

Romagne Newsletter April 2021

Apr 21



Patience is the keyword

Dear friends of Museum Romagne 14-18,

How dearly we would have liked to inform you that our beloved Museum Romagne 14-18 has reopened its doors. Or will reopen very soon. The harsh reality is that we still don't know. The Covid crisis is not yet under control. The vaccination programs are running at full speed throughout Europe, but it still might take some considerable time before things return to what we once called 'normal'. Until

then patience is the keyword. And hope. And hope we have! Behind closed doors Museum Romagne 14-18 is in full swing. Jean-Paul is preparing for the summer season, whenever it may start.



Brooding Dough Boy, waiting for his favourite museum to reopen

You answered our call

Without your help Jean-Paul wouldn't have come this far at all, that's for sure. As we said in our previous newsletter, the mandatory closure has caused major financial consequences for the museum. And it still does. But just as we thought that permanent closure was inevitable, support came from all around the world. Your commitment to our museum was expressed in many donations, small and large, all equally valuable and indispensable. It helped Jean-Paul through the winter. It

will help him this spring and it offers him a prospect of the summer.

Thanks to you all we have a little more breathing space. It is not easy to find the words for our gratitude.

As long as the covid-crisis lasts Museum Romagne 14-18 will be in danger. What will happen when things return to normal nobody knows. We feel tremendously supported by our donors. The energy has returned, something we did not envisage during the past difficult months. So bless you all, dear friends! We are back on track, stumbling at occasions, encountering setbacks, but moving forward, seeing a road ahead.



Jean-Paul in his element during his School and College Tour 2018 at Maurick College in Vught, The Netherlands

Schoolchildren help their favourite Museum

Romagne

We fully respect the privacy of all our donors. As we said, every donation is equally valuable and indispensable. But in this Newsletter we would like to make an exception and mention a special person. Or rather, a group of persons.

We were touched by the schoolchildren and teachers of the [Maurick College in Vught](#) in the province of Brabant in the southern part of the Netherlands.

For 16 years the children and their teachers have been coming to Romagne as a part of their history curriculum. During a four-day excursion they enjoy a visit to the museum, the Verdun region and a guided walk by Jean-Paul on the former battlefields. The visit and walk never fail to leave a great and lasting impression on the schoolchildren. It fits perfectly into Jean-Pauls philosophy: to teach and to touch.



Last year the covid crisis stood in the way of the annual trip to France. The disappointment was great but the museum was not forgotten!

The Maurick College sold a collection of its school wall maps that were of no use any longer and donated the proceeds (almost a thousand Euros!) to their favourite Museum in France.

An amazing campaign that touched our hearts. Words fail us again. Thank you so much. Come back to us soon, dear children and teachers of Maurick College! Your gesture will not be forgotten.

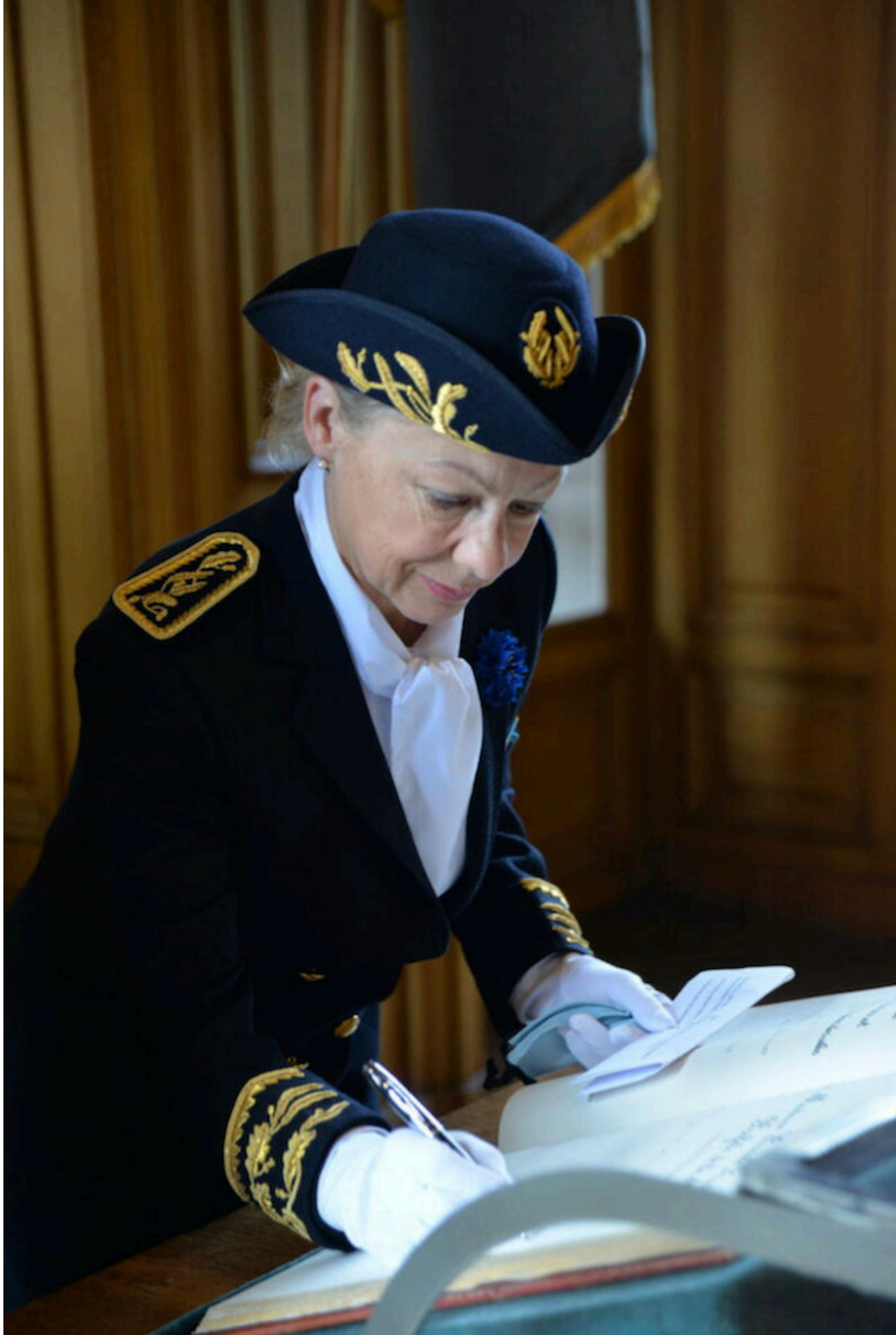
And that goes, of course, for every gesture and donation of all our friends all over the world. You keep us going!



Jean-Paul doing what he does best: teaching and touching

State Representative visits Museum Romagne

On Saturday April 17th Madame Pascale Trimbach, the 'Préfète de la Meuse', or State Representative of the Meuse Region, visited Museum Romagne, to see with her own eyes what she had heard so much about. Jean-Paul had the privilege to show her around his museum and answer all her questions. Madame Trimbach was visibly moved by Jean-Paul's collection and his personal stories behind the war relics. The Museum Romagne 14-18 Foundation highly appreciates the visit of Madame Trimbach. We consider it a warm and sincere support for Jean-Paul's museum and his important message of peace.



Madame Pascale Trimbach, State Representative of the Meuse Region

Recent acquisitions for the museum

All our donors can be sure that every Dollar and Euro will be wisely spent. The maintenance of the museum collection is an important part of our financial management. The fate of the museum and the quality of its collection are inextricably linked. The higher the level of the collection, the more visitors a museum will attract.

Over a period of more than 25 years Jean-Paul has managed to bring together a unique collection. But every collection needs new acquisitions to make a next visit worthwhile and inspiring. Museum Romagne hopes to celebrate its reopening with a new exposition:

And then it was over. The Great War and its medical aspects.

As new exhibits for the upcoming exposition - and thanks to our donors- Museum Romagne has been able to acquire two very special items: a French wheelchair and a German chair for wounded soldiers. (See pictures below).

In the words of Jean-Paul: *The 'glorious' dead have their well-maintained cemeteries, their monuments, their hymns, salutes and remembrances. But what about the millions that came home maimed, wounded, physically and mentally damaged? The nameless who had to take care of themselves and never found their homeland to be the 'land fit for heroes' as it had been promised to them? My exposition And Then It Was Over is their monument.*

Another reason to look forward to the reopening of
Museum Romagne!



Oil painting of wounded soldier returning from the front by Ugo Matania (1916)



German chair for the wounded



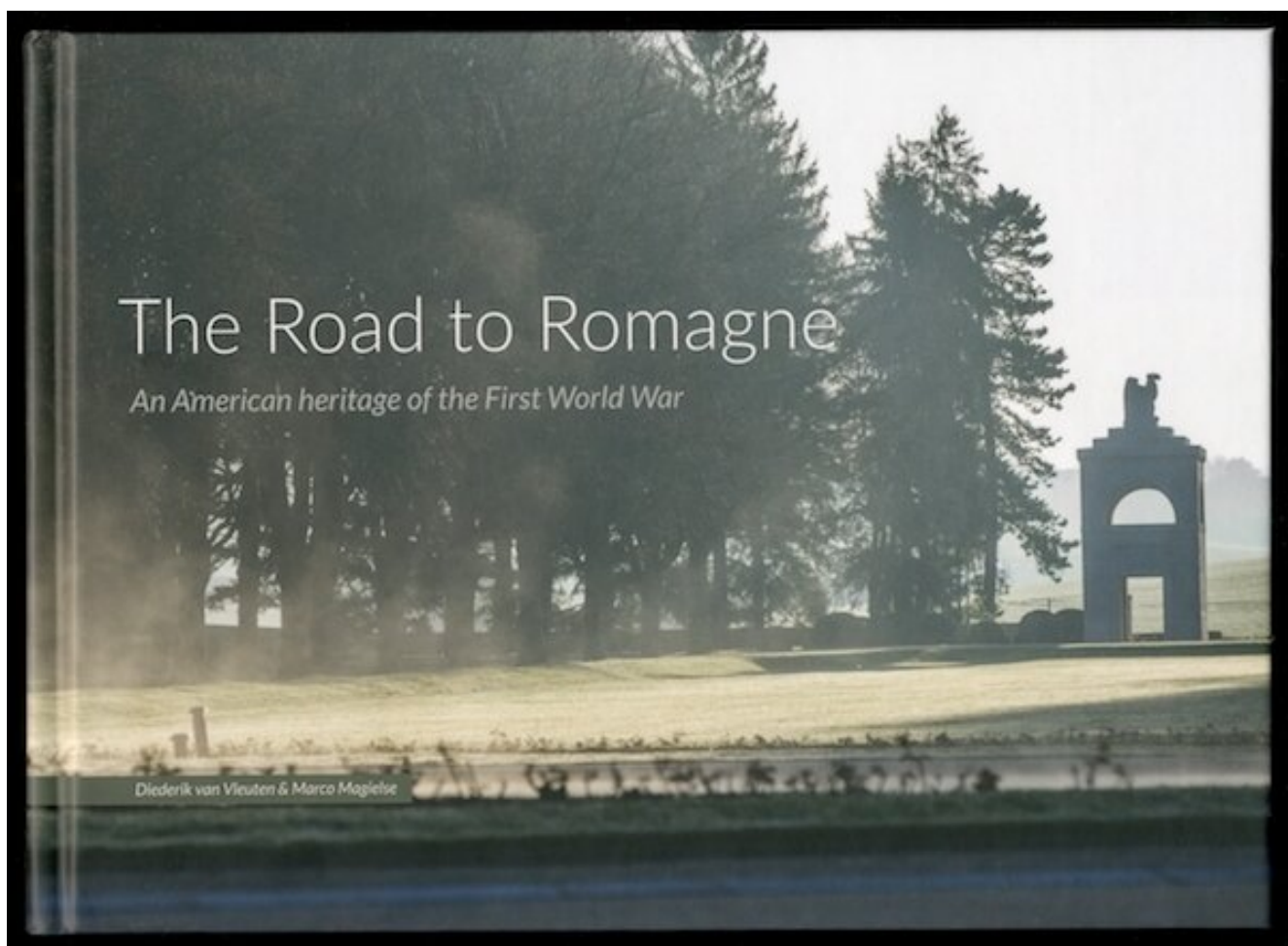
Accommodation next to museum in full progress

Leading up to the reopening of Museum Romagne the realization of accommodation next to the museum is in full

swing. We already announced the good news in our previous newsletter. Jean-Paul's former house will provide room for up to 8 guests and will be fully equipped for a self-catering stay. These pictures show Jean-Paul's work in progress. To be continued. And to be finished this summer to welcome you!







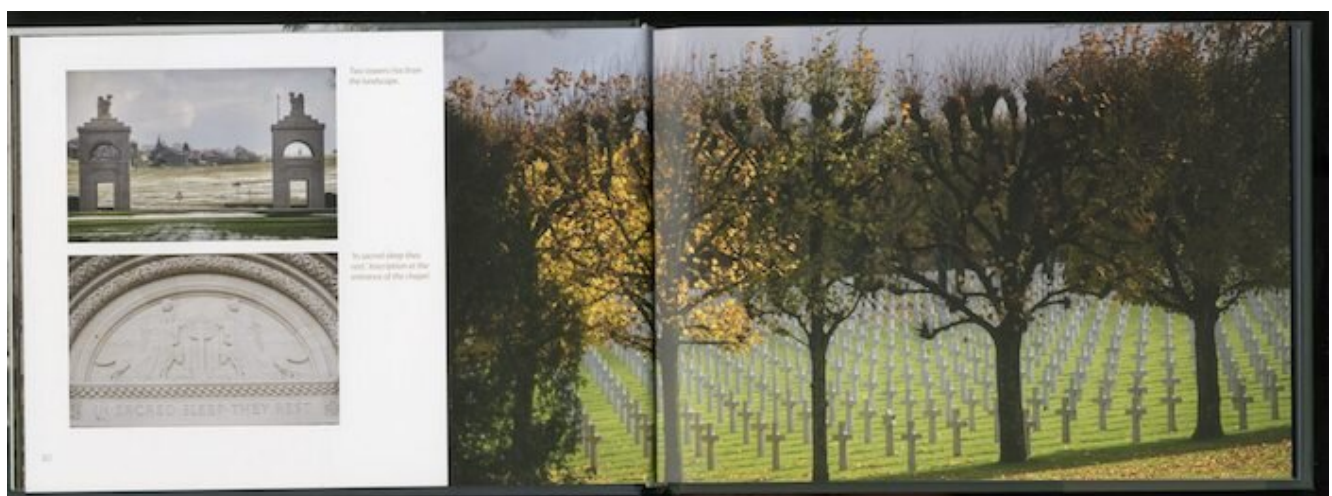
In the summer of 2018 the Friends of Romagne Foundation celebrated its first publication to support

Museum Romagne 14-18: *The Road to Romagne*.

This hardcover booklet, richly illustrated, contains 112 pages. The text was written by Diederik van Vleuten, the beautiful photographs are by Marco Magielse and a foreword was supplied by former Friends of Romagne 14-18 Foundation chairman Bob Latten.



Subtitled 'An American Heritage of the First World War' *The road to Romagne* describes the enormous war effort and sacrifices of the American Army during the famous Argonne offensive of September 1918. Needless to say our book focusses on Romagne and its surroundings. It also tells the story of Jean-Paul and his Museum Romagne 14-18. To quote Jean-Paul: '*My goal is to make people aware of the senseless brutality of war.*'



We are proud of our first publication. *The Road to Romagne* already found its way to many readers, donors and supporters. The first edition is rapidly selling out. At this moment we have only 350 copies left. If you want to secure your copy place your order at **info@friendsofromagne14-18.com**.

To our regret *The Road to Romagne* is not available at Amazon. This means that our buyers from outside the Netherlands will be charged with extra shipping costs. We are sorry for that. Offering our book through Amazon would almost wipe out the profit that we want to use for the benefit of Museum Romagne.

price book Road to Romagne:

EU 25 including shipping within The Netherlands

EU 40 including shipping to the United States of America

(For other countries please obtain your info at

info@friendsofromagne14-18.com)





*Ms. Sherry Keneson-Hall, Counselor for Public Affairs of the American Embassy in The Hague, The Netherlands, receiving the first copy of *The Road to Romagne* in Huis Doorn, a century ago the former 'palace' of the German Emperor in exile Wilhelm II.
photos © Marco Magielse*



*The Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery at Romagne on Memorial Day 2019.
photo © Diederik van Vleuten*

Repeated call: Contributions to www.Romagne14-18.com

Romagne14-18.com is our central source of information and news concerning the museum. But we hope that our site will be something more. Something special. A site to which our visitors can make a substantial contribution. By means of columns, photos, personal recollections and facts of interest.

Did you visit Romagne? Do you have plans to do so? What is your connection to the Great War and especially the Romagne region? Do you have family stories to share?

We invite you to contribute. Please don't hesitate and feel free to share your thoughts, your writings, photographs etc. with a like-minded and global audience.

We regularly post new content on our news pages. Have a look and feel inspired to contribute! You are most welcome.

Please send your content to **info@friendsofromagne14-18.com**

We will certainly get in touch with you. Please do!



Apremont German Cemetery close to Romagne.

photo © Diederik van Vleuten

Despite the encouraging developments Museum Romagne 14-18 is certainly not saved yet. The upcoming months will be challenging. So we continue to repeat our appeal to support Museum Romagne 14-18. You can do so by clicking on the orange button at the bottom of this newsletter.

In the meantime we continue to keep our beloved museum alive and kicking. Please keep following us, via our site and [Facebook page](#).

For all your questions and comments, please email us at **info@friendsofromagne14-18.com**

Spread the word: subscribe to this newsletter - if you haven't already done so - and ask your friends to do the same.

You can subscribe via the [home page of romagne14-18.com](http://home.page.of.romagne14-18.com)

best wishes,

Jean-Paul de Vries

Friends of Romagne Foundation



UNTIL OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER