

A CHILD IN JERSEY

We have interviewed a survivor from the Second World War in Jersey.

Who are you and how old were you in 1940 ?

My name is James Marckle, I live in Jersey. My parents were deep-sea fishermen. I was 14 years old in 1940 and my brother was 7 years old. I am a survivor from Hinzert camp in Germany during the Second World War.

I think it must have been a shock to see the Germans in Jersey. What happened? How did you experience it ?

On June 28th 1940 the German Air Force bombed multiple sites on the island. It was terrible, I saw three people dying in front of me. Oh no ! I forgot to tell you Jersey was the only British island which was invaded by the Germans.

A little after the arrival of the Germans, towers

were built by thousands of slave workers from countries like Russia, Spain, France, Poland, and Algeria. They built hundreds of bunkers, anti-tank walls, railway systems, as well of many tunnel complexes. As my parents were fishermen, they saw everyday the fortifications around the island : this is the "Atlantic Wall ".



the Atlantic Wall, coast of Jersey

Source : wikipédia

How did you react to the German invasion ?

As I couldn't stay without doing nothing I got into the resistance with a friend. I took some photographs of German weapons and organization.

Did you stay in Jersey during all the war as a resistant ?

Unfortunately, no ! I was denounced by my friend. I was sent to prison in Jersey. 3 months later, I was sent in Frenes prison, next to Paris then I was sent in Hinzert camp in Germany.

I was placed in a train with 50 other men. Conditions were disastrous, horrible. We were humiliated by the German soldiers. Their humiliation has always remained in our hearts and minds.

You are talking about your family, how did they live the war, did they stay in Jersey?

My family stayed in Jersey. My brother, Harry, experienced the war better than me. When the Germans invaded Jersey everyday life was disrupted. Inhabitants of Jersey had to drive on the wrong side of the road, they also had to adopt the European time. The price of bicycles rose because there was a shortage of petrol. Shopping hours were reduced because goods became rare, inhabitants of Jersey were restocked by the SS Vega in December 1944. It is a Red Cross ship sent to provide us with boxes of salt, soap, medical supplies, food parcels ...

The armistice was signed on the island at 07:05 am on 09 May 1945. I returned to Jersey and found my friends and my family back but we have never forgotten our sad experience of the Second World War.



Hinzert camp in Germany, source : wikipedia