

THE STATUE OF MIRANDA (1930)

Francisco de MIRANDA came from Venezuela to France for the second time in March 1792. He was appointed Brigadier of the Meuse army under the advice of Danton.

After military successes, he was made general and he took part in the artillery fight.

Back in South America together with Bolivar, he fought for the independence of his country. He was defeated by the Spanish and he died in Cadix in 1816 on ...Bastille Day .

THE BUST OF BOLIVAR

General Simon Bolivar took up Miranda's action and freed Venezuela from the Spanish domination for the 2nd time. That is the reason why his chest was set in 1983 in front of Miranda's statue.

In memory of these events, the ambassador of Venezuela sometimes attends the festival in Valmy.

DID THE BATTLE OF VALMY REALLY TOOK PLACE ?

Historians put several theories forward to explain that the battle of Valmy was no more than an artillery fight :

- *Bad weather, sick soldiers (according to the legend of the green grapes), diplomatic and financial agreements.*
- *Free Masonry.*

THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC

In those days, the battle of Valmy went virtually unnoticed, however it brought about the first republic on the 21st of september 1792.

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VALMY

Visit of the site

THE WINDMILL

This present windmill is the fourth since 1792.

The first one, which was not situated exactly on this spot, was destroyed on the day of the battle under Kellermann's orders because it was a target point for the enemy artillery. It was rebuilt with the reparation money, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was demolished, like all windmills in France because it had become of no use.

In 1939, on the 150th anniversary of the battle, a windmill which had been bought in Flanders was re-erected but because of the 2nd world war, it was not inaugurated until the 20th of September 1947.

During the bicentenary festival, a huge ferris wheel was set up. As it rotated, it symbolized the long forgotten movement of the slats.

It had been designed so that it could rotate on its central axis in order to face the wind. But time passed and damages were caused and the windmill had to be placed upon a concrete base and has often been restaured.

The windmill was destroyed by the storm on the 26th december 1999. A new windmill, built in the factory of Villeneuve d'Ascq (North of France), has been especially convoyed up to the site on the 1st of april 2005. It is now possible to see it mowing wheat and producing flour like in 1792.

The wings are covered with canvas when the windmill works.

THE BATTLE FIELD

Four orientation tables show the position of the troops.

The center of the enemy were positioned on the " Côte de la Lune " (200m. high) about 2 km away as the crow flies as the French army was near the windmill.

The battlefield was very hilly. Notice the steep slope leading to the small wood. Furthermore, heavy rains had hindered the cavalry charge.

There were no crops on this land but sheep grazed there. The tradition of the Noël des Bergers (Shepherds' Christmas) in Braux Sainte Cohière was kept a long time but is not celebrated any longer.

THE ARMIES

Around 50000 professional soldiers and volunteers made up the French army.

As for the enemy it numbered 42000 Prussians, 49000 Austrians, 6000 Hessians, 15000 emigrants.

THE CHAPEL

The chapel shelters the ashes of Princess Ginetti, Kellermann's great grand daughter and daughter of Edmond Kellermann who helped with his own money to fit out the site. She had funded the development of the site.

Take a look at the coat of arms with the crescent moon. Incidentally, the battle has for a long time been called " Bataille de la lune " (Battle of the moon).

THE STONE PYRAMID

In this monument, the heart of the famous general is kept within a lead box.

As can be read on the inscription, Kellermann wanted his heart to rest in company of his brave soldiers. The remains of the general's body were buried in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

GENERAL KELLERMANN'S STATUE

BARRAU, the sculptor carved the statue of the general. In his left hand, he is seen to be holding a hat with blue, white and red feathers, and in his right hand, his famous cry " VIVE LA NATION " (Long live the nation) to uplift the spirit of his troops.

The monument was inaugurated in 1892 on the anniversary of the first centenary of the battle.

François, Christophe KELLERMANN , from Strasburg, was 57 years old on the day of the battle. He was the general in chief of the central army.

BONAPARTE appointed him marshal in 1804 and Duke of VALMY in 1808. At the time of the Restaurations, he was made PEER of France. He died in 1820 aged 85.

GOETHE'S FAMOUS WORDS

On the Eastern side of the monument, you can read these words : " From this day, and this place dates a new era in world's history ".

Goethe was born in 1749, a German writer and politician, followed the armies and understood the full significance of the battle of VALMY.

THE CANNONS AROUND THE MONUMENT

These cannons were not used during the battle as is engraved upon the shaft. They are English guns taken from Dutch ship by general PICHEGRY in 1795 at the Helder battle in the Low Countries (actual Netherlands). The French Army was equipped with the brand new GRIBEAUVAL guns, named after their designer, the same guns which will lead Napoleon to victory.

NO STATUE FOR DUMOURIEZ

Aged 53, Dumouriez was general in chief of the armies. After Valmy, he won the battle of Jemmapes and conquered Belgium. After the defeat of Nerwinden, and for other reasons, he went over to the enemy in 1793. He died in England in 1823 and left Kellermann alone to be honoured for the victory of Valmy.

No statue had been erected in his memory.