

## SPEECH – Mayor of Bachy – 9 May 2015

The Departmental Councilor  
The Vice-Presidents of the Community of Communes  
Mayors, dear colleagues,  
The Burgomaster of Rumes  
Madame Hanotte Henriette  
Ladies, and Gentlemen of the Veterans Organizations  
Ladies & Gentlemen, dear friends

The 70th anniversary of the Liberation of the 1940-45 is the occasion to remember the courage and merit of certain people during this painful time in our history.

Today, on this 9th of May 2015, the Bachy Commune has the privilege to re-live an important moment inscribed in our local history - and of which we are all witness: the nomination of our well known Resistance member, Madame Henriette HANOTTE as Honorary Citizen.

There are moments when it is necessary to distinguish those who gave service to others. In the name of all Bachy-ois, I have the honour and pleasure to praise the qualities which deserve the distinction of "Honorary Citizen of the Commune".

The Municipal Council decided on January 30 to create this honorary distinction. It is attributed by the Council upon people or associations who have particularly dedicated their service to others, either by their moral or intellectual qualities, their heroism, their sporting achievements, or their dedication, which merits our special attention. It is with great pleasure that I submitted your name to the Municipal Council to nominate you as "Honorary Citizen of the Commune", at the request of the Circle of Remembrance. In consideration of your qualities and service, the Municipal Council gave a favourable opinion.

Although I do not want to inflict a long speech on you, I still need to remind everybody of the reasons for this distinction to Madame Henriette Hanotte, even though Mr Régis DOUCY has already amply explained your valuable work.

Belgian Resistants created The Comet Line - of which one of the missions was to conduct the airmen of planes shot down, and parachuted over Belgium and Holland, to rejoin the United Kingdom by crossing France & Spain.

The Hanotte family, who lived in Rumes, were particularly distinguished on the Brussels, Rumes, Bachy, Lille & Paris lines. Airmen generally arrived at Rumes station, lodged in Mr & Mrs Hanotte's hotel opposite the station - just the time to make false French Identity Cards, and Work Permits, as well as clothes. Their daughter Henriette, aged 20, took on the responsibility of taking these men across the (then closed) frontier between Rumes & Bachy, and onto Paris.

20 years old! What courage! And perhaps also the *insouciance* of youth. Every trip was dangerous. By your quiet courage, your sense of initiative, all your missions were successful. By yourself alone, you played a major role in the resistance of our two communes. You, together with your parents, developed a network in Rumes and

Bachy, which led to the escape of many airmen. You are an example to our young people of today.

Today, aged 95, you have brought these painful times to the attention of our young children. Your testimony of your war years must teach the younger generations to prevent this ever happening again. The participation of many children in this ceremony is a sign of future peace. The creation of Europe must help us to maintain peace. Sadly, every day on our European borders, we hear of the dramatic exodus of people fleeing conflict and suppression.

Madame Henriette Hanotte, you spent much of your youth in Bachy, for your schooling and your passion for the violin. Your relations at school provided you with a role you could never have dreamed of at the time: very active membership of the Resistance Network BACHY-RUMES, the 1940-45 war - the history of our two communes.

The presence at this ceremony of family members of rescued airmen, & the presence of "Comète" Resistance members, is proof of the gratitude they have towards you.

Madame Henriette Hanotte, thanks to your courage and *sang-froid*, you saved the life of many airmen. For these acts of courage, and as an example for our young people, in the name of the Municipal Council, I bestow the title of Honourary Citizen of Bachy Commune.

You merit collective gratitude as you have, by your personal activities and exemplary service, contributed to the development of the resistance network against the occupying forces.

My congratulations to you and your family, who must be very proud of you on this day.

Philippe Delcourt - Mayor of Bachy