

The Erasmus mag'

2ème mobilité: Wormhout, en France

WOMEN IN THE FRENCH RESISTANCE



During the Second World War, many women succumbed to the charm of the Nazis but other women remained loyal to France. There were between 80.000 and 100.000 Franco-German babies during the war. Some women were shaven because they were married to Germans or because they had had a relationship with them. Most of the women were teenagers or middle-aged when they began to get involved in the Resistance and they came from different backgrounds (aristocratic, working-class..).



In the movie entitled Female Agents, Louise, a woman involved in the French Resistance, is hired by the SOE (Special Operation Executive). She has to save a British agent captured by the Germans. In order to do this, she has to set up a commando group composed of women. Suzy, Gaëlle, Jeanne and Maria, are chosen. They succeed in saving the British agent but afterwards they are given a new mission: killing German Colonel Heindrich. Once again, these female agents are successful but this time, only Louise survives.



Role of the media in the resistance during the Second World War

Newspapers

A newspaper entitled 'La Voix du Nord' was created on 5 September 1944 by a Belgian press group called the Rossel group. 'La Voix du Nord' used to be a clandestine newspaper. Its name came from the name given to a French resistance movement.

The first newspaper was published (clandestinely) on April 1st, 1941.

The headline of the first official newspaper was 'La région du Nord est libre'. In this first newspaper, there was a sentence which said:

'On ne transige pas avec le devoir et avec l'honneur, on ne pactise pas avec le mal, on ne collabore pas avec l'ennemi.'

'One does not compromise with duty and honour, one does not pacify with evil, one does not cooperate with the enemy'



The first copy of 'La Voix du Nord'
'La region du Nord est libre'
(5th September 1941)

Jules Noutour was at the head of the resistance movement called 'La Voix du Nord'. He co-created 'La Voix du Nord' with Natalis Dumez. Both of them were involved in the resistance. Noutour died on February 1st, 1945 after being deported to Gross Rosen



Jules NOUTOUR
(12th December 1897 – 1st February 1945)

Natalis DUMEZ
(17th April 1890 - 25th September 1976)





Clandestine newspapers used coded messages to spread the messages from General de Gaulle.

In 1943, two resistance movements were organized in the Nord Pas De Calais. There were «La Voix du Nord » and «L'Organisation civile et militaire » (OCM). The 'Organisation civile et militaire' was a great movement of the French Forces of the Interior and it was one of the eight movements which constituted the French National Council of Resistance (CNR).



Lots of resistance fighters from 'La Voix du Nord' were shot dead, tortured to death, went missing after being deported or were killed on the battle front, which means that more than 530 resistance fighters from 'La Voix du Nord' died.

Eventually, 'La Voix du Nord' became an official newspaper on 5 September 1944.

The Resistance included all the movements and clandestine networks fighting against the Germans and helping the Allies during the Second World War.



There were also other newspapers involved in the Resistance like 'Libération' or 'Combat'.

But they were all censored by the enemy. So they had to use flyers, pamphlets, posters...



Charles de Gaulle
(22th November 1890 – 9th November 1970)
President of the French Republic from January 8, 1959 to April 28, 1969.

Radio

At first, at the beginning of the 20th century, the media used were newspapers and posters. Afterwards, other media were created like the radio or the cinema...

The first clandestine radio was born on 25 December 1940. The radio stations of the countries at war told the truth but often what they said were lies for enemy countries : that is was was called 'la guerre des ondes'.

Radio stations were used to send coded messages : to confirm and start an attack, to tell secret information, to congratulate soldiers...

For example: 'po-po-po-pom' in morse code '••••-' = V for Victory

Everyone knows the words of Charles de Gaulle, who said on 18th June, 1940 :

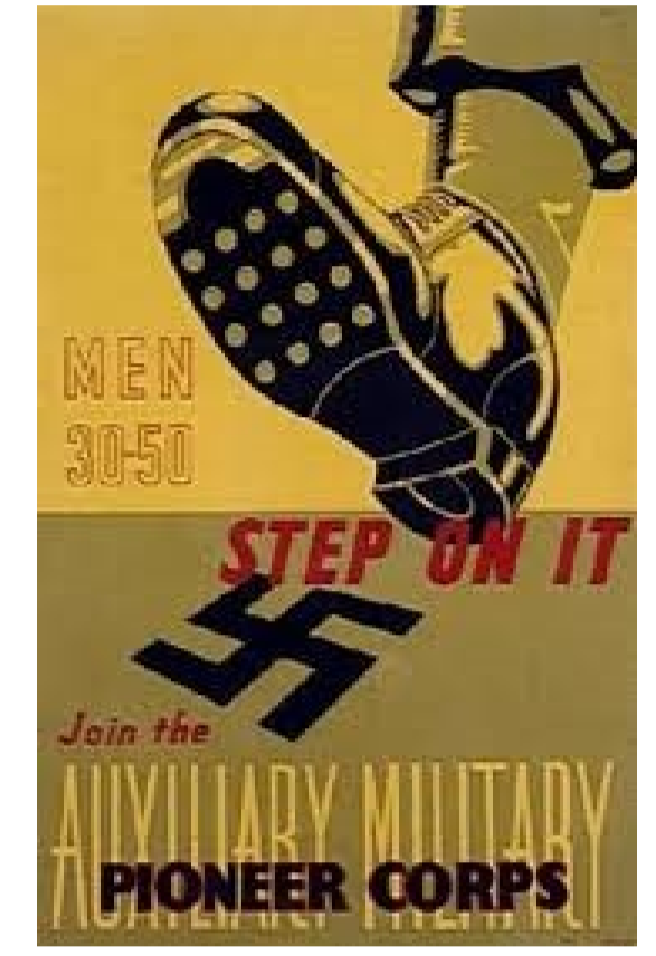
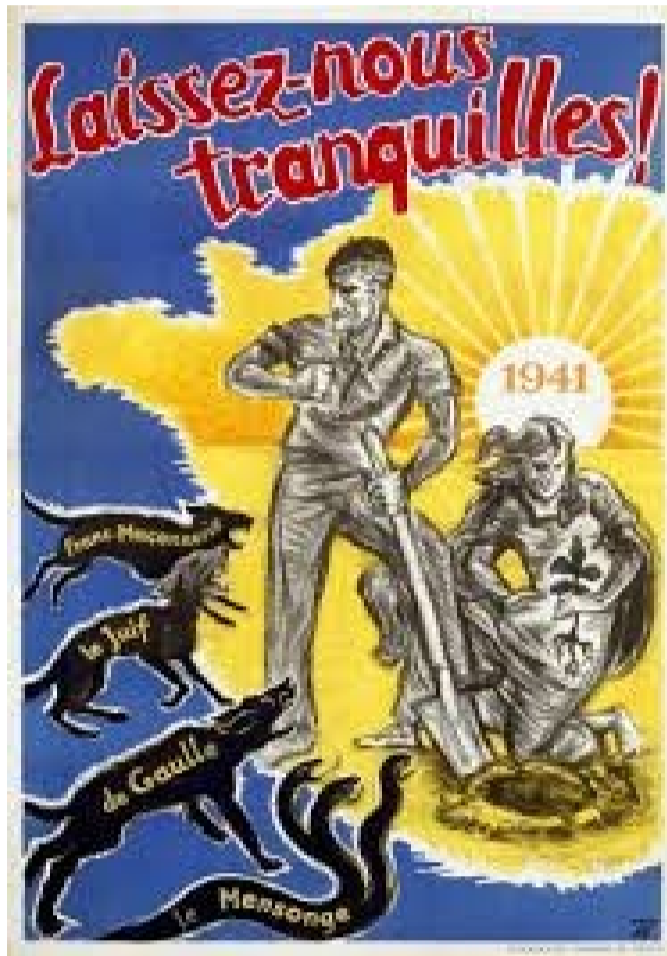
'La France a perdu une bataille! Mais la France n'a pas perdu la guerre !'

☐ 'France has lost a battle! But France has not lost the war!'



Propaganda posters

Propaganda posters were used to spread messages : never give up, national subscriptions to finance the war effort, calls for resistance... The messages were either aggressive or full of sarcasm.



Animals

During the Second World War, 30 million animals were used on the operating grounds. Soldiers needed the help of animals to communicate, locate enemies, carry out bombings... or after the battle. Animals also helped to capture enemies. Some animals got prizes, medals and honors for what they did.

Some examples: geese, dolphins, elephants, foxes, rats, pigeons, seals, seagulls, dogs, cats...



A German-Husky shepherd called 'Chips' was a member of the first War Dog Detachment sent abroad by the United States. He served in the custody of Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt at their meeting at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943.

In Sicily, during the first amphibious assault, Chips and his master, Private John Rowell, landed on the front. The entire detachment was quickly pinned to the beach by machine guns from an enemy bunker. Cornered, Chips charged the enemy. The Italians in the bunker tried to shoot him. One bullet grazed him and another went into his hip. Yet, he kept on fighting and entered the bunker. There were screams, and then a man came out with Chips tightly wrapped around his neck. Then three men came out and surrendered. Chips had captured the soldiers using the machine guns and saved the lives of men who were trapped on the beach.

On November 19, 1943 the dog received the Silver Star for bravery, and the Purple Heart for wounds received in action. At the end of the war, his unity was awarded – unofficially - the Europe-Middle East-Africa campaign medal with eight stars. He later returned to his original family in New York.