

WHY AND UNDER WHAT- CONDITIONS WAS THE RESISTANCE BORN?

By Doctor Jean Lapeyre-Mensignac, person in charge for the
Office of the Operation Air



- 3rd september 1939, France and Great Britain were forced to declare war to nazi germany after the attacks against Poland.
- 10 may 1940, Hitler attacks with overwhelming force, France is invaded.
- 14 june 1940, the Germans enter in Paris, the French are under the shock.
- 17 june 1940, the Marshal PETAIN is called to lead the country, an armistice is requested.
- 18 june 1940 the General De GAULLE made the day before his famous declaration to French people: **"France has lost a battle but has not lost the war"**.



2nd July 1940, after the mass exodus of civilians from the north of France to the south, the great majority of soldiers were made prisoners of war. France was cut in two by a demarcation line. The northern zone occupied by Germans and the southern zone controlled by Petain's government which was installed in Vichy. In 1942, this zone was eventually occupied by the Germans. From the very start and subsequently those who will form the Resistance are not trained combatants, all are volunteers, without uniforms, anonymous and secret. They were faced with crushing German repression run by the feared special police : the Gestapo who were often helped by French collaborators who had been led astray by German propaganda and the Militia created by Vichy. The Gestapo was made up of highly qualified professionals and completely believed in the Nazi ideology, whereas the resistant were practically (amateurs) in this terrifying "war of the shadows". The Resistant quickly learned to their cost that the combat was unequal, but their inexperience was compensated for by their sense of patriotism, thus allowing them to often come out on top, but at a heavy price.

WAS THERE A STANDARD MODEL OF RESISTANCE ? THE ANSWER IS NO.

There was a total diversity of the members of the Resistance at all levels. The Resistance was founded on the convictions and actions of all the members who voluntarily worked and risked their lives everywhere and in everyway to bring about the release of their fatherland: France.

Basically, French Interior Resistance had in its origins two (sources) :

Externally in Great Britain led by de Gaulle in London.
Internally, in France with spontaneous formation of ad hoc movements.

This two currents gradually came together under the direction and authority of de Gaulle too form an entity that played a very active part in the liberation of France. Much of this was achieved by the information provided to the Allied staff throughout the occupation. This information proved to be vital before and after the Allied invasion of Normandy on the 6 June 1944.



FIRST STEPS OF RESISTANCE – SUMMER 1940 UNTIL THE END OF 1941.

In July 1940, the French were crushed materially and morally by the trauma of the capitulation and the following occupation.

WITH LONDON

General De GAULLE organised his staff with in particular: DEWRAVIN (PASSY), ROULIER (REMY), DUCLO (SAINT-JACQUES), FOURCAUD, D'ESTIENNE D'ORVES... These first "men of London" will formed the Central Office of Information and Action.

On July 1940, the first secret envoy lands in France. The BCRA will follow this up with many others "in charge of missions": their job was to recruit volunteers in France to form "networks" which with their clandestine air operations (landings and air-drops) as well as the maritime operations, will become an umbilical cord connecting occupied France to de Gaulle's staff in London, who were in turn connected to the allied staff. At the same time de Gaulle gathers and organises, under sound command, the remainders of the French who had escaped the Germans, with volunteers who gradually join this made up the forces of ground, sea and air known as "Free France" who fought along side the allies until the end of the war on 8 May 1945.

PASSY



IN FRANCE

In July 1940 some people started circulating clandestine leaflets, then small newspapers whose activities will inevitably be reduced. They quickly set up avenues of escape to Spain to join the Free France, these avenues were also used for the French prisoners of war and allied aviators brought down in France. Gradually, here and there, under the leadership of various individuals movements of Resistance were born, some of the units were very extensive and they will become particularly effective.

Henri FRESNAY who writes on august 1940 a very structured proclamation which effectively brought about the birth of the movement "Fights".

Colonel REMY set up a remarkable information network with many ramifications: "la CONFRERIE DE NOTRE-DAME". D'ASTIER DE LA VIGERIE, joined by trade unionists LACOSTE and PINAUT will form the movement known as "Release". MARIE-MADELEINE FOURCADE set up the network "Alliance" and its offshoots one of which will be known as "Noah's Ark".

The OCM (Civil Organisation and Military), the movement "Franc- Tireur", C.D.L.R (those of the Resistance), etc...

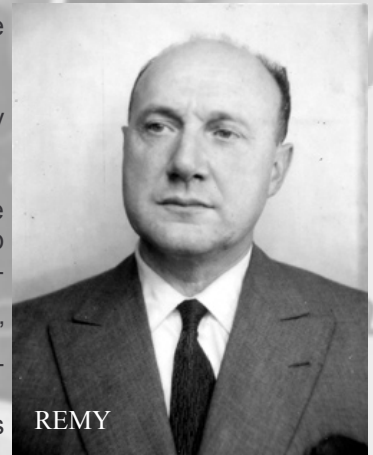
It is impossible to list all the networks and movements as there were so many, moreover many were, alas, destroyed by the Gestapo and Militia before becoming extensive.

Courage in front of the enemy was not enough, a degree of luck was also essential for survival.

Old political parties, the trade unions and cooperative associations all organise core units some of which will become networks and important movements, for example, "Resistance Iron" set up by SNCF, the "National Face of the Fight for Independence" set up by the post and telecommunications workers and the organisation of Resistance in France set up also by foreigners.

In addition from July 1940, Polish officers demobilised in Toulouse will create the network "F2" which will send essential information to London. In the south west and in Dordogne, "des Brigadistes" coming back to Spain and Spanish Republicans set up network.

In Great Britain at the suggestion of Churchill the "S.O.E" (Special Operation Executive) was formed, Major Buckmaster was appointed to direct the "French section". This network was operational throughout France. Thereafter the United States became involved with the networks by creating the "OSS" (Office of Special Service).



REMY

AMONG THE RESISTANCE THERE WERE VARIOUS TYPES OF MEMBERS.

- Those who gave up all of their former life, devoting themselves entirely to the Resistance. (The clandestine ones).
- Those who could maintain a facade of legality, both social whilst conducting parallel clandestine activities.
- Those who accommodated and helped the Resistance occasionally, often paying with their lives.

But the courage and sacrifices of all these heroes would have little effect without the coordination by the units; it is here that Jean MOULIN in particular made best use of the talent, audacity and tenacity of his people in determining the future.

HOW THE UNIFYING ROLE OF JEAN MOULIN WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE INTERIOR RESISTANCE TO BECOME "THE ARMY IN THE SHADOWS", DREADED BY THE OCCUPIERS.

Jean MOULIN made his first stay in London at the end of 1941, De GAULLE was very interested in the report Jean MOULIN sent to him on the situation in France. 1ST january 1942, before the paddle, MOULIN (known as REX) is parachuted into France, representing General DE GAULLE, he has the role of unifying the actions of all elements. Also, in addition to prepara-



tion for combat, it was necessary to consider the post-war political and economic organisation of France, which, when liberated, will not be managed by the Allies, as some had expressed the intention of doing, but by the French Republic which wanted to install de Gaulle.

27 May, 1943 Jean MOULIN, after many secret, often difficult, discussions with the persons in charge of the main factions, achieves a consensus and the first National Council of Resistance (CNR) which announces a unified Resistance under the authority of general de Gaulle was formed. The Resistance then takes on another dimension, the three main divisions ("Fight", "Liberation", "Franc-Tireur") gather under the name of the "United Movements of Resistance" (M.U.R) and amalgamate their paramilitary elements in a "Secret Army" (the A.S), under the command of General DELESTRAINT.

21 June, 1943, the catastrophe of Caluire, Jean MOULIN is arrested by the Gestapo and tortured to death, but he doesn't speak. He is replaced as the head of CNR by SERREULES and then by BIDAUT. From September 1943, in accordance with the snap decisions of Moulin and de Gaulle, Regional Military Delegates (D.M.R) will be sent in turn to France (including Claude BONNIER-

aka Hypotenuse in charge of area B which covers all of the South West). These DMR are directly under De Gaulle's authority who will send them instructions based on decisions taken in London for them to carry out in France.

In addition to preparation with the combat liberators, it will be necessary to envisage the organization of political and economic future of France, which when it is released, will not have to be managed by the allies as some expressed some the intention, but by the French Republic which wants to restore Of GAULLE.

The put means has the provision of the DMR by the BCRA are important:

- Air operations, landings and airdrops (B.O.A: Office of Air Operations in Northern zone, S.A.P : Sections for landings and airdrops – in Southern zone) ensuring the essential connections with London for the transit of the important agents, mail bags for Services Information, delivery of weapons, explosives and radio transmitters, using Lysanders and also some Hudsons all provided by the RAF (the British Royal Airforce).
- The maritime operations (rare but very dangerous) were carried out with small boats or small submarines approaching the French coasts at night.
- Sabotage instructors (like Jacques NANCY in Charente) formed in conjunction with London groups of saboteurs in France.
- Radio operators and their equipment, (a particularly dangerous operation because the Germans used radio location devices), but it was essential to send coded messages between the various networks and London.
- DMR had to be the project superintendents of the Resistance on the ground in France. Their job was to set up the plans, worked out in London, in order to prepare for the D day landings on June 6 1944. These plans consisted of the destruction or neutralization of the infrastructure :
 - Green Plan: destruction of the railways.
 - Red Plan: destruction of the enemy ammunition dumps.
 - Blue Plan: destruction of the powerlines.
 - Purple Plan: destruction of lines postal and telecommunications authorities (telephone and telegraph).
 - Yellow Plan: destruction of the enemy headquarters.
 - Plane Black: destruction of the enemy fuel deposits.
 - Mummy Plan: protection of the ports.
 - Tortoise Plan: neutralization of the roads (to prevent the enemy from sending reinforcements).

Beginning in 1944 "the secret army" will form with O R A (Organisation of Resistance of the Army) and F.T.P.F (French Partisans – an organisation created by the French Communist Party), F.F.I (French Forces of the Interior).

FRENCH FORCES OF THE INTERIOR (F.F.I)

Ordered by general KOENING, they were the symbol of "Free France" and the branch charged with interior resistance: "The Maquis".

The "Men of the Maquis" were difficult to control in 1941 and 1942, isolated from the rest of the Resistance, unorganised and almost without weapons.

In February, the law of Vichy instituted the "S.T.O" (Service of Obligatory Work) because of the departure of those recalled to Germany. Many young people refused to work for the occupiers and will hide in the forest (Maquis).

They were known as the "Refractories" because they refused the S.T.O, they formed small groups and where knowns the Ma-

quais, they were everywhere but mostly in wooded or mountainous areas which provided plenty of hiding places and where they could take refuge once their work was accomplished.

Initially they had very little structure, later grouped under the DMR weapons were provided to them by the BCRA and the BOA and airdropped to them directly from London. Some Maquis groups had specialists parachuted in as well as weapons , "Missions JEDBURGH".

Guerilla, sabotage, and commando actions multiplied "to badger and demoralise" the enemy. Certain Maquis groups were very large having several thousand men such as the Maquis of Vercors. However most of the Maquis remained in small



groups so they would not be noticed and thus could be more effective.

With the start of the liberation of the units which....

June 6, 1944 with the D day landings on the Normandy beaches, all the plans set up by the DMR functioned perfectly. The execution of these plans and the rise of the Maquis, whose numbers had swelled considerably, delayed or helped prevent the Germans from gathering sufficient men and materials to repulse the invasion... After the landings the Maquis worked to release many French towns and cities.

General EISENHOWER, commander-in-chief of the allied forces, paid homage to the whole of the French Resistance of the French Resistance.

The unique nature of the Resistance means it was impossible to know the full extent of its manpower, but it is known that losses were considerable (for example , of 600 radio operators nearly 400 were killed), serious researchers calculate that approximately 200 000 people were actively engaged in the Resistance. In addition the great majority of the French sympathised with their cause. During the 6 years of operations on land, sea and in the air and in the shadows perhaps a million deaths paid the price of victory and helped bring about the peace that made it possible for France to regain its dignity and freedom on 8 May, 1945.

So during the Second World War, a glorious page of French history was written by the dedication and effectiveness of the men and women of the Resistance.



24 JUNE 1940 THE GERMAN IN ANGOULÈME



31 AUGUST 1944 ANGOULÈME FREE