reception hosted by the burgomaster at the Sports Hall, Rue des Vergers, 7, 6990 Hotton

Around 13.30-15.00: Hot buffet lunch (€ 22 per person) organised by veteran association FNC Hotton at Le Royal, Rue de Ecoles, 23, 6990 Hotton. Menu enclosed. Bookings via andree.ferrant@gmail.com by 26 April at the latest. Bank details for those wishing to take lunch : FNC Hotton - BE07 0689 4241 7166

Around 15:00: Travel to La Roche-en-Ardenne (20-minute drive).

15.30: Act of Remembrance at the 51st Highland Division Memorial, in the presence of the burgomaster of La Roche-en-Ardenne or his representative. Followed by a short reception.

Around 16.30: Return to Brussels

**Transport**

If you plan to join us at Hotton – all are welcome – please inform asap Honorary Secretary Andrée Ferrant, andree.ferrant@gmail.com. Please let Andrée know if you intend to drive to Hotton and have seats available, or whether you need transport. A car-sharing will be organised at the car park by Carrefour Auderghem, Boulevard du Souverain, 240, opposite Burger King, departing at 7.30. The branch can reimburse car sharing drivers (0,35 €/km on completion of form SOP42, to be requested.

**Hotton and the Battle of the Bulge**

Hotton was the western limit of the great German counter offensive in the Ardennes in January 1945. Most of the burials at the Commonwealth War Cemetery date from that time, although there are also some from May 1940. The cemetery contains 666 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 21 of them unidentified.