

The story of Arthur Dupont, a child in Vichy Regime.

Vichy Regime was a political regime established in France, following the defeat versus Germany in 1940. Led by Maréchal Petain who took the full powers, this regime collaborated with the Nazis.

Can you introduce yourself to our readers ?

My name is Arthur Dupont, I'm 95 years old. I was a sculptor in tribute to my father, Jhonas. My mother, Alice was a teacher. I live in Rouen with my wife, Margarete. I have two children Alain and Anne. They are 70 and 60 years old.

France entered the war on 3rd September, 1939. Was your father conscripted ?

Yes, my father joined the 12th Dragon regiment. He went to Poland. But when I was 12 years old, on 8 September, 1940, my mother received a letter and she burst into tears. At the moment I realised my father had died.

What was your reaction when you learnt the news ?

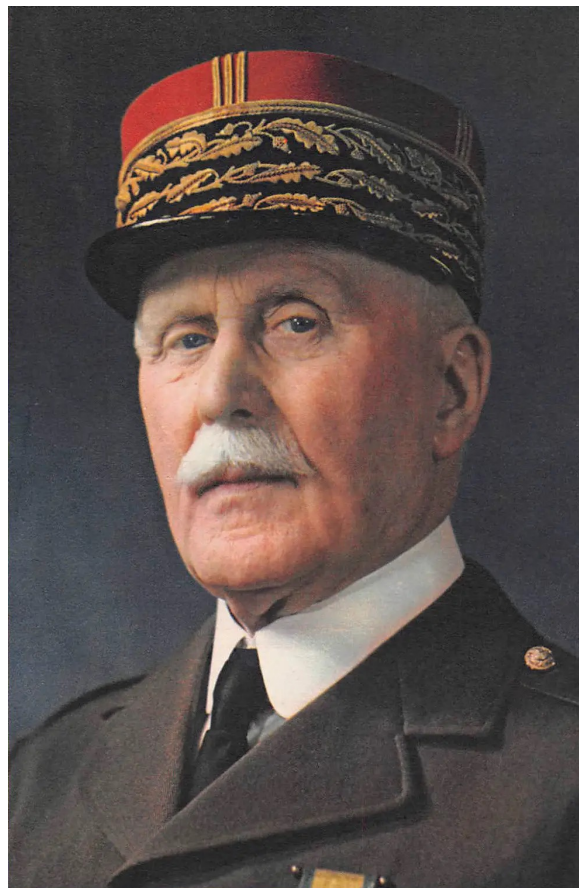
I was devastated and on the next day I didn't go to school.

What was your reaction when Marechal Petain signed the armistice ?

Pétain was my idol because he had saved France but today I know that he gave up France to the Nazis and he collaborated.

Marechal Pétain was a military who won the Verdun battle (1916). He was the savior of French people so he was called for help.

I sent to Marechal Petain a letter where I talked about my admiration for him. It was like a relationship with him.



This is a portrait of Maréchal Pétain (1856-1951).

It was exhibited in Arthur Dupont's school.

(Source Wikipedia)

Did you have an anecdote about one of your friends ?

Yes, one morning, I came to school and one of my friends showed me a piece of shell. I was shocked. He said that it was his father that had brought that back.

Was he caught ?

No he wasn't, because he had shown it only to me and my other friends. But his mother punished him because he wasn't allowed to take the shell in school.

Did you resist ?

No, I didn't because I was too young and I wasn't brave enough to oppose the Nazis. My brother got into the resistance but he was arrested by a militia.

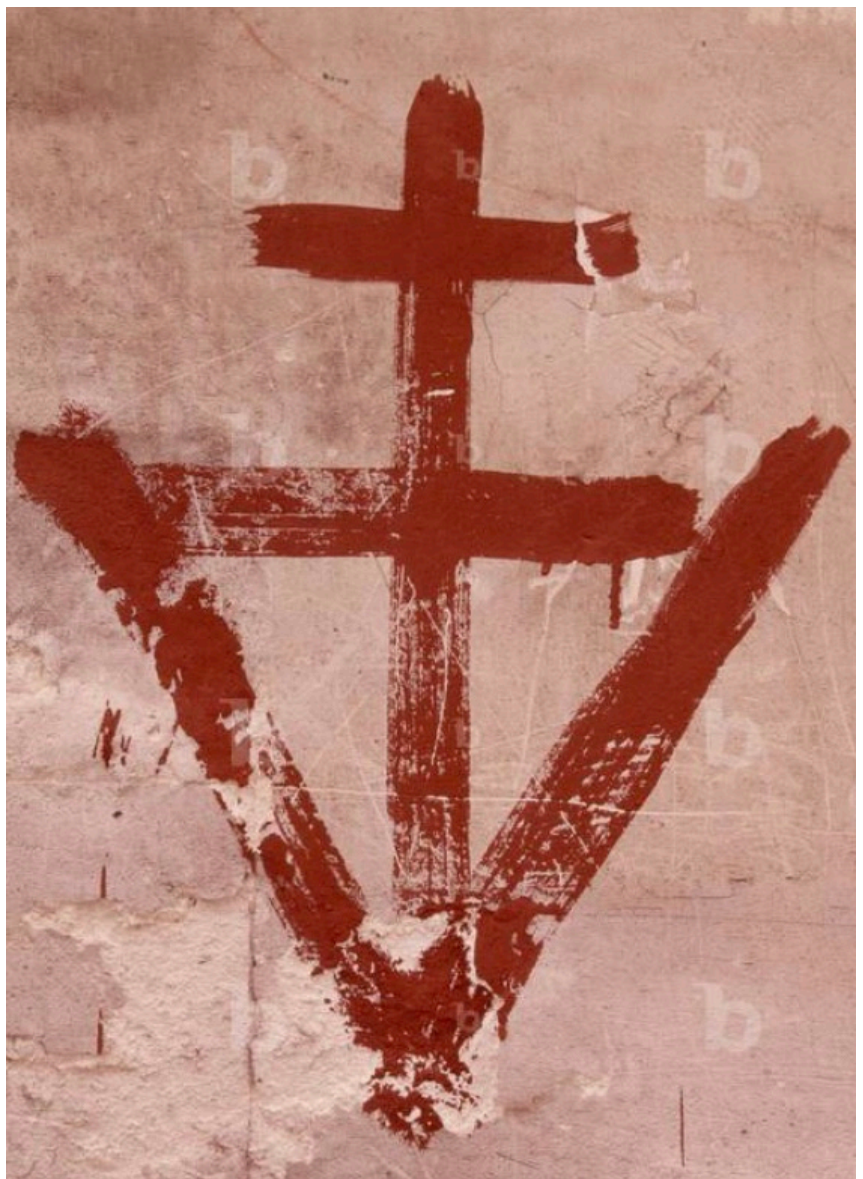
What was his act of resistance ?

He burnt a Nazi flag and he drew a "V" for Victory and the "Croix de Lorraine". This was a sign for resistance on a wall of the Nazi Buildings.

Was one of your close friends deported ?

Yes, my best friend wore a yellow star because he was a Jew and Hitler was anti-Semitic. At first I didn't understand why he wore that star and my parents didn't want to explain me. One day my friend disappeared but I didn't know why.

Later I understood that my friend had been deported and he died on a concentration camp.



This is the symbol which was drawn on the wall of a Nazi building. (Source bridgeman images).