

Mapping Colonial Subjects in the French Resistance

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Historical Context

The French Internal Resistance (1940-1944) was a network of various groups fighting against Nazi Occupation and the collaborationist Vichy regime. In the French collective memory, the Resistance is greatly exaggerated in scope and significance. A phenomenon coined as 'Le Résistancialisme' by historian Henry Rousso in 1987. However, modern historians have exposed a further flaw with the French collective memory: a failure to commemorate the efforts of members of the French Empire.

Crucially, French North Africans have long been underrepresented, or misrepresented, in the history of the French Resistance. Their role in the conflict is greatly underestimated yet *Chemins de Memoire* identifies more than 300,000 North African soldiers mobilised in May 1940.

Methodology

The first stage of my research involved a research trip to Paris, working in the French Military Archives in Vincennes. I identified 30 individuals from Professor Wardleworth's extensive database with the '75' Département Code and accessed their individual 'GR 16 P' files at Vincennes. These contained the archival documents necessary to create individual fact files that would later form the profiles on our interactive map. I then cross-referenced this information with digitised archival resources to create profiles; most notably, the Ministry of Defence's *Memoire des Hommes* and *FranceArchives*, the French National Archives. The next stage involved transforming these written profiles into an interactive map, using Google MyMaps as the medium to present our findings. All the profiles display key information about each soldier as well as a short paragraph detailing their experience of the French Internal Resistance and for some, a photograph. The pins are plotted using the addresses found in their 'GR 16 P' or 'GR 19 P' files and are colour-coded based on FFI Group, representing the clusters of French North African Resistance fighters scattered across Paris.

Aims and Objectives

This project, as part of Professor Wardleworth's broader, ongoing research, plays a vital role in diversifying and decolonising the history of the French Resistance and the commemoration of World War Two in France by telling the stories of marginalised communities.

Significant Findings

- Mouloud Amoura's GR 16 P file, containing over 200 documents detailing his experience of the French Internal Resistance and his 20-year legal battle for a military pension
- Evidence of Ménaheem Chouraqui's Légion d'Honneur, found in the digitised French National Archives
- A group of five individuals who received the Croix de Guerre avec étoile d'argent for the exact same mission.
- Joseph Chiche who took the unusual path of internment at Drancy, France's largest transit camp, to Alderney Island.
- The 'Jackal Group', an FFI group in the 14th Arrondissement, an exclusively North African unit with over 600 members who fought in the Liberation of Paris in August 1944.

Conclusion

This project has identified French North Africans engaged in the French Internal Resistance as early as the summer of 1940 and has 'mapped' over 60, establishing a method to plot a database of over 2000 colonial subjects.

