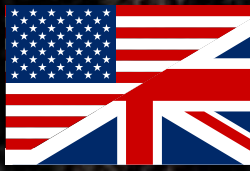
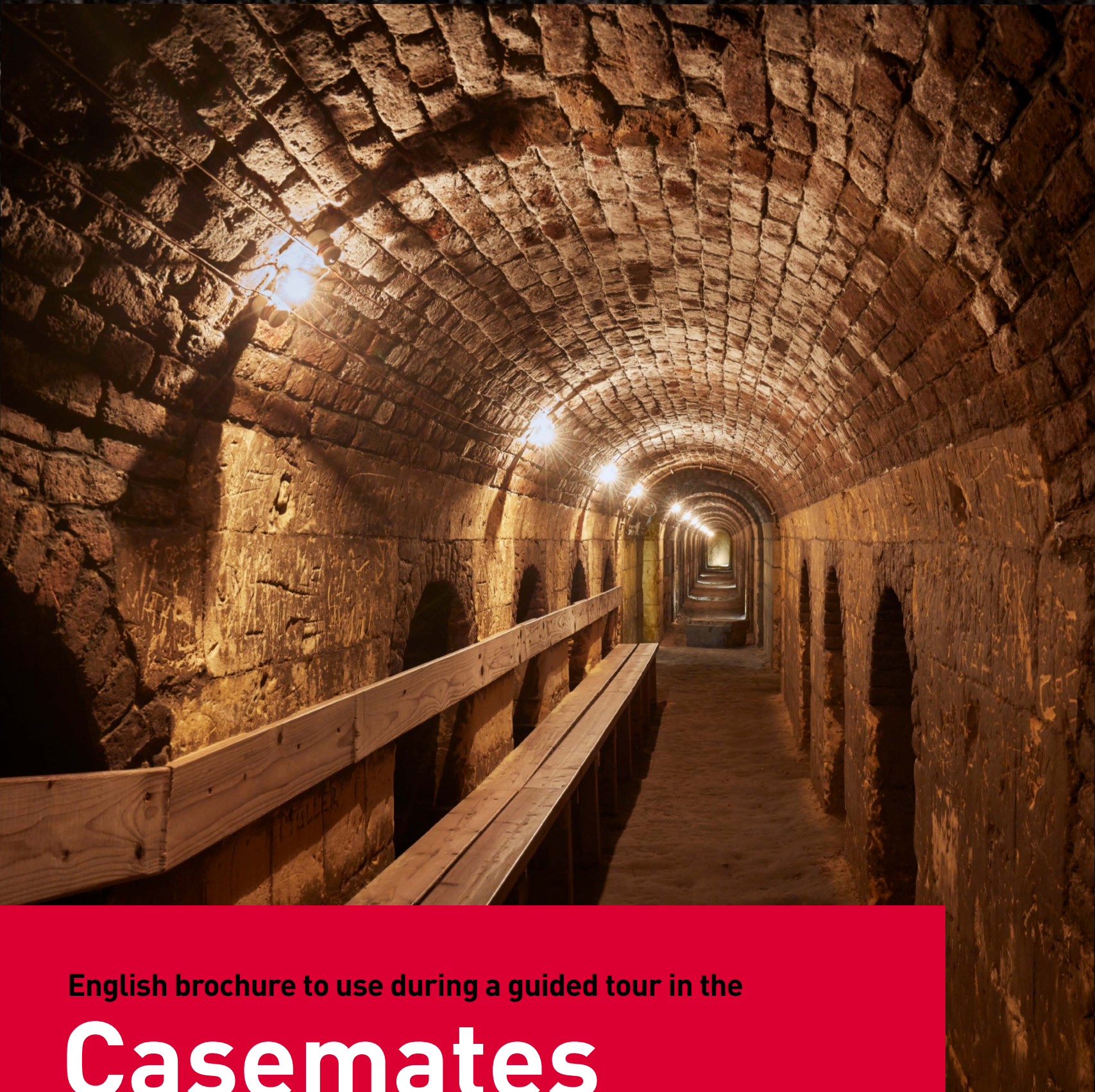


maastricht under ground



FORT | CAVES | CASEMATES



English brochure to use during a guided tour in the

Casemates



maastrichtunderground.nl

MENU

MENU 



WELCOME
& SAFETY



OUTSIDE
INTRODUCTION



IN THE
WALDECK
CAPONIER



DOME BELOW
WALDECK
BASTION



CONNECTING
PASSAGE FROM
WALDECK TO
DRENTHE



DRENTHE
CAPONIER



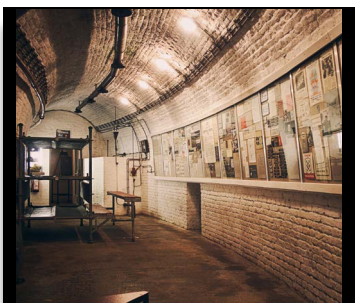
ON THE
BENCHES



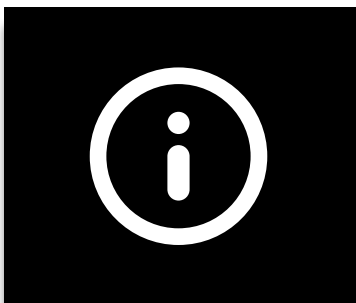
IN THE
WILCKE
CAPONIER



WORLD WAR II
EXHIBITION



COLD WAR
EXHIBITION



MORE
INFORMATION

WELCOME TO THE MAASTRICHT CASEMATES

MENU 



On behalf of Maastricht Underground we extend to you a warm welcome to the Casemates.

In this document we describe the highlights you may encounter during the guided tour. The guide will point out these highlights, →

allowing you to look up all relevant information in this document. Some of the stops are not listed in this document and some stops described in this document are not part of the tour. The guide will have to be selective in painting a varied and full picture of events that happened at this location through the centuries. On various guided tours you will be visiting different locations! Please feel free to ask questions.

We hope you will enjoy the guided tour!

SAFETY

[MENU](#) 

First of all we ask your attention for some safety aspects:

- ⚠ Some floors are uneven. Please take care when walking on such floors.
- ⚠ Please stay with your group and follow the directions given by your guide.
- ⚠ Please do not touch the walls or any objects on the walls.



OUTSIDE INTRODUCTION

You are now standing in a so-called 'dry moat' as part of the outdoor structures of the former Maastricht fortress. These fortifications outside the city wall consist of wall-covered earthworks (the high wall on the city side), moats and bunkers with embrasures. From these bunkers (caponiers), soldiers used muskets to fire along the →

bastion walls. Moats on the western side (this side) of the city could not hold any water as they were partly dug out on a hill. As a defence strategy, bullets were used, rather than water in the moats. Everywhere along the entire western side of the city were pentagonal bastions pointing towards the enemy. Their walls were covered from caponiers across the moat. These bunkers are connected through underground passages covering a distance of about 14 kilometres (= 8.7 miles). All of this was built to defend Maastricht against an underground approach of enemy troops. The red door gives access to this 18th Century system.



IN THE WALDECK CAPONIER

Many illustrations paint a picture of the city, particularly of the ever changing (outside) fortifications throughout the centuries. A spot has also been reserved for d'Artagnan, the best-known of the three musketeers from the books written by Alexandre Dumas, who got killed at the age of 62 near this location during the siege of King Louis XIV in 1673. →

A large part of the arrangement concerns the subterranean passageways, communication corridors (to the city) and the so-called 'galeries d'ecoute', meaning listening corridors. From these listening arcades, soldiers could trace and defuse the enemy's proximity mines.

Throughout the tunnels you will see small rooms dug out of the walls. These are powder magazines, which were used for storing gunpowder kegs during a siege.

Be careful inside the passageways:
low ceilings and uneven floors!



IN THE DOME BELOW THE WALDECK BASTION

On your way to this assembly point below the dome under the Waldeck bastion, you will have noticed many shallow, arched recesses on either side of the passageway.

These recesses are on both sides of the listening and communication tunnels. In the passageways only on the field enemy side of the corridor. The brickwork in the back of these recesses is only one half a brick deep and could easily be removed to create a quick opening for digging countermines. →



MENU

You will see a hole in the top of the dome-shaped assembly point, where soldiers from the city entered through the (unnumbered) communication tunnels and waited to be deployed. This was connected via an 8-metre long ventilation tube to the top of the bastion, from which point people could monitor and communicate the position and activities of the enemy.

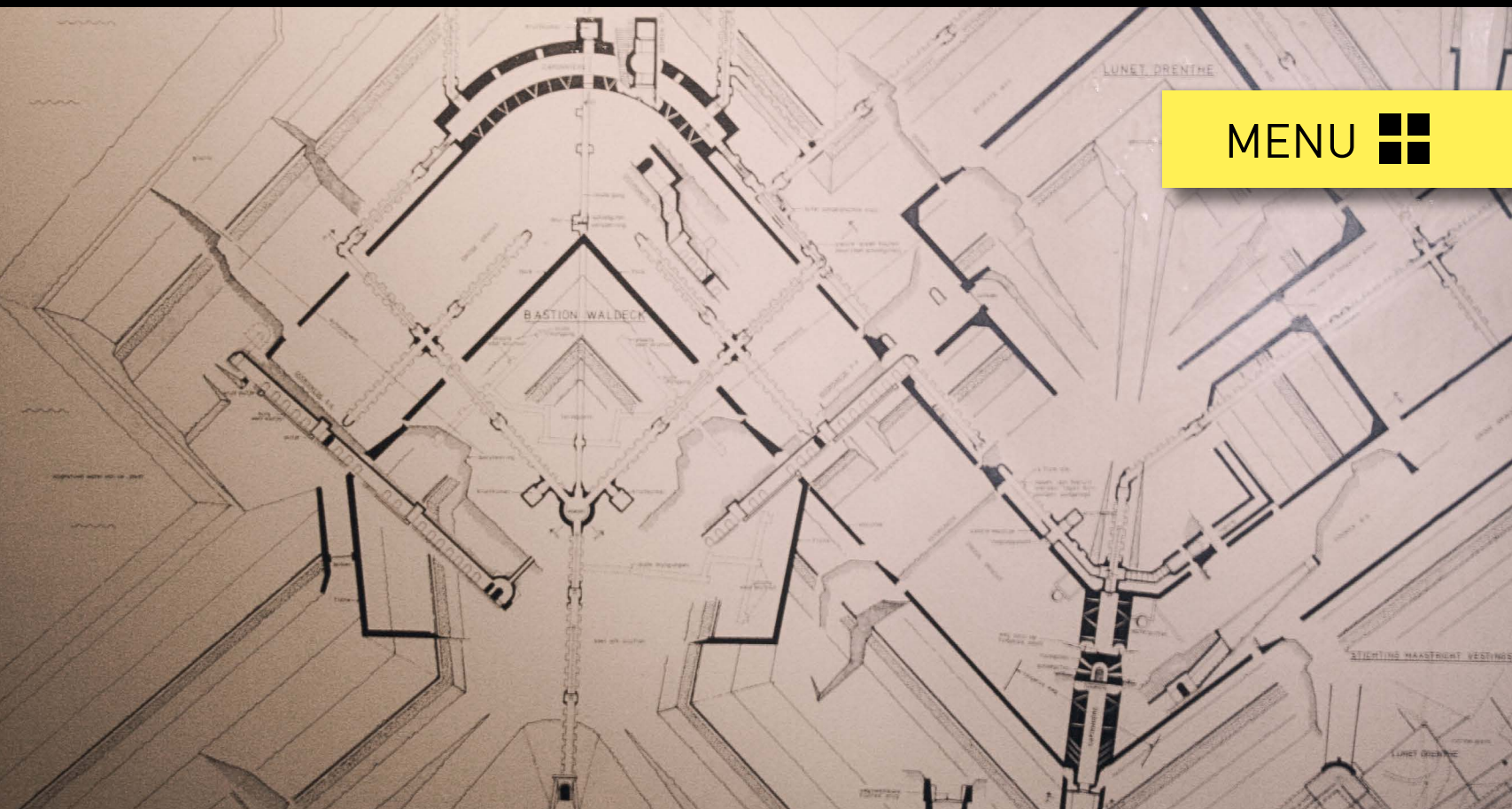
It also helped the engineers to pin-point the location for new tunnels. The tube was used to pass on the information to an officer down on the ground, who would then instruct his men on digging the tunnel.



CONNECTING PASSAGE FROM WALDECK TO DRENTHE (WITH ELECTRIC LIGHT)

On the right-hand side of this connecting passage you will notice electric light and on the left-hand side a water main; both were constructed during the Cold War. Walking along the walls, you will pass many inscriptions from the 19th Century. The oldest inscription, dating back from the time the system was built, is on the left-hand side in this passageway (MT 1776). →

It is not possible to get lost in this system as long as you remember that the 'closed' wall on your right is the city side (with no looming enemies) and the wall on your left (with its many recesses) is the field side. Just keep walking and keep the closed wall on your left or on your right, and you will always find a way out.



IN THE DRENTHE CAPONIER

Other than the semi-circular bunkers across the points of the bastions, this rectangular shaped caponier had embrasures on either side. This was possible (and necessary!) because the bunker was built in the dry moat as a bridge to and from a gate. →

From these embrasures the troops were able to cover the moat with gunfire in both directions and on either side. (crossfire)

This map shows you the passageways you have walked up to now, including the side views. Your guided tour below the Waldeck bastion started from the semi-circular bunker. At the bottom right you can clearly recognise the (rectangular) Drenthe caponier, where you are right now.

When you leave this room, please mind the low ceiling and the steps.



ON THE BENCHES

During World War II, locals used the corridors and bunkers of this system for shelter from air-raids and bombings.

Over the centuries, the system has proved its usefulness as a bombproof area and also in the war years 1940-1945 it was considered a safe shelter. Up to 15,000 civilians regularly used the place for that purpose. →

Benches, like the one you are sitting on right now, were installed in all passageways. This form of lighting is from the same era.

Close to the end of the war, the allied forces also bombed the city (specifically aimed at the bridges across the river Meuse) so the population had to flee to underground shelters time and again. Many civilians brought food and water; they stayed underground for a number of days to weather through the acts of war. As many as 25,000 people have used the tunnels as a place of shelter! All who stayed in these corridors survived unharmed.



NAAR SCHUILPLAATS
WERELDOORLOG 2
ZUM LUFTSCHUTZRAUM

IN THE WILCKE CAPONIER

Today, this caponier (Wilcke) has been split into two parts. Turn left for a small museum-style exhibition using various materials and photographs in display cabinets for an impression of people taking shelter during World War II.

Or turn right and enter the section that revolves around the Cold War. Once again, it has not been our intention to present a full exhibition but rather to express the mood of this menacing era.



WORLD WAR II EXHIBITION

The first display case contains part of the first newspaper (“Limburger”) published during the German occupation (17 May 1940), starting with: “After a 150-year period of relative calm, the city entered into an historic adventure once again...”. People had no idea of what was yet to come, but the following display cases show the destruction as a result of a British aircraft dropping a bomb on this area. →

Widespread devastation, many casualties and injured people, but those who managed to take shelter in the basement of their house or in the tunnels survived this enormous blow.

Take a closer look in one of the display cases for a photograph of St Nicholas (Dutch childrens tradition) visiting the casemates; all efforts were made to ‘keep the spirits high’. For instance, with the formation of a “bomb shelter cabaret group”.

In the back of this area (behind the walls) were the subterranean sanitary facilities, ranging from a primitive excrement bucket to a so-called peat dust toilet.

Return via the back of the arrangement and you will see a number of (original) propaganda posters from the war years.



MENU

COLD WAR EXHIBITION

This collection gives an insight into the measures that were taken in the years from 1965 to 1992. Part of the facility remained intact. The fixtures and fittings included an air-dryer, a brick container for the water supply and the ventilation system with a carbon filter.

The space between the two halves of the caponier is filled with seven types of sand that worked as an air filter. →

Clean air would be blown into the indoor area through the black discs on the ceiling.

The bunk beds in this area came in the form of kit sets and had to be put together by those who had taken refuge. In the display cabinets are objects such as food parcels (cans and crackers), various types of emergency lighting, dosimeters and a wireless set on which the main radio stations were marked.

A large part of the 'wall of thoughts' is taken up by matters informing the public about the operations of Civil Defence. In the event of calamities, this organisation of civilians would be in control and provide the population with basic needs. →

Fortunately, there has never been an urgent need for these areas; 1989 saw the destruction of the Berlin Wall and in 1992 all such shelters have been dismantled.

Knowing what we know now, this form of civil defence would never have been an effective protection. But it has been very useful after all, if only for reassuring the citizens who believed they would survive unharmed in these shelters in the event of a (nuclear) calamity.

MORE INFORMATION

MENU 

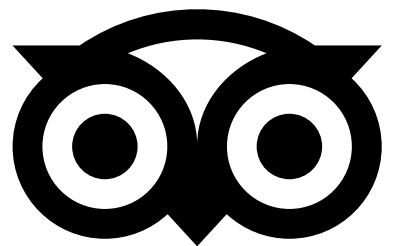
We have come to the end of this guided tour through the Casemates. We hope you enjoyed your walk in this authentic part of the city of Maastricht. We would like to hear your opinion on this guided tour. To do so, please go to the **[Tripadvisor – Maastricht Underground](#)**

For information on other locations of Maastricht Underground, go to **www.maastrichtunderground.nl** or ask your guide.

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