

Introduction

The French Resistance during WW2 was made up of people from many different countries and backgrounds – since the end of the war, certain people have been more widely celebrated and their contribution more broadly recognised. Black women and men from the French Caribbean formed a key part of the French internal resistance but their stories are often forgotten or omitted, with many people unaware of them.

Aims

Our aim is to try to bring recognition to the people who risked their lives and played key roles in the French Internal Resistance throughout the war. These peoples' voices are not heard and their stories remain mainly untold – we wanted to change this.

By the end of my project, my aim is to have compiled a list of as many women and men I can find from the French Caribbean (and the Island of La Reunion), as well as have around 8 profiles of specific resistance fighters which go into detail about their background, their motivations for joining the resistance, their experience and roles during the war, as well as what happened to them.



Research Methodology

I began my research by firstly getting familiar with the databases which would become a key part of my research, as well as the French abbreviations which often came up throughout my tasks. My first task was then to compile a spreadsheet of all the names I could find across many databases, of internal French resistance fighters from the 4 islands – I tried to find as much detail as possible. Often the information about these people that I could find was just a name, place of birth, date of birth and a file number. However sometimes I would scour across further databases and websites (such as genealogy websites) and was able to find more information, such as date of death, their childhood, their profession before joining the resistance, their reasons for joining, their wartime experience, and if they survived the war, what happened to them after. With this added information, I created fact files of these people. We also created bar charts, showing the vast age difference of people from the islands who joined the resistance, and how common each age range was. I also did further research, reading into specific resistance networks during the

Results

There were many difficulties we had to face throughout this research project, such as the vast amount of information on the internet, making it harder and time consuming to go through. However, on the other hand, there was a lack of easily accessible (or existent) information on these commonly forgotten people. Often, even if you found a name and file code, there would be no more information available anywhere and the person would remain solely a name and number, without a story. Furthermore, due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, we were unable to go to Paris and go through the national archives as well as visit Mont Valerien – a place where many of the resistant fighter executions took place. However, finding the information and building the profiles was very rewarding – it was interesting to understand their motivations and learn about the terrifying experiences these resistance fighters lived through. I am happy with the fact files I have been able to create and hope I have given a voice to at least some people who played a key role in the French Internal Resistance during the war whose stories would have otherwise potentially remained unheard and forgotten.



war, enabling me to find out more about the motivations behind people joining as well as being able to pinpoint certain people on a map, including where some of these people lived and fought. In addition, fortunately through Nina's contacts in France, we were able to access some of the information from the national archive files, in order to add to what we had already found, giving a clearer picture. It was interesting to see that many of the files also included photos and personal letters from the relatives of the resistant fighters, wanting to honour and gain recognition of their relative.