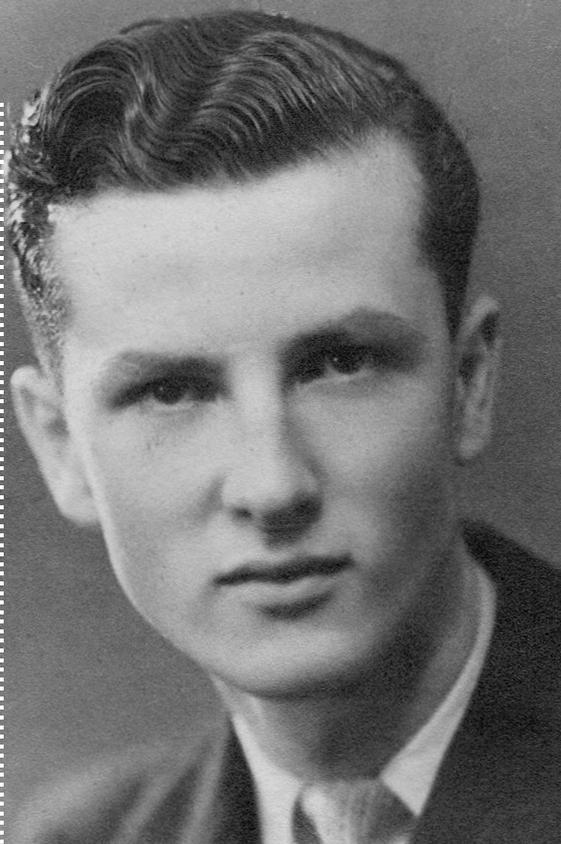


# FOCUS

## GÉRARD DUBOIS, A FORGOTTEN VICTIM OF THE COMBATS IN EXIDEUIL - JULY 1944



### AUTHOR - CONTRIBUTOR : BENOÎT SAVY

A history and geography teacher, he conducts research on the structuring of Resistance movements and the Liberation in Charente and Haute-Vienne.

He has several publications to his credit, based on a critical methodology of available historical works, archives and person accounts he has gathered.

VILLES  
& PAYS  
D'ART &  
D'HISTOIRE  
DIRE

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On the left: photograph of Gérard Dubois.

© Family collections.

On the right: photograph of the Liberation of Exideuil-sur-Vienne

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# EDITORIAL

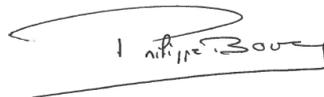
**The summer of 2019 began with a cycle of commemoration of the liberation of Charente and Limousin by the fighting forces of the internal resistance. Seventy-five years after that redeeming summer, the months of August and September 1944 forever echoed the jubilation of the masses that accompanied the entry of maquisard troops into the region's main cities. Four years of occupation, submission to a fascist regime, deprivation, bullying, arrests and deportation remain irremediably inscribed in the DNA of our regions today.**

**Two sites of national importance, the martyred village of Oradour-sur-Glane and the memorial to the Resistance in Chasseneuil-sur-Bonnieure, are emerging as veritable beacons against all obscurantism, breeding grounds for contemporary revisionism.**

**It is time for the inhabitants of these regions to appreciate the value of this heritage in peace. For nearly a year now, the elected representatives of Charente Limousine, in conjunction with the elected representatives of Porte Océane du Limousin, have been working on a project to promote remembrance tourism. This desire to develop remembrance tourism will take the form of a wide range of educational and recreational activities designed to share with as many people as possible the historical analysis and need for remembrance of this seminal period. We are driven by the imperative of creating a remembrance that is the guardian of the truth, which provides a reading of the past while ensuring intergenerational continuity. Knowing the past and understanding the present guide people towards a new horizon, for a humanity freed from intolerance and denial.**

**This publication, which launches the Charente Limousine memorial project, describes the sombre fate of Gérard Dubois, a Resistance fighter forgotten by history and absent from his own family history. Like the commemorative plaque affixed to the wall and open to chance reading by passers-by, it allows us to enter into the history of the place in a concrete way, but above all to give back to those who perished a name, an age, a life path of which we remain the custodians. It paves the way for other actions, other ideas, that reflect our desire to pass on and analyze this period, which is all too little known to our inhabitants.**

**Philippe Bouty  
President of the Charente Limousine Community of communes  
(2014-2021)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philippe Bouty', enclosed within a simple rectangular box.



**Opposite**  
Photo of Gérard Dubois, 1943.  
© Family collections.

# LIFE AND JOURNEY OF GÉRARD DUBOIS

2019 saw a series of commemorations marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Charente region by the fighting forces of the French Resistance. The families of the victims are still deeply scarred by this tumultuous period, whose main historical developments form the foundation of the story. Despite this, on a finer scale, far removed from the mystification of the Resistance and the sacralization of testimony, the history of this period has yet to be written. Although historians have worked on the subject with dignity in recent years, contemporary researchers still have vast fields of investigation open to them in the course of historical analysis. Forgotten for three quarters of a century, the story of the end of Gérard Dubois's life is a clear example of this.

## **IT ALL STARTED BY CHANCE...**

The story of this young man came to light in 2017 under the most fortuitous of circumstances : the consultation of a civil registry from the Charente commune of Montrollet as part of a routine search of a birth certificate. After turning a few pages, a transcript of a death decree, drawn up at the request of the Angoulême district court on 21 June 1967, was revealed, stating that Gérard, Henri, Pierre Dubois went missing on 28 July 1944 in Montrollet (Charente). To this day, he is considered to be deceased. This surprising disappearance, which took place during the troubled period of the liberation and purification of the Charente region by the fighting forces of the Resistance, is undoubtedly linked to the conflict. How could it be otherwise ? The idea

immediately sprang to mind, prompting a rush of curiosity, as this name was quite unknown to the historian who had been working on the period for over a decade. A quick glance at the Charente martyrology of war victims and a few contacts confirmed the initial intuition. The disappearance of this man is unknown to local historians and there is no trace in the records of the Charente veterans' associations. Was he a resistance fighter ? Or was he an expiatory victim of the purge whose death was masked by unfortunate circumstances ? These two preliminary questions begin the search for information about this unknown man.

## **SO WHO WAS THIS GÉRARD DUBOIS ?**

At this point, there was little information about the enigmatic Dubois. The deed in the Montrollet register does not say very much. A request for a civil status certificate was subsequently made to the Lille Town Hall, which mentioned that he was born in Lille, at 3 Rue Denfert Rochereau, on 8 March 1923, to Pierre François Dubois, a wood pattern maker born in Lille on 24 September 1896 and to Aline Herbaut, of no profession, born in La Madeleine (Nord) on 23 October 1897<sup>1</sup>. There is no marginal mention of the circumstances of his death. Further research was needed to unravel the puzzle of his disappearance, supported by a host of questions. How did the disappearance of the 21-year-old man from northern France go unnoticed ? What about his family ? Do they know his story ? Will the Charente archives reveal information about this man from a northern region ?



**1. Photo of the Dubois's family in 1933 ; Gérard is at his father's side.**

© Family collections.

**2. Disappearance certificate issued by the Ministry of Veterans and Victims of War in 1947.**

© Archives file, Ministry of Veterans and Victims of War.

**3. Extract of the disappearance certificate - explications about the disappearance of Gérard Dubois, 1947.**

© Archives file, Ministry of Veterans and Victims of War.

## **A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IS PUT IN PLACE**

As usual, all sources of information on the period were scrutinized, including known historical works, interviews with direct witnesses and administrative and private archives of the period. The time cursor was positioned on the end of July 1944, the objective being to find a way to progress in the questioning without any hypothesis being underestimated.

At the same time, the Defence Historical Service (D.H.S.), part of the French Ministry of Veterans and Victims of War, was asked about Gérard Dubois. Was there a file among the 600,000 bearing the name of Gérard Dubois ? The answer was yes. There was indeed a file with his name in the archives of the S.H.D. service based in Caen. A request for reproduction and dispatch of the file was made as soon as possible.

## **THE FIRST ELEMENTS OF THE CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTY FILE**

The letter from the *Service Historique de la Défense* made it possible to consult Gérard Dubois's file, compiled by the various administrations responsible for certifying services rendered for acts of resistance at the end of the war<sup>2</sup>.

The first consultation of the file confirmed that he was indeed the right person, this man was indeed a fighter against the occupying forces in Charente Limousine during the summer of 1944. There was therefore no longer any need to investigate the civilian victim of the purge. It was therefore abandoned in favour of a Resistance

fighter, for which the file provides little support. His record of civilian war victim at the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and Victims of War was marked as follows : « *Missing since 27 July 1944 in the vicinity of Pressac, Vienna, presumed deceased* »<sup>3</sup>. In a letter from the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Victims of War dated 23 December 1950, it was stated that Gérard Dubois remained « *missing on 1 August 1944 during the Chabanais operations while he belonged to the Pressac Franc Corps* ». Doubt was barely concealed in these few imprecise expressions, but the trail of the internal resistance fighter seemed to be getting stronger.

In response to two letters from Gérard Dubois's parents, dated 6 January and 15 March 1945, the Prefect of Orne provided information in his possession on their son's disappearance<sup>4</sup>. To his parents, the Prefect confirmed that Gérard Dubois had been « *arrested on 10 July 1944 by elements of the First Bernard Regiment and taken to the Command Post in Saint-Sornin (87) under the responsibility of Commandant Rémi. He joined the battalion's fighting forces to take part in the Magnac-Laval operations, before being transferred to the Taillat Command Post, near the town on 17 July 1944. He then chose to remain in the maquis, joining the Pressac Maquis on 28 July 1944. On 1 August 1944, during the Chabanais operations, he was wounded at Peyras near Exideuil. Despite a search, it had not been possible to trace him* ». The Prefect assumed, based on the information in his possession, that he was taken away by the Germans. Although this information provided some context, it did not

MINISTRE  
DES  
ANCIENS COMBATTANTS  
ET  
VICTIMES DE GUERRE

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Paris le 24 AVRIL 1947

MINISTRE DE L'ÉTUDE  
27, RUE DE BELLICHAUSE  
PARIS 17<sup>e</sup>

ACTE DE DISPARITION

Le Ministre des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre,  
Vu l'article 88 du Code Civil (Ord. du 30 octobre 1945) ;  
Vu le dossier de l'intéressé (ci-après) :

NOM : DUBOIS Gérard Henri Pierre  
né le 2 MAI 1923 à LILLE - Nord

dans les conditions indiquées ci-après :

Parti républicain de Maquis le 10 juillet 1944  
Vu pour la dernière fois alors qu'il s'apprêtait à  
rejoindre le Maquis de PRESSAC le 28 juillet 1944  
N'a revu de sa femme  
N'a revu de sa femme

Par application de la loi du 22 septembre 1942 validée et modifiée par l'ordonnance  
d'Alger du 5 avril 1944, la famille peut, par simple lettre adressée au Procureur de la Répu-  
blique du domicile du disparu, sans ministère d'avoué et sans frais, obtenir un jugement  
déclaratif d'absence.

A l'expiration d'un délai de cinq ans partant du jour de la disparition, le jugement décla-  
ratif d'absence peut être transformé en jugement déclaratif de décès par application de  
l'ordonnance du 5 avril 1944 ci-dessus.

En outre, à tout moment, l'acte de disparition peut être transformé par le Service de l'État  
Civil en acte de décès si les précisions nécessaires sont fournies.

MINISTRE DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS ET VICTIMES DE GUERRE

Le Chef de Bureau de l'État Civil  
P. O. Chef de Service

2

LE MINISTRE DES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS ET VICTIMES DE GUERRE,

Vu l'article 88 du Code Civil (Ord. du 30 octobre 1945) ;  
Vu le dossier de l'intéressé ci-après :

DÉCIDE :

la disparition de DUBOIS Gérard Henri Pierre  
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Civil en acte de décès si les précisions nécessaires sont fournies.

3

enable the family to find any trace of Gérard Dubois.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the authorities sought to unravel the mystery of his disappearance. The Ministry of Veterans and Victims of War contacted the regional recruitment and statistics office of the second military region based in Valenciennes about the missing man. The officer in charge replied that gendarmerie inquiries into his place of birth (Lille), his parents' place of residence (Tourcoing) and his subsequent places of residence had turned up nothing. The third and fourth military regions, based in Rennes and Poitiers respectively, were similarly unable to provide any further information<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, there were no death certificates in the Tourcoing civil registry, as mentioned in a letter from the Mayor of Tourcoing to the Minister of Veterans and Victims of War, dated 9 September 1952<sup>6</sup>.

Unfortunately, the information provided about the man did not make it possible to understand the circumstances of his disappearance.

After analyzing the content of these administrative documents, many questions remained unanswered. The certification files of the combatant units *Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur* (F.F.I.), the press articles of the time, the direct or indirect testimonies, the bibliography were examined, but revealed nothing conclusive about the history of this fighter. The traditional circle of historical inquiry in such cases needed to expand to include the circumstances of his demise. As a result, northern veterans associations were called upon but

without success. The story of this man was unknown to them<sup>7</sup>.

Then the family trail was activated, the trace had to be found imperatively to inquire about elements that were certainly known. The starting point had to be the last known address in Tourcoing before the war mentioned in the civil status document received from the Lille Town Hall.

## THE ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE FAMILY OF GÉRARD DUBOIS

Steps were immediately taken to try and trace the descendants of the family, thanks to an address in the file, 47 Rue fin de la Guerre, where the family was reportedly living in Tourcoing before the conflict. By letter, the Tourcoing Town Hall was asked to try to find the family, while the moral obligation to shed light on the conditions of Gérard Dubois's death gradually took hold. Contact was made with Gérard Dubois' family during the summer of 2018, thanks to the staff at Tourcoing Town Hall who managed to track down some of the family members. After a few weeks of administrative research, the letter written from the Charente region accompanying the request from the town hall arrived at its destination. The family discovered that people were working hard to determine the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Gérard, their loved one. His sister Marie-Colette, surprised and moved that news of her brother, who disappeared more than 70 years ago, should reach her so late from Charente, was distraught on the telephone. After long minutes of touching



**1. Photo of the Dubois family in 1941 ; Gérard is in the centre of the photo.**

© Family collections.

**2. Gaston Rade's employment certificate - top section. It shows his marital status and his parents' address.**

© Archives Unit for Victims of Contemporary Conflicts, Caen.

**3. Gaston Rade's employment certificate - bottom section. It shows the company employing him in Germany, his occupation and the length of his contract.**

© Archives Unit for Victims of Contemporary Conflicts, Caen.

discussion punctuated by sobs, she confessed that she could provide little information on Gérard's death, of which she knew little or nothing. Alerted, the other members of the family gathered the few photographs from their private archives and sent them to Charente. This information gradually enriched the family history, helping to put Gérard Dubois' disappearance into context and to understand his life before he joined the maquis.

His father was a woodworker who taught at Lille I.C.A.M (*Institut Catholique des Arts et Métiers* - Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts in the late 1930s. The family fled northern France when war broke out, taking refuge in Normandy at Condé-sur-Noireau in southern Calvados.

The Dubois family, consisting of Pierre and Aline, aged 45 and 44, and their six children Irène 20, Gérard 18, Yolande 16, Geneviève 12, Francis 9 and Marie-Colette 4, arrived in early 1941. Setting off by road for Normandy, they had to abandon their obsolete vehicle. The family was taken in by a couple belonging to the Norman nobility, the Dufaye family, who lived in a large mansion a stone's throw from Condé-sur-Noireau. The couple's hospitality enabled the Dubois family to find more suitable accommodation. Cohabitation was cordial, with the Dubois taking an active part in the work on the estate in order to return the favour to their hosts. They then found lodgings at 14 Rue Nationale in Condé-sur-Noireau for a time, before leaving the

town for a more isolated farmhouse at Les Petits. Gérard was now over 20, and was worried about the departure of his classmates from previous classes, who were drafted into the Obligatory Labour Service (in french S.T.O.). He decided with his parents to leave Normandy to avoid a forced departure for Germany. The destination was Brive-la-Gaillarde in Correze. At the end of 1943, some of the Dubois family accompanied Gérard to the station on the day of his scheduled departure. After warm embraces, the train pulled away and Marie-Colette never saw her older brother again. For several months, Gérard and his family corresponded by letter, enabling him to keep in touch. From the spring of 1944 onwards, Gérard never wrote to his family again. The jubilation of the end of the war paradoxically anchored the silence of this absence in the family home, while everyone dreamed of catching a glimpse of Gérard's frail silhouette in the doorway.

In May 1947, the family received a certificate of disappearance stating that Gérard Dubois had last been seen alive at the end of July 1944, in the small Charente commune of Montrollet, on 28 July 1944, and had not yet returned home<sup>8</sup>. To investigate further, the family set off directly to Brive, to Gérard Dubois' last known address. Once there, no one seemed to know their son. The wall of silence was too impenetrable between the locals and the people who had come to try to find one of their own. His parents left with no further information and a bad feeling. Why could light not be shed on the disappearance of their loved one ?

PV 67  
 N° d'ordre  
**Certificat d'embauchage N° 4**  
 (à remettre aux ayants droit de l'ouvrier embauché pour servir de pièce justificative auprès de l'Autorité française chargée du paiement des allocations (Mairie).)  
 RADE  
 Nom  
 Prénoms Gaston Gabriel  
 Né le 6 novembre 1920  
 Lieu de naissance Celle St Vrain / Mayenne  
 Nationalité française  
 Situation de famille célibataire Religion cath  
 Prénoms de la femme  
 Nom de jeune fille  
 Nombre total des parents à charge : 2  
 Nombre d'enfants appartenant au foyer et âgés de moins de 21 ans \_\_\_\_\_ de plus de 21 ans \_\_\_\_\_  
 Adresse exacte en France : 18 rue St Martin / Caude sur Noireau  
 Bénéficiaire de la délégation de salaire : Mme M. Rade / 18 rue Saint Martin / Caude sur Noireau / Calvados  
 2

Arbeitsamt régional compétent : Bayern  
 Arbeitsamt local compétent : München Callach  
 embauché en qualité de : ouvrier ajusteur  
 Employeur : Carroll Maffei SA  
 Lieu de travail : Munich  
 Durée du contrat : un an  
 Gare de destination : Munich  
 Feldkommandantur : 545 Alagon  
 Département  
 Signature de l'Ouvrier embauché :  
 Sur présentation de cette fiche signée par l'Office de Placement Allemand, les personnes à la charge de l'ouvrier sus-nommé auront droit, à partir du jour de son départ pour l'Allemagne et conformément aux arrêtés du 25 avril 1941 du Ministère des Finances, à une allocation qui sera versée par la Mairie. Le taux de cette allocation est indiqué au verso.  
 Lieu Paris le 17 octobre 1942  
 Office de Placement Allemand  
 (Signature)  
 3

Stunned by the receipt of an unexpected parcel, the family regained hope when Gérard Dubois' personal belongings arrived by post. Surely someone knew what had become of Gérard ? Who sent the parcel? The euphoria was short-lived, as no mention or information about the sender accompanied this unexpected parcel. A suitcase filled with personal effects, some of which did not belong to Gérard Dubois, was delivered to the family's former address, Rue fin de la guerre in Tourcoing. The family found the parcel several month after it had been sent. Nonetheless, these elements were too slim to prolong a hope that was too furtive. The absence of factual elements contributed to forging the family legend around Gérard Dubois' disappearance. A death that left no trace in the collective memory other than the grief of his loved ones, the absence of information in Brive, a suitcase with no sender, could they not have meant anything other than an infamous disappearance, marked by collaboration and betrayal ? For decades, the family's grief was fuelled by these conflicting feelings. The irremediable construction of family guilt was nourished by the unexplained absence. The imperative need to understand the circumstances surrounding Gérard Dubois's disappearance became an indispensable quest for the truth about the real reasons behind his death.

### A DECISIVE PIECE OF EVIDENCE : GASTON RADE'S FILE

After a few telephone exchanges with the administrative officer of the service who had been

following the case from the outset<sup>9</sup>, shared curiosity led to a wider search for information in other victims' files, in an attempt to establish vital cross-references. The strenght of self-sacrifice was matched only by the riskiness of this methodology: the collection of the slightest clue became a leitmotiv. Every piece of evidence in the case file was revisited, the interviews with the protagonists revisited, the archives replayed. Not much in the way of conclusive evidence for several weeks, until an anodyne testimony from a maquisard of the 2401<sup>st</sup> F.T.P.F. company, contained in a probate file, mentioned a comrade answering to the alias of « Georges », who had arrived in the area in July 1944 with a fellow from the North.

However scant it may have been, this clue was provided to the administrative agent of the service while agreeing on the one hand on the low probability that this man from the North really was Gérard Dubois, and on the other hand on the extreme difficulty of finding a file without the slightest certainty as to his surname. A few weeks passed without the research being particularly fruitful. Then, at the end of September 2017, an enthusiastic telephone call from the Caen Defence Historical Service broke the summer tranquility to indicate that an important document had been found in the file of a certain Gaston Rade, alias « Georges ». The file of around twenty pages was sent by the Defence Historical Service: a testimony gives elements about a man who shared the last moments of Gérard Dubois.

A certain Gaston Rade<sup>10</sup>, born on 6 November



**1. The schools in Chabanais after the fighting on 1 August 1944.**

© José Délias.

**2. The main street in Chabanais, with Gaumy's pharmacy in the foreground, after the fighting on 1 August 1944.**

© José Délias.

1920, in Cosse-le-Vivien, Mayenne. On 4 October 1944, he described the last weeks he spent with Gérard Dubois in Brive-la-Gaillarde on leave. He was from Condé-sur-Noireau in southern Calvados. He lived at 18 rue Saint Martin with his parents, for whom he was responsible. To support his family, on 17 October 1942 he signed a type 4 employment certificate to go and work in Germany<sup>11</sup>. He was hired as a fitter by KRAUSS MAFFEI AG, based in Munich, Bavaria. His one-year contract stipulated that the worker's dependents, in this case his parents, would be entitled to an allowance paid by the town council, in accordance with the Ministry of Finance decrees of 25 April 1941, from the day of his departure for Germany. His contract ended at the end of 1943, and he returned to his family home in Normandy.

Gaston Rade and Gérard Dubois met at this time, and quickly became friends. They both received technical training, the former in general mechanics and the latter in wood pattern-making. Gérard Dubois followed in the professional footsteps of his father Pierre, who taught at the ICAM in Lille (*Institut Catholique des Arts et Métiers* - Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts) before taking refuge in Normandy. Shortly after Gaston Rade returned from Germany, the two friends decided to leave Condé-sur-Noireau for the Corrèze department. It was undoubtedly the growing pressure over a likely requisition for the Compulsory Labour Service (S.T.O. in french) in Germany that motivated this departure.

The two young men ended up in Brive-la-

Gaillarde (Corrèze) in the anonymity provided by this medium-sized town. The two friends looked for work there, sharing the same accommodation at 14 boulevard du Docteur Mirabeau<sup>12</sup>. News from their respective families in Normandy punctuated their life in Corrèze as the two brothers soon became involved in a passive resistance group. Together with two other comrades, Pecheyrand and Leflambe, they were active in a Secret Army (A.S.)<sup>13</sup> group of the town of Brive, led by Combes, the manager of the town centre Monoprix<sup>14</sup>. In October 1942, General Delestraint commanded a Secret Army made up of paramilitary formations in the southern zone. Thus, regional and departmental commands were established. Edmond Michelet, alias Duval, was out in charge of R5, an area comprising the three departments of Limousin plus part of Dordogne, Indre and Vienne<sup>15</sup>. In this context, several services were gradually being built around the Secret Army, such as the French Corps, air operations, the clandestine press and fake papers.

The headquarters of the regional general staff were in Brive, where Edmond Michelet lived. With the introduction of the S.T.O. on 16 February 1943, the number of resistance fighters who preferred to go underground rather than work in Germany increased rapidly, as in the case of Gérard Dubois. At the same time, the occupying forces and the Vichy government's auxiliaries hunted down Resistance organisations. In Brive, many members of the A.S. were killed, including its leader Edmond Michelet, who was arrested on



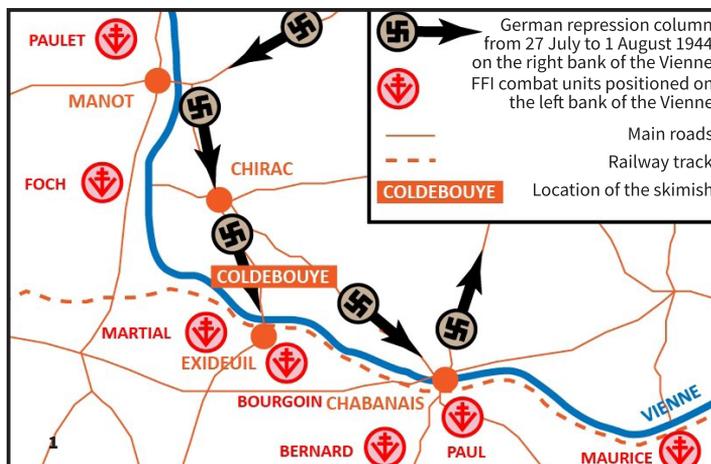
25 February 1943. For a few weeks in Corrèze, Martial Brigouleix<sup>16</sup>, the departmental leader of the A.S., took over the command. He too was arrested on 17 April 1943, two and a half months after Edmond Michelet. After the Anglo-American landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944, the A.S. in Corrèze formed four battalions that helped liberate the territory.

On 15 August 1944, they forced Major Bohmer, head of the German garrison in Brive, to sign a surrender agreement. Gérard Dubois and Gaston Rade were both part of the armed resistance in Brive, but it is not possible today to describe the role of their group more precisely. With the Anglo-American landings on 6 June 1944, French resistance took a real turn. The two friends decided to leave Corrèze as quickly as possible for Normandy. Worried about no longer having news from their families, they left their lodgings in Brive on 10 July 1944 for Condé-sur-Noireau.

### **GASTON RADE AND GÉRARD DUBOIS ON THE ROADS OF A REDEMPTIVE SUMMER**

Following the Allied landings on the Normandy beaches, bombings raged across Normandy. Towns were almost completely destroyed, as in the case of Condé-sur-Noireau, the very town where they had their family ties. The two men left Brive on the 8.30am train on 10 July 1944 and arrived in Limoges shortly before midday. They wanted to reach Poitiers, Angers, Château-Gontier and then the Condé-sur-Noireau region. The movements of occupying troops in south-western France, desperate to reach the

Normandy front, combined with operations by the internal Resistance to slow their movements northwards, complicated the journey. The Brive-Limoges link was made by train without too many problems. The rest of the journey was more difficult, as the railway line was cut in several places by acts of sabotage by F.T.P. maquisards in Limousin. Poitiers railway station had been bombed by Allied aircraft since 12 June 1944. The road was not clear either. After spending two days in Limoges, Gérard Dubois and Gaston Rade decided to join a French Red Cross team to get around more easily. They carried mail for towns in the north of France, which enabled them to slip through all kinds of checkpoints on the busy roads of July 1944. A few kilometres after leaving the town of Limoges, they were stopped by a roadblock at Saint-Bonnet-de-Bellac. Armed maquisards checked everyone travelling along the road, and were particularly suspicious of the young men, all of whom were suspected of being supporters of the occupiers. To show their good faith, they offered to fight alongside them in the operations being prepared to regain control of the Limousin countryside. After checking their identity papers, the maquisards took Gaston Rade and Gérard Dubois to the Command Post (CP) of Commandant Rémi<sup>17</sup>, head of the second sub-sector B, in a farm in the commune of Saint-Sornin-Leulac (Haute-Vienne), some thirty kilometres further east. They remained at the CP from 15 to 17 July 1944. Then on 17 July, the CP moved to a protected farm in the middle of a wooded area at Taillat in the



1. The route taken by the German repression column in the summer of 1944.

© Benoît Savy.

2. Clash between the German repression column and the maquis at Exideuil-sur-Vienne on 31 July 1944.

© Benoît Savy.

Haute-Vienne commune of Chamboret.

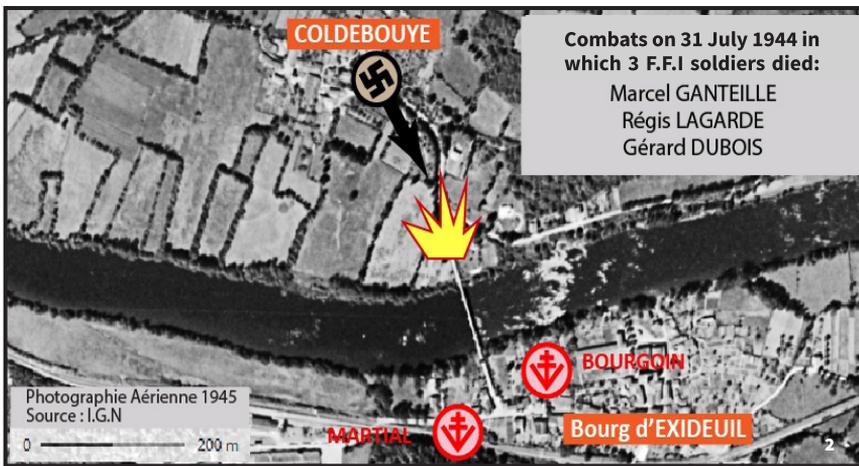
Having won the confidence of their hosts, Gaston Rade and Gérard Dubois were now armed and fully part of the maquis group commanded by two brothers with the rank of Captain Georges<sup>18</sup> and Captain Jean<sup>19</sup>. Gérard Dubois was Captain Jean's secretary and Gaston Rade was a member of the motor service, in line with his training as a mechanic.

Around 22 July, the two friends arrived at the headquarters of the second office of the Francs Tireurs et Partisans (F.T.P.)<sup>20</sup> of sub-sector C in the hamlet of Puy Mériçout in Montrollet. This group of maquisards, made up of around fifty men mostly from the neighbouring department of Haute-Vienne, had been occupying the hamlet since the end of May. Gérard Dubois took his place in an office on the ground floor of the manor house, at the end of the enclosed courtyard, while Gaston Rade installed electricity on the first floor where the officers were staying. Gaston was often on the road with Captain Georges. Gérard Dubois remained in contact with the officers through his role as secretary, particularly Lieutenants Pierre<sup>21</sup> and Robert<sup>22</sup>. Two days later, on 24 July 1944, the leaders of the maquis offered Gaston Rade and Gérard Dubois the chance to continue their journey to join their families, if they so wished. However, the two men were no longer of the same opinion : Gaston Rade wanted to get back on the road, while Gérard Dubois wanted to continue fighting in the maquis group for

the time being. After discussion, the two men decided not to split up and to remain members of the F.T.P. maquis to continue the fight against the occupying forces. Events would separate them permanently in the days that followed.

### THE LIBERATION IN CHARENTE LIMOUSINE ; THE VICTORY OF THE MAQUISARDS

Events followed very quickly for both men. Between 26 and 28 July 1944, Gérard Dubois told his comrade that he had been urgently transferred to the company stationed at Château de Pressac in the commune of Saint-Quentin-sur-Charente, under the orders of Commandant Bernard<sup>23</sup>. Gaston Rade wanted to follow his friend to the CP at Château de Pressac but he was too useful to the motor service as a mechanic. Disappointed, he remained stationed at Puy Mériçout while Gérard Dubois was already in the car taking him to Château de Pressac. They didn't both know it, but these were the last moments they would spend together in the courtyard of the hamlet of Puy Mériçout. Fighting broke out in the Vienne valley against a Wehrmacht detachment for 4 days, from 27 July to 1 August 1944. On 3 August 1944, a maquisard working as a cook at Château de Pressac went to Montrollet to give Gaston Rade some very bad news. His friend Gérard Dubois had been killed in the commune of Exideuil-sur-Vienne during clashes with German troops on 31 July 1944.



The next day, deeply affected by the death of his friend, Gaston Rade left the Puy Mérigout quarters with the members of the second office. He crossed Saint-Junien to take up a position at Vayres (87) some thirty kilometres further south. He did not want to believe in his comrade's death and questioned the officers present to find out more about the conditions in which Gérard Dubois had fought. Confirming the death of his companion, Lieutenant Robert was unable to give him all the details he requested. He simply mentioned bursts of machine-gun fire near the hamlets of Peyras and Coldebouye, villages on the heights of Exideuil-sur-Vienne close to the road between Chirac and Chabanais. On 31 July 1944, this road was used by a German column of the 608<sup>th</sup> Division, made up of almost 700 soldiers accompanied by a few militiamen. Several hundred Wehrmacht soldiers stationed at Champagne-Mouton had been reigning terror in Charente Limousine since the clash in Ambernac on 27 July 1944.

The maquis groups were on the alert, with the Foch group of Commandant Gary<sup>24</sup> in the Confolentais, Commandant Bernard's F.T.P. in the Chabanois and Bir Hacheim companies of Commandant Chabanne<sup>25</sup> further west trying to halt the column's progress. Looting and fires in Chirac led to fears of the worst for Chabanais on the one hand and for the Bernard maquis CP position at Château de Pressac on the other, only a short distance

away. The F.T.P. fighters took up positions to warn of the column's arrival by setting up outposts. Gérard Dubois was one of these men, positioned near the Chirac-Chabanais road passing through Peyras. From there, the road down to the market town of Exideuil-sur-Vienne could be approached in the best possible way. The column soon came into view and the horde attempted to cross the Vienne at Exideuil, using the road guarded by the outpost. The fight began, but the forces present were uneven. The intelligence available to the maquisards underestimated the number and weaponry of the forces involved. The maquisards of the 2410<sup>th</sup> F.T.P. company under the orders of Commandant Martial<sup>26</sup> retreated to the left bank of the Vienne under German fire<sup>27</sup>. In a sudden movement, Régis Lagarde<sup>28</sup>, the machine-gunner, Marcel Ganteille<sup>29</sup>, the rifleman and Gérard Dubois, the ammunition-server of the detachment stationed as an outpost at Peyras<sup>30</sup> fell to German bullets as they tried to cover their retreat towards the hamlet of Coldebouye. Their comrades posted on the other side of the bridge prevented the German troops from crossing the Vienne. The hamlet of Peyras was set on fire and the attackers suffered heavy casualties. Despite the size of the forces involved, the maquisards had only one watchword : to prevent the Wehrmacht regiment and the militiamen from crossing the Vienne. The bridges over the Vienne in Charente were mined.

The following day, fighting broke out in



**1. Photo of the liberation of Exideuil-sur-Vienne.**

© José Délias.

**2. Photo of Maurice Gary.**

© Reproduction, Benoit Savy.

**3. Photo of Bernard Lelay.**

© Reproduction, Benoit Savy.

**4. Photo of Régis Lagarde.**

© Reproduction, Benoit Savy

Chabanais, during which eight maquisards lost their lives, four were seriously wounded and more than sixty houses and the local schools were set on fire<sup>31</sup>.

### **THE VAIN QUEST FOR THE BODY OF GÉRARD DUBOIS**

In early August 1944, after the fighting in the Vienne valley, Gaston Rade moved heaven and earth to find out where to recover the body of his missing friend. He obtained permission from his superiors to return to the scene with a few comrades to search the area around the fighting. Unfortunately, there was no trace of Gérard Dubois' body. Apart from his friend Gaston Rade, few maquisards would have been able to identify the body of a man from the north of France, who had arrived in the maquis a fortnight earlier, with no particular ties to the area in which he was fighting.

Persevering, Gaston Rade asked the F.T.P. Health Service to see the objects collected or found on the fallen in the last days of July 1944. To his dismay, he did not recognise any object that had belonged to his comrade. However, he knew that when Gérard Dubois disappeared, he was in possession of a wallet, a sum of money of around 1,800 francs, a metal wristwatch and a metal plate on his wrist bearing his name. Despite his self-sacrifice, none of these items were found. On 6 August 1944, Gaston Rade was transferred to the depot company under Major Bernard, whom he questioned once again

about his friend's disappearance. No additional information enabled him to find the body of his companion. Gaston Rade continued his involvement in the liberation of the Charente region without losing sight of the need to shed light on his friend's tragic fate. He took part in the liberation of Angoulême on 1 September 1944 with Major Bernard's troops, and then joined the F.F.I. armoury in Marthon. He left Charente Limousine with regret as he was unable to locate his friend's body.

Were Gérard Dubois' remains taken away by German troops ? It is unlikely. Was the body the object of relentless attacks by German soldiers, as was often the case with the bodies of maquisards killed in combat ? It is entirely possible. This was common practice among German troops. Resistance fighters considered to be « terrorists » rather than conventional combatants were very often martyred once they had fallen in battle. To prevent families from recognising the maquisards, bodies and faces were mutilated with rifle butts, boots or bayonets<sup>32</sup>. Was it thrown into the nearby Vienne or did it fall into it during the fighting ? It is possible, but we do not have the opportunity today to support one hypothesis more than another, while remaining faithfully attached to historical objectivity.

However, there is one last hypothesis : Gérard Dubois could have been one of the fighters from late July 1944 who were temporarily buried in the Saint-Pierre de



Chabanais cemetery<sup>33</sup>. The Chabanais archives indicate that the remains of sixteen men, recovered from the fighting in late July and early August 1944, were quickly placed in the communal vault. Six of these men have yet to be identified. Without a body, there is no memorial for the sacrifice of this young man in the Charente region, unknown to almost everyone. Gaston Rade died in 1994 in Le Mans, taking with him the pain of losing his friend and the regret of not having been able to return Gérard Dubois' body to his family.

### **A PLACE IN THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF CHARENTE LIMOUSINE**

Gérard Dubois, a man on his way from Brive-la-Gaillarde to Normandy, lost his life in the fighting to liberate Charente Limousine. Gradually forgotten after 31 July 1944, he must now take his rightful place in the respectful memory of the men who selflessly gave their lives for the liberation of France. Even if his story is unknown in his native region, where his close family lived in expectation for several decades, his name must now resonate in its own right in these verdant valleys of Charente Limousine. As soon as Gérard Dubois' story of the death of a young man committed to the fight against barbarism was revealed, the elected representatives of Exideuil-sur-Vienne wanted to pay tribute to his sacrifice.

Thanks to the clear determination of Mayor

Jean-François Duvergne, Gérard Dubois' name will now adorn a commemorative plaque honouring his fight for the liberation of France and, more generally, will complete the Charente martyrology of the victims of the last world conflict. He was keen to affix a plaque at the ceremony marking the battle of Exideuil-sur-Vienne on 31 July 2018, when he gave a speech in tribute to this man who died doing his duty as a free man. Lastly, an application for the commendation of « Mort pour la France (Died for France) », to which this publication will be attached, should logically be made to the National Organisation of Veterans and Victims of War (O.N.A.C.V.G.) in Caen so that Gérard Dubois' role in the liberation of France be recognised by the highest national authorities and veterans' associations.



**1. Aerial photo of Exideuil-sur-Vienne, 1945.**

© IGN.

**2. Jean-François Duvergne and Benoit Savy during the ceremony of the battle of Exideuil-sur-Vienne, on 31 July 2018.**

© Charente Libre.

**3. Plaque produced by ANACR, as part of their remembrance trails, and affixed during the ceremony of the battle of Exideuil-sur-Vienne, on 31 July 2018.**

© Town of Exideuil-sur-Vienne.

## EPILOGUE

In 2012, the ANACR association set up the *Chemins de la Mémoire* (Paths of Remembrance) in the district of Chabanais. As the years went by, the veterans disappeared and with them the memories of the last months of the Second World War.

As my father lost one of his brothers in battle beside Lieutenant Colonel Bernard on the front in Royan, I have always been interested in this period of our history. It seemed obvious to me to join the association. At the suggestion of its president, the idea was to point out the locations of the different clashes with the Germans : here burned villages, there a downed plane or the place where victims of the Battle of Chabanais fell. The vast majority of these victims were well known, having been part of the local maquis for several months. Others were less well known, having come to reinforce local groups.

I had always heard about the « dead in the vines of Peyras », but had no further details. Years went by until ANACR decided to erect a stele in memory of Marcel Ganteille. Local historians are not in the habit of stopping their research in this way. Thanks to the curiosity of Benoit Savy, things gathered pace until 2018. Often, all you have to do is go through the civil registers to make some very unexpected discoveries.

This is how the second victim of Peyras was identified and his family was traced.

The name of Gérard Dubois now appears on the plaque on the Peyras stele in Exideuil, alongside Marcel Ganteille.

*Jean-François Duvergne, mayor of Exideuil-sur-Vienne and vice-president of the Charente Limousine Community of communes (2018).*



# LES CHEMINS DE LA MÉMOIRE



**MARCEL GANTEILLE**  
FTP

TUÉ PAR LES NAZIS LE 31 JUILLET 1944

◆◆◆  
**GÉRARD DUBOIS**

NÉ À LILLE LE 8 MARS 1923

TUÉ PAR LES NAZIS LE 31 JUILLET 1944

À PEYRAS D'EXIDEUIL

ET PORTÉ DISPARU LE 1<sup>ER</sup> AOÛT 1944

3



# READING NOTES / BIBLIOGRAPHY

## READING NOTES

**1** - Extract from the Registers of Birth Certificates for the year 1923, n°910, Lille Civil Status Service.

**2** - This database includes nearly 600,000 files recorded in the S.H.D. services based in Caen and at the Château de Vincennes.

**3** - File for Gérard Dubois, 21 P 337 596, Ministry of Veterans and War Victims. In the first entry, there is confusion between the Château de Pressac in the commune of Saint-Quentin-sur-Charente and the commune of Pressac in the department of Vienne.

**4** - Letter issued on 10 July 1945 by the Prefecture of Orne, 3<sup>rd</sup> bureau, Investigation in the interest of the families.

**5** - Letter from the head of the second military region to the Minister of Veterans and War Victims dated 19 February 1953, in response to the request for the personal identification and service record concerning Gérard Dubois.

**6** - Source : File 116.593F.

**7** - Interviews conducted with Sylvie Daems, President of the ANACR du Nord, and the Tourcoing Town Hall clearly confirm that Gérard Dubois' history in Charente is unknown to veterans' associations in the Nord department, as well as to the administrative authorities.

**8** - Disappearance certificate for Gérard Dubois, number 600875R, from the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims.

**9** - *Without the professional skills, kindness and self-sacrifice of Patricia Durand, agent of the Archives Unit for Victims of Contemporary*

*Conflicts at the Historical Center of Archives based in Caen, this work could not have been carried out. We once again express our gratitude to her.*

**10** - Gaston Édouard Rade was born on 6 November 1920, at Route de Laval in Cosse-le-Vivien, to Théodore Rade, 46, a saddler, and Berthe Desbois, who had no occupation. Gaston Rade married Renée Marie Henriette Perroteau on 23 March 1946 in Grez en Bouère (53). He married Ginette Alice Bellanger on 19 December 1981 in Cosse-le-Vivien and died on 27 October 1994 in Le Mans at the age of 74. Source : Certified photocopy of the 1920 civil register, Cosse-le-Vivien, 19 June 2018.

**11** - Hiring certificate for Gaston Rade, Gaston Rade file, Archives Center for Victims of Contemporary Conflicts in Caen, number AC 40 R 1654 and AC 27 P 7095.

**12** - Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, File 116.593F, letter from the Minister to the Mayor of Brive regarding civil status regularisation dated 16 September 1953.

**13** - The Secret Army (A.S.) is a resistance formation of Gaullist obedience created in September 1942, resulting from the grouping of paramilitary formations of three major resistance movements in the South zone : Combat, Libération-Sud and Franc-Tireur.

**14** - The Monoprix chain was created in 1932 in Rouen by Max Heilbronn, son-in-law of Théophile Bader (creator of the Galeries Lafayette). These stores were initially set up in the centres of medium-sized towns. We were unable to determine whether the group's comrades

**Photo of the liberation of Rochechouart, 14 July 1944.**

©Jacques Deserces.



were employees of the Brive store.

**15** - Developments on the context of Resistance A.S. in Corrèze are taken from work and interviews with Gilbert Beaubatie, historian attached to the Edmond Michelet study center and Museum in Brive. May he be warmly thanked.

**16** - Martial Brigouleix, Reserve Captain in the 126<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at Brive, a socialist and freemason, was dismissed in July 1941 from the *École Militaire Préparatoire Technique* in Tulle (19). He remained in command of the A.S. for over two months in Corrèze after the arrest of Edmond Michelet. Arrested on 17 April 1943, he was shot on 2 October 1943 at Mont Valérien.

**17** - André Boussie in civilian life (born 10 janvier 1921 in Bordeaux), was a combatant who was interned for political reasons from 10 June 1940. He was released on 26 August 1942, and joined the resistance in Haute-Vienne under the command of Georges Guingouin. Arrested by the Gestapo in Bordeaux, he escaped from the convoy that was taking him to Germany on 10 August 1943. On his return to Haute-Vienne, he joined the resistance for good, and became one of the leaders of the F.T.P.F. armed struggle, taking over military command of sub-sector B, while sub-sector C, covering south-west Haute-Vienne and Charente Limousine, was under the command of Commandant Bernard.

**18** - Georges Brousse (19 March 1921 in Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat (87) - 16 August 1945 in Confolens (16)) was one of the leaders of the second F.T.P. intelligence bureau, stationed in Montrollet in July 1944. A lieutenant in the 107<sup>th</sup>

Infantry Regiment on the Royan - La Rochelle front from late 1944 to early 1945, he died in Confolens in August 1945 in unclear circumstances, after having been at the centre of illegal purge operations in the western Haute-Vienne region.

**19** - Jean-Baptiste Brousse (1 May 1916 in Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat (87) - 1980 in Paris) was Captain Jean, member of the command triangle of the second F.T.P. bureau, sub-sector C at Montrollet in July 1944.

**20** - The F.T.P. fighting organization is a French domestic resistance movement created in 1941 by an offshoot of the French Communist Party.

**21** - Lieutenant Pierre is Lucien Baudout (9 November 1910 in Cahors - 29 August 2000 in Biarritz) in civilian life. An officer in the second bureau (Intelligence) at Montrollet in July 1944, he was involved in the liberation of Limoges and then Angoulême. He quickly climbed the ranks of the F.T.P. hierarchy to take charge of the Angoulême police force after the city's liberation on 1 September 1944, and was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in the autumn of 1944. His department moved to 23 avenue Wilson, a location vacated a few days earlier by the German Sipo-SD (Gestapo). His relations with Lieutenant-Colonel Bernard were tumultuous. Imprisoned in Bordeaux, justice caught up with him in 1947 for the many acts of violence committed by the men of Avenue Wilson in Angoulême in September and October 1944.

**22** - Lieutenant Robert, Jean Pasquet (1922 - 1974) in civilian life, was a militant communist farmer at Les Fayards in the commune of



**1. Photo of an F.T.P.F. group in the courtyard of the château de Pressac (Saint-Quentin-sur-Charente) in July 1944.**

© Private collections.

**2. Photo of Bernard Lelay in Gémozac during the liberation of the Royan pocket by Maquis forces in December 1944.**

© Charente County Archives.

Etagnac, close to Commandant Gustave (Fernand Bricout) who had taken refuge in Mons d'Etagnac in early 1942, and who had authority over all F.T.P. groups in Charente and Haut-Viennois in 1944. Jean Pasquet belonged to the group of F.T.P. officers of the Pressac Maquis. He took part in the liberation of Limoges and then Angoulême, before continuing the fight on the Royan Front in autumn 1944.

**23** - Bernard Le Lay (29 October 1911 in Bourbiac (22) - 1 June 1975 in Bobigny (93)) worked as a typesetter for the newspaper *l'Humanité* before the war. He joined the French army in Morocco in 1939 and returned to the free zone in Saint-Victurien (87) when the armistice was signed. An active Communist, he was kept under surveillance by the French authorities in Vichy. He earned living as a farm labourer and quarryman in Exideuil-sur-Vienne (16), before joining the resistance in 1943 in the Monts de Blond. He took charge of the F.T.P. companies in the area at the end of June 1944, setting up his command post at Château de Pressac. His troops took part in the liberation of Limoges at the end of August 1944, and captured Angoulême on 1 September 1944. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and put in charge of the Angoulême subdivision. At the liberation, he resigned from the army and came into conflict with the Charente Communist Party organisation chart after his defeat in the April 1945 municipal elections in Lésignac-Durand (16) at the head of a socialist-communist union list.

He withdrew from the area and became a farmer in Chazelles (16). In the early fifties, he resumed his militant activities at the request of his former troops, and actively led the movement of former maquisards, thanks to the respectability he had gained through his courage and feats of arms in 1944. He resumed his activity as a typesetter in the 1950<sup>s</sup> in the Paris region.

Sources : *Renseignements Généraux* file on Bernard Le Lay n°4885 - Charente County Archives, reference code 1781W63.

**24** - Maurice Gary (1898 in Paris - 1973), stationmaster in Confolens, joined the passive resistance in 1940, along with a first group whose main members were arrested in December 1943. He was one of the leaders of the Foch group, and took part in the liberation of the region. He was wounded and lost his son Jean (born 7 May 1925 in Saint-Sébastien (23)), who was enlisted alongside him on 27 July 1944 in Ambernac.

**25** - André Chabanne (1914 in Cherves-Châtelars (16) - 1963 in Beurlay (17)), a schoolteacher by training, joined the Resistance in 1943 to rescue his comrades from the S.T.O. by organizing their hiding places in the shacks in the region. With the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he commanded the Bir-Hacheim maquis during the liberation of Angoulême, and took command of the Saintes military subdivision in September 1944. Elected deputy for the Charente region in 1945, he joined the civil service after the war and died in a road accident in 1963.



**26** - Commandant Martial, Jean Dubourdeau (28 septembre 1918 in Saint-Junien (87) - 20 October 2008 in Hiersac (16)) joined the Resistance at the end of 1942. An accountant by training, he quickly became one of the leaders of the Pressac maquis. Becoming head of the second F.T.P. battalion, he entered Angoulême on 31 August 1944 via the plateau, where he played an active rôle in the liberation. He continued his commitment to the army, taking part in the fighting on the Royan Front, leaving the army for good in 1960.

**27** - The movement is described in particular in CORDET F., 2004.

**28** - Régis Lagarde (13 February 1923 in La Chapelle-Montbrandeix (87) - 31 July 1944 in Exideuil (16)), a member of the Bernard maquis, was killed as he retreated to the right bank of the Vienne near the bridge that has borne his name since 2012.

**29** - Marcel Ganteille (1 April 1927 in Saulgond (16) - 31 juillet 1944 in Exideuil (16)), a member of the Bernard maquis, died in the same conditions as his comrade Régis Lagarde.

**30** - This version is corroborated by the report of Captain Bourgoïn, Commander of the Third F.T.P. Battalion, page 10. Source : Charente County Archives, reference code 18J30. F.T.P. combat groups generally consisted of a machine-gunner, an ammunition-server, a rifleman and a group leader with lighter weapons. Indeed, in F.T.P. combat groups, everyone had a very specific role to play in the service of a collective military item. For the group in question, the Bren sub-machine gun from British parachute drops was to be the main weapon. The ammunition-server's job was to replace empty magazines with full ones, and the rifleman would

supply the ammunition-server with ammunition. In the field, however, improvisation was the order of the day among groups of young men with no real military combat training.

**31** - This event has been described in great detail in the literature, notably in : DELIAS J., 2000, *La Bataille de Chabonais*, Edigraphic, Saint-Maurice des Lions, GIRAUD J., 1944, *Les Confolentais dans la seconde guerre mondiale*, Edition La Peruse, CORDET F., 2004, *Carnets de guerre en Charente*, Édition De Borée, HONTARREDE G., 1987, *Ami entends-tu ? L'occupation et la résistance en Charente*, Published by the *Université populaire de Ruelle*, HONTARREDE G., 2004, *La Charente dans la seconde guerre mondiale*, Édition Le Croix Vif.

**32** - This relatively common practice was carried out by German soldiers on the seven F.F.I. killed at Gué du Bredin in Chabonais on 1 August 1944, as revealed by the hearings of the *gendarmerie* investigation into the battle of Chabonais, carried out between October 1944 and June 1945. Charente County Archives, File 1W85.

**33** - This hypothesis is drawn from the work of José Délias who identified ten of the sixteen fighters by going through Chaban archives, whose names follow : Pavoine, Mortier, Boisseau, Labrousse, Philipps, Winterstein, Keber, Sardin, Dumortier and Ferreira.



**Photo of André Chabanne.**  
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# GÉRARD DUBOIS, A FORGOTTEN VICTIM OF THE COMBATS IN EXIDEUIL - JULY 1944

## DISCOVER THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN CHARENTE LIMOUSINE

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# «TO BUILD A MEMORY IT IS SOMETIMES STRANGELY NECESSARY TO START BY FORGETTING.»

Xavier Laroudie, *Un seul châtiment pour les traîtres, Haute-Vienne 1944, épuration et libération dans la douleur*, Geste Édition, 2016.

## **Tales of the Confolentais, Land of art and history...**

... in the company of guides approved by the Ministry of Culture. They know the area perfectly and give you the keys to understanding a landscape, a town and a village from one district to another.

## **The Confolentais (in Charente Limousine) is a member of the national network of Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire - Towns and Lands of art and history**

Inside the Ministry of Culture, the General Directorate of Heritage awards the label « Towns and Lands of art and history » to local authorities that promote their heritage. It guarantees the expertise of the guides, those involved in promoting architecture and heritage and the quality of their actions. From architecture to landscapes, the towns and lands show heritage in all its diversity. Today, a network of 202 towns and lands offers its expertise throughout France.

**The Heritage service** leads the « Land of art and history » agreement signed between the Charente Limousine Community of communes and the Ministry of Culture. It organizes various activities to discover and promote the territory's heritage to its inhabitants and visitors. It is at the disposal of the communes and local structures for any project.

## **Nearby**

In the Nouvelle Aquitaine Region : the towns of Bayonne, Bergerac, Bordeaux, Cognac, Dax, La Réole, Limoges, Pau, Périgueux, Rochefort, Royan, Saintes, Sarlat, Thouars ; the lands of GrandAngoulême, of Grand Châtellerault, of Grand Poitiers, of Grand Villeneuve, of Hautes Terres Corrésiennes et Ventadour, of Île de Ré, of Mellois en Poitou, of Monts et Barrages, of Parthenay-Gâtine, of Pyrénées béarnaises, of Saint-Jean-de-Luz et Ciboure, Vézère et Ardoise, of Vienne et Gartempe.

## **For all information**

Land of art and history service  
Charente Limousine Community of communes  
8 rue Fontaine des jardins  
16 500 Confolens  
Tel : 05.45.84.14.08.  
celine.deveza@charente-limousine.fr  
Charente Limousine Tourist Office -  
8 rue Fontaine des jardins - 16 500  
Confolens  
Tel : 05.45.84.22.22.  
tourisme@charente-limousine.fr  
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This brochure reproduces the article written by Benoit Savy. A History-Geography teacher and Doctor of Physical Geography, he has been conducting historical research for nearly 10 years on the structuring of Resistance movements and the Liberation in Charente and Haute-Vienne. He has a number of publications to his credit, based on a critical methodology of the historical works available, the various archives and the eyewitness accounts he has gathered.



Direction régionale  
des Affaires culturelles  
de Nouvelle-Aquitaine



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