



# WORMHOUT

## ERASMUS + MOBILITY IN THE FRANCE

### FRENCH RESISTANCE IN WORLD WAR II

After coming back from the first mobility in Germany, we couldn't wait to experience another adventure-second mobility in France as a part of our mutual project World War II – our history and its cultural legacy. 8 students from each participating country (Czech Republic, Greece, Germany, Poland) met their hosts in a small city of Wormhout, the northern France.

### DAY 1 Arrival in France

After the short flight from Prague we landed at the airport in Paris and we had a chance to stay overnight not to miss the main historical sights. „La Tour Eiffel” was a must see! Together with other beautiful landmarks.



## DAY 2 Acquaintance with female agents

On the second day we headed north to get to Wormhout where our hosts were waiting for us. After visiting school College du Houtland a great pizza party was prepared for us and we met with local authorities. The mayor of Wormhout welcomed us warmly and we spent a nice time with our new friends getting to know each other better. Then to prepare for a project work we watched together a movie Female agents to learn about the role of women in French resistance movement during WW II.

### THE LIAISON OFFICER



*Cécile Rol-Tanguy worked with her husband Henri to co-ordinate the battle for the liberation of Paris. She joined the Resistance aged only 21 and acted as a liaison officer for her husband, sometimes in disguise and under different code names. She would use fake documents to pass through German checkpoints, hide guns, grenades and sensitive documents in a baby carriage.*

*"It was easier to put a revolver or a submachine gun in the bottom of a pram!" "Often afterwards we would think to ourselves 'that was close,' but you don't do anything if you have fear in your stomach. I believed in everything we did," she said. France 24, 2014*

### LES FEMMES DE L'OMBRE

(FEMALE AGENTS, SÍLA ODVAHY)

*Female Agents is an adventurous film from 2008 celebrating the not very known heroics of French women in the Resistance movement. The film took place in wartime France, in the last days of the Nazi occupation. Five French female spies were put together to rescue a British geologist, an undercover agent holding the vital information about the future D-Day landings and eliminate Colonel Heindrich, the head of German counter intelligence who knew too much about a prepared operation.*

*The film was based on true story, the character of Louise was inspired by the real-life Resistance fighter Lise Villameur, whose biography inspired director Jean-Paul Salomé to write the film. The other accomplices are fictional, though Salomé says their histories are drawn from factual accounts of the range of women who fought to emancipate their country from the Nazis.*



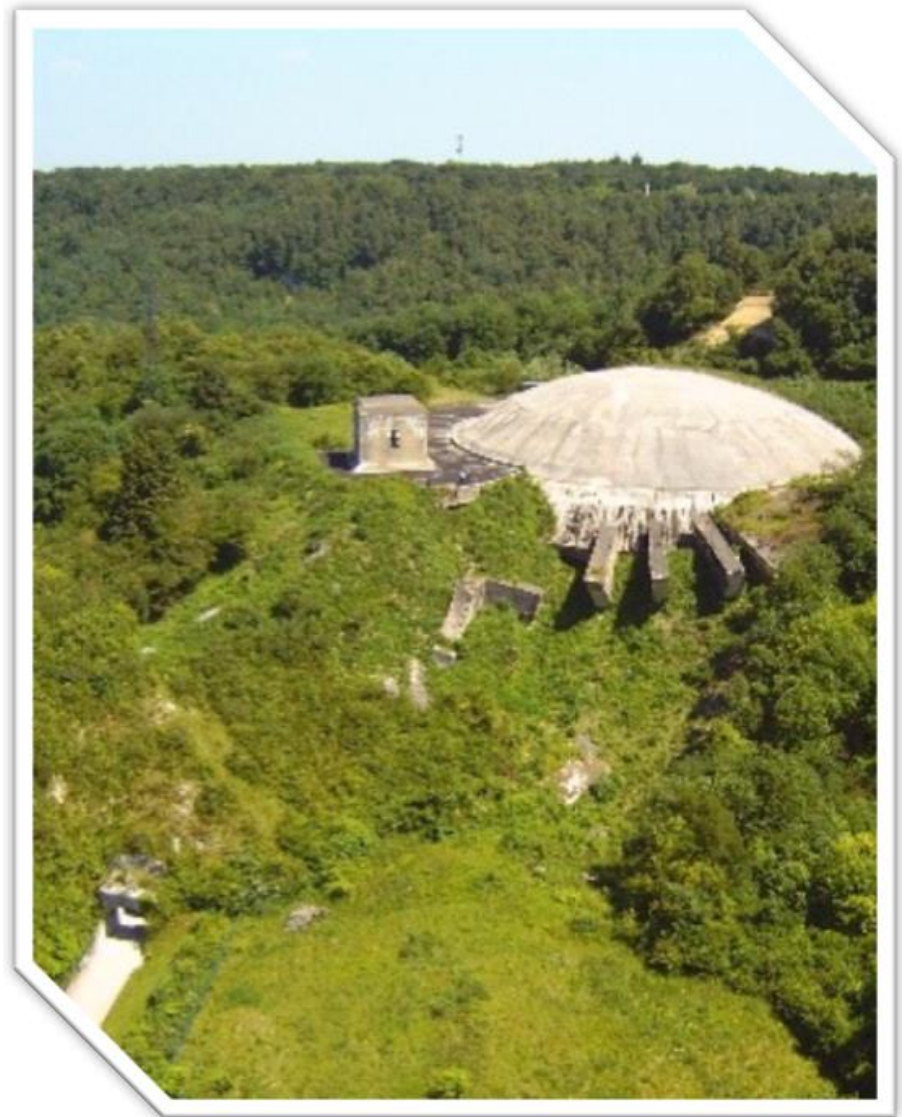
### WHY WOMEN IN FRENCH RESISTANCE MOVEMENT?

Resisting was hard and dangerous work. Women were spies, gunrunners, decoders, forgers. They were engaged in reconnaissance, transmission of messages, support services, and propaganda. Of all the jobs held by women, the liaison agent, or courier, was the most symbolic. Because women were less suspect than men, they were carrying messages on foot or by bicycle, conveying information from supervisors to rank-and-file, transporting arms and ammunition in market baskets and even in baby carriages.

## DAY 3 Visiting La Coupole and Blockhaus of Eperlecques

After spending a night in host families we went on a trip to St.Olmer where students had an extraordinary opportunity to see an old abandoned bunker La Coupole that served as a military base for launching rockets. This symbol of Nazi oppression was later turned into a museum which attracts lots of visitors every year. During the tour around museum, we had to complete the worksheets with questions referring to resistance activities of local inhabitants during WWII.

Afterwards we moved to another bunker in Eperlecques, the biggest of its kind in the northern France. Built by Germans with an intention to launch ballistic missiles, the place was damaged and never completed. Later it was used as a liquid oxygen factory.



## Day 4 War Museum in Calais, Museum of resistance in Bondues

Next day we visited the former Marine Kommando bunker that is located in the middle of the park in the city centre of Calais. The place has been serving as a museum since 1962. The large bunker is divided into 21 rooms and each room has its own theme. We could see a wide variety of uniforms, photos, posters, magazines and other historical objects from the period of German occupation of the city.



### ADOLF VRANA ONE OF THE FEW CZECHS FIGTING IN THE BATTLE OF FRANCE

\* 27. 10. 1908 † 25. 02. 1997

*On arrival in France, Czechoslovak escapees were required to join the French Foreign Legion for a five year period with the agreement that, should war be declared, they would be transferred to French military units. Adolf, with the rank of Sergeant, was at the Legion's barracks at Nanterre, near Paris, awaiting medical examination and documentation to be completed prior to transfer to the Legion's training base at Sidi-bel-Abbès, Algeria. Fortunately for him, war was declared before he was sent to Algeria. Instead, on 9 October he was released from the Legion's service and transferred to l'Armée d'Air at their Paris recruitment centre and then on to Centre d'Instruction de Chasse for re-training on French equipment and to learn a bit of French.*

*Adolf completed his re-training, achieving a further 38 flying hours to add to his record, and on 1 May 1940 was promoted back to the rank of Sergeant within l'Armée d'Air. Among other Czechoslovak pilots were Alois Vašátko and František Peřina, both of whom were to achieve considerable success in combat during the forthcoming Battle of France.*

*The Germans invaded France on 10 May 1940. During the ensuing Battle of France, Adolf flew 30 operational hours, often being scrambled three times a day and achieving combat success during heavy fighting.*



Our last stop was at the Museum of Resistance in Bondues, the former fort occupied by German troops during world wars. During the battle of Britain it became one of the German bases and in 1943-44 french members of Resistance movement were executed there.



## DAY 5 going home

On the last day of our stay we had to say good bye to our new friends, thank to host families for our hospitality and we came back home with new memories and experience.

