

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests,

1. On behalf of Viroinval and in my personal name,
I want to wish you all **a warm welcome** in our city.

We fully believe the **same** commemoration without the families and other guests wouldn't have the **same** impact and the **same** meaning. Without you, this ceremony, this event would be meaningless.

So, we are thankful for the fact that you decided to join this ceremony, coming from New Zealand and from the United Kingdom but also from Australia, The United States and Ireland.

We are truly moved by your presence today.

Be sure you make the difference!

2. Three years ago, on the 8th of May 2015 in the framework of “the seventieth” anniversary of the end of World War II, we gathered at the same place to inaugurate the “Memorial of the Short Stirling BF 513”.

Seventy-two years after the crash, we were finally able to pay tribute to the seven aviators who died here one night of April 1943. We were finally able to get them out of anonymity.

We know that each man walking into this hell had his own story that had brought him to this place.

During seven decades, we didn't know their names, their faces, their lives. They were kind of “unknown soldiers”.

We only knew that their lives stopped here one night.

Now, we may name them and we will remember them!

Belgian people will never forget the service and sacrifice of those men.

3. As we all know, none of this would have taken place without the outstanding research work of one man.

We'd like to thank again Mr Guy Lapaille, our former town hall director, who is now called "The project assistant" for the huge, phenomenal work he has done to realize and deliver the content of a publication, and an exhibition about The Short Stirling and its crew.

And after all this, for this special event, he has cooked up something special for us: **a movie!**

This forty minutes documentary may be regarded as "**The icing on the cake**", in some way the "grand finaly" of our programme.

This film will be discovered at 5 O'clock this afternoon.

So, our "**project assistant**" has become a "**film director and producer**" and I'd like to congratulate him for this new realisation.

4. Before concluding, I'd like to thank whole the team who worked hard to organise this ceremony and a full program of activities during this weekend.

5. Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we pay tribute to the crew of the Stirling.

They are now part of our history and this is our most important message:

“we will remember them!”

Lest we forget.

Dear guests, I wish you a nice day.

And again thanks for coming!

Jean-Marc DELIZEE

Member of the Belgian federal Parliament

& Mayor of Viroinval