

SPEECH Brigitte d'Oultremont, President "Comete Line Remembrance"
Bachy 9 May 2015

I have known Monique for 10 years.

When I accepted to become the President of The Comet Line Association, she enthusiastically became a member of the Committee. As she lives close to me, for 10 years I have had the privilege of giving her a lift to the reunions.

These journeys with Monique have always been a source of inspiration, as she has happily answered all my questions and given valuable advice on running this organization.

Monique is always positive, frank, direct, brief and generous. There is nothing complicated about Monique! When something has to be done - it has to be done! But even after all this time, I am **still discovering** new things about her role in Comet. When she showed her father the medal awarded by the British Government, he told her it was ridiculous giving a medal to such a young girl! So one can understand her immense reluctance to talk about her role during the war. She has never boasted about her activities - but when shown a photo of herself with Michou in 44, she begins to talk ... a bit ... and then a photo with Max Roger, who ran Comet from Bayonne for a while - suddenly she becomes alive, and talks vividly of their work together.

This is the extraordinary person we are honouring today, thanks to the incredible things she did, & through stories told by others about her activities in & around Bachy during five years of war between 1939-1944. "Simple" actions, but how brave & generous for a young girl living on the other side of the frontier in Rumes, & went to school in Bachy!

When Bachy's Circle of Remembrance met Monique a few months ago, they told her: "We would like to organize a walk from Rumes to Bachy. And afterwards a Ceremony of Honour for you, followed by a lunch with your family & a few people from the village.

Today, 100, 200, 300 people, not only from Bachy - but also from America, Britain, Holland, Belgium & France, are here to pay homage to you!!

Monique: The world, & all those you helped, (thanks to your parents, as you always say) - we all remember you! We are here with fanfares, Willys jeeps, all just as happy as on Liberation Day!

Congratulations to Bachy's Circle of Remembrance for uncovering this amazing story, and their extensive research to discover more about the Hanotte family and others: Houdart, Bricout Thank you so much for contacting Rumes, The Comet Association and the "Annual Walk in the Airmen's footsteps" in the Pyrenees. Thank you today for launching the Walk in Monique's Footsteps.

Thank you everybody for being here - in her footsteps - and for crossing the border!
