



Commemoration of SOE's role in the French Resistance



Saturday 29th September 2018

ONAC VG (Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre) who administer the national memorial to the French Resistance at Le Mont Valérien near Paris and the Mairie of Suresnes, have invited Libre Résistance, the Special Forces Club and other British associations to hold the first ceremony that is open to non-French nationals at this "Haute lieu de la Mémoire Nationale". This is a great honour and the British Ambassador to France as well as several British organisations have been invited to what will be a memorable commemoration.

We have prepared a program for the afternoon's events at the Mont Valérien including our ceremony to commemorate the 429 SOE agents sent to France and the over 70,000 local resistant fighters who assisted in the liberation of France in 1944.



PROGRAM FOR THE AFTERNOON

- 14 h 30 : Guided tour of the Mont Valérien, permanent exhibition, chapel and clearing.
- 16 h 30 : SOE - Libre Résistance ceremony in the parade ground in front of the Memorial de la France Combattante.
- 17 h 30 : Cocktail party Vignoble de Suresnes, hosted by the Maire of Suresnes.

THE MONT VALERIEN

The Mont Valérien is located 2kms West of Paris and is the highest point in the Département of the Hauts de Seine and has remarkable views over Paris. It is the site of a Vauban fort built in 1841 as part of the defences of Paris for the Franco-Prussian war. From 1940 to 1944, it was used as a prison and place of executions by the Nazi occupiers of Paris. The Germans brought prisoners here in trucks from other locations. The prisoners were temporarily confined in a disused chapel, and later taken to be shot in a clearing 100 metres away. The bodies were then buried in various cemeteries in the Paris area. Approx. 1,040 hostages and resitants were executed.

In 1960, General de De Gaulle inaugurated the Memorial of La France Combattante where 16 resitant fighters have been entombed.



Parade ground in front of Memorial of la France Combattante

Annual ceremony on June 18th with the French President and cabinet

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS AT THE SOE CEREMONY



LIBRE RESISTANCE

Libre Résistance is the French association that represents the 429 Special Operations Executive agents infiltrated into France during the Nazi occupation as well as the over 70,000 local resistant fighters who prepared for the allied invasion from 1941 and helped to liberate France in 1944.

It has been associated with the Special Forces Club since they were both created in 1945.

F-section has worked with Libre Résistance to organise this club event which will be a precursor to more events in the future. The Vice-president is Willie Beauclerk

SPECIAL FORCES CLUB

A private members club located in Knightsbridge, London. Initially established in 1945 for former personnel of the Special Operations Executive, members of wartime resistance organisations, the Special Forces, its membership now includes those who had served, or were serving, in organisations and units closely associated with special forces and the intelligence community.



ROYAL
BRITISH
LEGION



RNVR
ASSOCIATION,
PARIS BRANCH



BRITISH SECTION
ST GERMAIN
-EN-LAYE



FONDATION
FRANCE LIBRE
92



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ONAC VG 92

This is the national office of former combatants and war victims. It is financed by public subsidies for a role that could be compared to a French combination of the Royal British Legion, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Ssafa.

The local director is M. Antoine Grande.

VILLE DE SURESNES

Suresnes is a commune of 50,000 inhabitants, on the Banks of the River Seine. Its location and nature is similar to Twickenham. It is twinned with Hackney.

The Maire is M. Christian Dupuy, who is hosting a cocktail party after the ceremony.



HE Ed Llewellyn
British Ambassador
to France



Matthew Lodge,
Minister,
British Embassy
Paris



Mike Sixsmith
Chairman
SFC F-Section
Sub-Committee



Jean-Baptiste
Romain
Directeur
ONAC VG 92



Christian Dupuy
Maire de Suresnes



Lionel Southgate
President
Libre Résistance

DRAFT PROGRAM FOR THE SOE-LIBRE RESISTANCE CEREMONY

- 16 h 15 : Arrival of guests, dignitaries and standard bearers.
Master of ceremony : M. Etienne Ignatovitch, Royal British Legion, Paris Branch.
- 16 h 30 : Welcome by the Director of the Mont-Valérien memorial, Mr. Antoine Grande.
Welcome by Mr. Christian Dupuy, Maire de Suresnes.
Commencement of the ceremony.
Recital of prayers by the Royal British Legion chaplain, Fr Aidan Troy, St Joseph's church.
Exhortation of the Royal British Legion, M. David Bean, Chairman de la RBL, Paris branch.
Last post (trompette) followed by a minute's silence.
Reveillè (trompette).
National anthems are sung. (1 verse only)
- God Save the Queen,
- La Marseillaise,
Speeches :
1. M. Lionel Southgate, Président Libre Résistance.
2. Representative of the Special Forces Club, London.
3. H.E. Lord Llewellyn, British Ambassador to France (to be confirmed).
Greeting of the standard bearers by HE the British Ambassador, M. Le Maire, Representative of the SFC, Chairman of the RBL, President of the RNVR, RBL Chaplain.
- 17 h 15 : End of ceremony.