

A CHILD JOINS FRENCH RESISTANCE

Marcel Bonnet was a resister during the second World War in Morbihan (Brittany, France). He was a teenager at the time. Today he tells us his story.

Your father was the owner of a local pub and resister. When and how did you discover his secret?

I was thirteen years old in 1944. My father worked until late and I was still waiting for him in the back of the shop. I could play pinball for hours and on that day I didn't see the time going by. It was starting to get late and I was worried because my father wasn't coming to pick me up in the back store to go home. I decided to look for my father... I would be discreet. I saw him talking with another men around a table . I stayed there listening and watching. Then I understood that he was part of the resistance.

How did you react when you learnt about your parents' political position?

When I found out , I'm not going to lie to you , I was against it ! I thought sabotaging rails and killing people was horrible ! But thinking about it , I didn't want to be against my parents. Eventually I wanted to help them with their actions .My family were in the resistance too. I found out becoming a resistance fighter was cool .



Marcel's father at the counter of his Guidel's local pub

Which actions did you do as a resister ?

As a resister, we sabotaged the rails in the small Gestel station. I had received an appointment letter to do this action with the precise time and place indicated. On the next day we made guns in the basement of my father's pub. We joined together to street battles against German soldiers.. I remember this battle well because it was one of the most impressive and violent street battles. It took place in the avenue des Bons Amis. Most of my mates were injured or killed. Then we all went back to the hall of my father's pub to talk about it and listened to BBC radio. We listened to the BBC because that's where we received the orders to commit resister acts but it was forbidden to listen to it. It was even forbidden to own a radio so ours was well hidden under the floor boards.

Were you afraid of getting arrested ?

I was scared . We were all terrified ! But we did it because we had to . We had to defend our families and our homeland and we had to stand up against Hitler and his troops .

Today, are you proud of committing resistant's acts during the second world war?

Yes sure! It was very important for me to defend my country, the place where I was born and grew up. Liberty, peace and family spirit were part of my ideology and I defended it with all my courage and my strength.

Why are you coming today to give evidence about your experience?

I'm here today to give evidence of my experience with this long period which had a big impact on me and on many people. I grew with the war and I realized the importance of many things like family and the importance of defending our country to get peace. I want to tell children and all the people who haven't experienced war why we must be wary, why we must fight to obtain our freedom and not be crushed and dominated by a totalitarian, racist regime that is outside our principles of life.



arrest of a French resistance fighter in 1940