

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

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EVENT

CegeSoma launches its first WIKIPEDIA marathon... A study day dedicated to the writing or correcting of articles related to the history of the Second World War. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (<http://www.cegesoma.be>

/cms/index_en.php?article=3642&pag0nbr=29&pagofs=0)

PUBLICATIONS

A wide range of publications to mark the end of the IAP Justice and Populations. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

(http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3649)

ARCHIVES

The inventory of the archives of the Royal National Federation of Veterans of the Piron Brigade is finally accessible. Immerse yourself in the memory of a mythical Belgian military unit which distinguished itself in Normandy, the south of the Netherlands and Brussels. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (<http://www.cegesoma.be>

/cms/index_en.php?article=3644)

RESEARCH

Call for participation in the research project TRANSMEMO dedicated to family memory of resistance and collaboration. [\[MORE INFO\]](#) (http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3650&pag0nbr=29&pagofs=0)

CegeSoma Embraces the Wikipedia Adventure

On 18 December, CegeSoma organized its first 'Wikipedia marathon'.

As everyone knows, Wikipedia is a multilingual online encyclopedia that is available to anyone who wishes to use it and correct it. The project is part of a bigger project: Wikimedia. Apart from the encyclopedia, there is also Wikisource for original documents, Wikidata for databases, Wikimedia Commons for photographs, Wikinews, Wiktionnaire etc.



The purpose of Wikimedia and its derivatives, which are essential tools for internet users, is to 'bring together all human knowledge and to make it freely available to everyone' (1). Very specifically, Wikipedia consists of about 35 million articles in 285 languages, 21 billion consulted articles pro month, 500 million visitors pro month, 9 million contributions pro month and 21 million files on Wikimedia Commons (2).

Wikimedia works with cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries and offers support and tailor-made assistance to carry out projects in exchange for the online availability of the data. In this way, an institution can contribute to the creation of content or make collections online available. Wikipedia offers the institution better visibility and allows the valorization of the digitized collections.

What is a Wikipedia marathon and why did we organize it?

A Wikipedia marathon, sometimes referred to as edit-a-thon, is a meeting where different persons, experts and authors, contribute to the editing or correcting of existing Wikipedia pages. The authors are supported by a Wikipedia volunteer who trains the participants and shows them how to write articles in the 'Wikipedia style'.

On 18 December, some fifteen collaborators of the State Archives have joined others to enrich Wikipedia by writing new articles or correcting existing ones, with the help of an expert of Wikimedia Belgium. The purpose is to make the knowledge on the Second World War better known and more available.



The result : some twenty articles on the Second World War have been edited or corrected, in French or in Dutch. The new articles concern *Les amis du Grand Reich Allemand*, the Military Prosecutor Office, the 'Certificate of Good Citizenship', *Mouvement national populaire wallon*, *Gardes wallonnes*, *Département Sécurité et Information (DSI)*, *Sipho*, *Communauté culturelle wallonne*. The corrected notes relate to the following themes: the Belgian legislative elections of 1936, *Radio Bruxelles*, *Le Soir*, *Le Nouveau Journal*, the fortress of Huy, *de Duitsch-Vlaamsche Arbeidsgemeenschap*, Rolf Wilkenning, *Rexisme*, *Pays Réel*, ... A succesful first adventure that will undoubtedly be followed up.

Isabelle Ponteville & Chantal Kesteloot
22.1.2018

(1) 'Comment travailler avec succès avec Wikipedia. Un guide à l'usage des galeries, des bibliothèques, des archives et des musées', Bruxelles, 2015, p. 2

(2) *Ibidem*.

IAP Justice and Populations finalized with a rich selection of publications

On 20 December 2017, CegeSoma organized the last event in the context of the IAP 'Justice and Populations': an international workshop on the research of IAP-collaborator Dr. Jan Julia Zurné with regard to the 'liberation murders' in the court district of Brussels.



Presentation of the book of JJ Zurné - CegeSoma - 29.11.2017.

10-43.

Jan Julia studied the way in which justice dealt with murders of alleged collaborators that could be linked to the resistance in the first months after the liberation in the court district of Brussels. Since this phenomenon was not limited to Belgium, foreign researchers were asked to reflect on the research of Jan Julia Zurné: Jean Marc Berlière and Henk Termeer debated with her and Xavier Rousseaux, promotor of the IAP, added a long-term perspective. Jan Julia will include these comments in the article she has dedicated to the question and which has been submitted to the editorial board of an international specialized journal.

This is not the only scientific output of the IAP, a project which started in 2012. The IAP researchers of CegeSoma were authors or co-authors of several publications.

Jan Julia Zurné wrote a book destined for a wide audience on the magistracy and the resistance during the Second World War in Belgium, based on her doctoral thesis which was written in the context of the IAP: Jan Julia Zurné, *Tussen twee vuren, Gerecht en verzet tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2017.

Previously, she had developed a case study in the *JBH*: Jan Julia- Zurné, 'Een "bedrijfsongeval" met verregaande gevolgen. Het parket van Brussel en de zaak-Predom 1942-1947', in: *Journal of Belgian History*, 46:3/4, 2016, p.

Mélanie Bost, who also worked as a researcher in the context of the IAP, was one of the editors of the proceedings of a colloquium organized by the IAP on the sources of the military justice. The military justice is primarily known as organizer of the repression after the Second World War, but the sources that were produced by this institution are also relevant for other periods of the history of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Mélanie Bost, Paul Drossens and Stanislas Horvat (eds.), 'Ressources et usages des archives de la Justice militaire = Bronnen en onderzoeksperspectieven in verband met het Militaire Gerecht', in: *Justice & Society*, VII, State Archives, Brussels 2016.

Gerlinda Swillen and Laurence Petrone were associated researchers with the IAP. Gerlinda Swillen published a book based on her thesis on 'War Children', a group that was confronted with numerous legal problems. Gerlinda Swillen, *De wieg van de Tweede Wereldoorlog : Oorlogskinderen op de as Brussel-Berlijn*, VUBPress, Brussels, 2016. Laurence Petrone did international comparative research on extrajudicial deprivation of liberty between 1914 and 1940, a question which has gained relevance in the context of terrorism. Laurence Petrone, 'Democratie in crisis. Een anatomie van de buitengerechtelijke vrijheidsberoving in West-Europa (1914-1940)', in: *Studies in Belgian History 3*, State Archives, Brussels, 2017.

Public history

The IAP's core business is academic research, but the project has also led to a number of publications for a wider audience. *Les mots de la justice*, Mardaga, Brussels, 2017 explains the legal jargon in an understandable language and in this way makes the judicial system comprehensible, connecting past and present. The book *Papy était-il un Nazi?*, of which the co-promotor of the IAP is one of the co-authors, explains how sources that give information on persons involved in repression and purges can be found and used. Koen Aerts, Dirk Luyten, Bart Willems, Paul Drossens, Pieter Lagrou, *Papy était-il un Nazi? Sur les traces d'un passé de guerre*, Bruxelles, Racine, 2017.

Finally, the website Belgium WW II (www.belgiumwwii.be) has a legal component, which has for the most part been realized by IAP researcher Tamar Cachet. All these publications, except *Les mots de la justice* can be ordered at CegeSoma. More information can be found [here](#).

Dirk Luyten
19.1.2018

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Inventory of the Archives of the The Royal National Federation of Veterans of the Piron Brigade

The memory of a legendary Belgian military unit finally accessible

When the activities of certain military units ceased after the German capitulation of May 1945, their members often felt the need to continue to reunite and keep the memories of their sacrifices alive. The acquisition and inventorization of archives of associations such as The Royal National Federation of Veterans of the Piron Brigade, are therefore particularly important to CegeSoma.



Marshal Bernard Montgomery congratulates Colonel Jules Piron in the presence of the Brigade reunited on the 'Grand Place' of Brussels, on 10 March 1945, CegeSoma/SA, photo n° 26.537.

The Piron Brigade, an emblem of the resistance

With the arrival of numerous young people eager to fight the occupier, the extended Belgian Forces in Great Britain are officially put at the disposal of the Allies in June 1942. The restructuring of the ground forces at the end of 1942 sees the creation of the First Belgian Group under the direction of Major Jean-Baptiste Piron, incorporated in the British army. From March 1943, the unit is supplemented by the Luxembourg volunteers.

The group, now a brigade, lands in Normandy between 30 July and 8 August 1944, and carries out its first mission on 9 August. The brigade Piron, as they are now called, fights in Normandy till the end of the month. On 2 September, it is ordered to reach Brussels as soon as possible and it enters the city as liberator on 4 September. It consequently liberates other Belgian cities and enters the Netherlands on 22 September. Relieved from the Dutch front lines on 17 November, it returns there in April 1945, and from May to December 1945 occupies a sector of the British area in Nordrhein-Westfalen. It is renamed the First Belgian Brigade 'Liberation' and is finally stationed at the barracks of Leopoldsborg. It provides the basis of the new Belgian army that throughout the Cold War will occupy a segment of the West-German territory between the Belgian frontier and the Iron Curtain.

The Royal National Federation of Veterans of the Piron Brigade, a dynamic structure

The Royal National Federation of Veterans of the Piron Brigade is created in 1947. Its goal is to regroup all those who fought with the First Brigade to establish bonds of comradeship, to provide moral and material support and to preserve their prestige and interests. It wishes to maintain close relations with the other groups of the Belgian Forces in Great Britain in order to coordinate their actions. The national federation has an administration on the national level and organizations on the provincial level. It is assisted by two associations in its endeavour to convey the memory of the Piron Brigade to a wide public. Finally, it is a member of coordinating organizations such as the Belgian Forces in Great Britain and the Front unique des anciens combattants which help to better defend its patriotic, moral and material interests with the authorities.

The archives, between commemoration and the present

The gift in 2006, and again in 2013, of the archives of the national administration of the Federation allows a fairly complete insight into the organization and activities of the former members of the Brigade since the creation of the Federation in 1947 until a quite recent date. The 2,2 running metres of documents show its involvement in the commemorations of the liberation of Normandy, the south of the Netherlands and Belgium. The numerous files relating to the liberation of Brussels in particular demonstrate its wish, and undoubtedly also of the Brussels authorities, to keep alive the memory of its share in the liberation of the capital.

Although the articles of association forbid any activities in the political sphere, the Federation does take a position on questions of amnesty and separatism, as well as show support for the royal family. This led to friction between the national Federation and some of its provincial organizations. Furthermore, of the coordinating and related organizations, we mostly received documents originating from the Belgian Forces in Great Britain. Finally, numerous publications of the National Federation and its provincial organizations have been transferred to the library of CegeSoma.

The inventory of this valuable archive is available [here](#).



Tribute to the Unknown Soldier by the former members of the Piron Brigade, probably in 1957. In the foreground, the wartime Prime Minister, Hubert Pierlot, CegeSoma/SA, photo n° 32.537.

[Fabrice Maerten](#)

19.1.2018

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CegeSoma is looking for families who want to participate in a new research project on family memories of resistance and collaboration

In the context of the latest project on family memories of resistance and collaboration in Belgium, which CegeSoma has started in cooperation with Ghent University and the UCL, we are looking for families who are willing to share their family history and their war memories.

TRANSMEMO is an interdisciplinary federal project in which historians and researchers in social and cognitive sciences are participating. The project is supported by the Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO).

Although during the past two decades, certain historical myths on the national history of the Second World War have been deconstructed by researchers, the historical legacy remains a source of division between political groups and linguistic communities. The absence of a common national or patriotic war memory is striking, and contrasting with the still dominant, but historically incorrect perception of a collaborationist Flanders and a Wallonia that resisted. Studies on the origin and development of these memories focus in particular on the way in which these memories have been promoted and admitted in the public space.



The grandfather, Fund war children : family photo (1942-...), CegeSoma/AGR, reserved rights, photo N° 566.104.

To better understand the mechanisms and the continuing effects of this divergent memory, the TRANSMEMO project studies an area as yet largely unexplored in Belgium: the intergenerational transmission of these memories within the Belgian families. Which stories are being told in Belgian families after the Second World War? How are these stories transmitted to the next generations? How do these stories evolve in the context of the family and how are they appropriated by each individual, in function of his or her trajectory and social context? These are the key questions of the TRANSMEMO project.

In the context of this project we are actively looking for Francophone families to help us: CegeSoma and the UCL are undertaking the French-language part of the project, Ghent University the Dutch-language part. We would like to get in touch with families who meet the following criteria:

- Families where three generations (one person per generation) are willing to take part in the project
- The oldest member of the family must be born before 1936 and be the son or daughter of a person whose resistance activities are recognized (by the family, a particular community or the Belgian state) or of whom a parent has been found guilty of collaboration after the war (by the family, a community or the Belgian justice).

The TRANSMEMO project guarantees full anonymity of all participants.

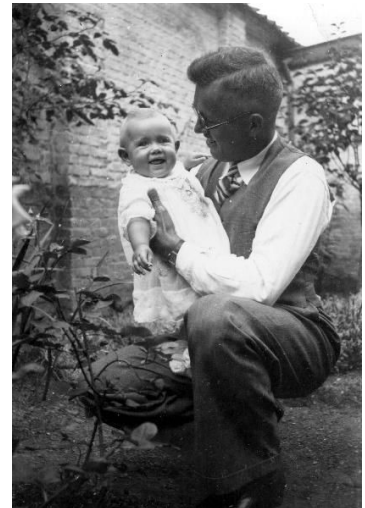
If you are interested to participate in the project, please contact :

- Aline Cordonnier (UCL) : aline.cordonnier@uclouvain.be, 010 47 23 49
- Florence Rasmont (CEGES) : florence.rasmont@arch.be, 02 556 92 07

We thank you in advance for your testimony and your interest in our project.

The members of the Transmemo team : Bruno De Wever (UGent), Koen Aerts (Ugent), Nico Wouters (CegeSoma), Olivier Luminet (UCL), Valérie Rosoux (UCL), Florence Rasmont (CegeSoma), Aline Cordonnier (UCL) and Pierre Bouchat (UCL).

Florence Rasmont
22.1.2018



Sint-Niklaas, July 1940, Hildegard with her dad, after his return from internment, Fund war children, daily life in Flanders (1940-1945), CegeSoma/AGR, reserved rights, photo N° 258.494.

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