



THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION



THE GERMAN OCCUPATION



THE RESISTANCE



INTERVIEW OF MARIE MARMOTTAN

THE WAR LIFE



For the 70 anniversary of the end of Second World War, this little flashback will bring you back during the time when the Savoy was occupied.

Italian Occupation

25th of June 1940 – 8th of September 1943.

During the month of June 1940, some of Savoy's villages were evacuated because of the Italian's bombing. When the population came back in their houses, they noticed that it was sacking. Originally, the sacking was forbidden by the Italian officers, however, it was an individual and unorganized act to take it out on the opponent. During three interminable days, villages were ruined. The 19th of July, the free villages inhabitants (Bourg Saint Maurice, Tignes, Val d'Isère) came back easily, whereas the occupied villages inhabitants (Séiez, Sainte Foy, Montvalezan) struggled to come back, Nevertheless, their daily life was ruled by Mussolini's government, Several laws were set up : Savoy's inhabitants had



to possess an Italian identity card , they must to go to school where the lesson was in Italian, the official money was lira and others modifications.

Political, economic and administrative power were controle by Italian captain, who apply the

“bando”, type of rules. In August, the population began to come back. But lots of administrative problems appeared because of the set up of the “bando. For example, famers have to pay taxes for their production. It is in September that Italians Soldiersran away by the col of the petit saint Bernard. The Italians occupied Savoy during 3 years.

German Occupation

9th of September 1943- 7th of August 1944

The 9th September of 1943, lot's of German soldiers took the place of the Italian soldiers. The Savoy became occupied by the German. It was a big organization, some Wehrmacht's groups were bring while gunmen watch after the population and if someone came too close or did some protest he was shot down. It was very difficult for the Italian troop to come back quickly in Italia so in the Aoste Valley because of their huge equipment and truck. Some of it was out of order or wedge on the road. They were scared because, in this time the relation between Italia and Germany was bad so the german's troops could attack them. After two days on the road the Italians have reached the Thuile of Aoste.

Bombings



The German established their quarters in Bourg-Saint-Maurice and Séez. In these two city, they were injured soldier who were on the East Front, in Russia. They were hate by the population because of their bad behavior with the inhabitants. Some of german's came in the house and still some precious thing or just the food. It was horrible for the inhabitants to live with this type of neighborhood who wasn't any respect and who install a climate of fear in all the valley of Tarentaise. The quarters in Savoy were used by the german in order to do some military training. After some time, the war against the resistance started. First, the soldiers asked at all the men to came and showed their Identity cards, if a resistance fighter was recognize, he was capture and probably killed. Time after time, the german went back. The 8th September 1944, the weren't any Troops in the Valley. The German government knew that the end of the war was close and decided to protect their country, that's why the troops in savoy came back in german.



The Resistance

Too often, we forget that resistance fighters were « normal » men before becoming a myth, and have never been soldiers. They were farmers, skiers, mountaineers or even hunters ; in short, highlanders who had a good knowledge of the mountains and its harsh conditions. But above all, they were young men driven by their desire to release their villages occupied by the fascists.

➤ Italian Occupation :

Italian Occupation has two steps. The first one from June 1940 to the 11th November 1942 took place in the villages of Séez, Montvalezan, and Sainte Foy. The second one set up in the entire South East of France from the 11th November 1942 to the 8th September 1943.

During the first step, the Occupation of the wide Sainte Foy's village was spatially restricted. Despite the Officers instructions and the good intentions of a few, Italians sacked the empty houses. These kind of acts brought shame on those who did it and even on the whole Italy. In fact, it fueled hatred and an anti-italian feeling of revenge. A patriotic and even nationalist feeling seized Savoy despite the tensions between the different villages. It is this special feeling which raised the resistance spirit and by the way the categorical refusal of the defeat and the armistice. After all, the defeat hurt the resistance fighters even if they start to feel the fascist breakdown since the beginning of 1943 while the occupants didn't even see it coming. The echo of the Allied landing in Sicily in the 25th of July and then, the fall of Mussolini gave the resistance fighters a glimpse of the Italian Occupation's end. Although they were suspicious about it, the fast leaving of the Italian army from the occupied area between the 8th and the 9th September let everyone surprised. But their pleasure was of brief duration since the German army landed during the 9th night.

➤ German Occupation :

How to resist ?

The testimony of a young resistance fighter, Ulysse Bozonet will answer this question : « Resisting, for us, young people of the region, must be military-type structured measures, but organized and reflected so as to limit the risks even if the older ones had already given a restricted arms training to the younger ones. Ressources were lacking in several cases even if we had provided a stock of weapons and prepared the first hideouts. » We cannot miss the important place of the Captain Emile Paganon in this young resistance fighter section, for his fighting experience in the army. He is the one who taught them the basis of the military training. Among the 55 volunteers with different hiding politic opinions, from the « gaullistes » to the communists, but all opposed to the CWS (Compulsory Working Service) or STO in French, born and raised in the Tarentaise villages, nearly none of them had followed a proper military service. They are in majority novice but at the same time driven by an unstoppable wish to defeat the nazi enemy who was strengthened his positions along the Isère’s right coast. Despite severals obstacles like the arrestation of companions or some defeats, the resistance fighters of the « Paganon section » fought with fierce in several struggles in the Chapieux or even in the Aosta Valley. As everybody knows, the resistance stopped when the war ended in 1945, as well with the fights and the Occupation whereas such an experience built unforgettable memories and a strong friendship between each resistance fighters.

Despite an unequal struggle against the German and the Italian army, the Alps army overcame an unbelievable challenge : she saved a part of the national territory, avoided the arrestation of her men, brought an unbreakable faith and hope to the population and of course, taught the resistance fighter spirit.



Interview

Name : Marmottan

Surname : Marie

Birth : 1927

Memory of the war in Savoy

I was 13 years old and I lived in a small villages of Sainte Foy Tarentaise. One day, a people from the village knew that Italy had declared War to France. He told that to the mayor, who decided to evacuate the village to protect the inhabitants. They had to pack some clothes and leave their houses, with all the animals in the village. Helped by some soldiers we went to Aime on foot and then we had to take to train in order to go to a small village in Haute Loire, where the mayor welcomed them. We travelled in a train reserved to livestock. The mayor on the village in Haute Loire put up family in different houses. Me and the order child went to school. And Men and women helped to cultivate the field, in exchange we could have some foods to eat. We stayed one month over there. When we came back to their village, we had discover that the village of Sainte Foy Tarentaise and Villaroger had burnt. We saw our houses marked by some crosses and some Italians words who signified that the house had been search. The house were sacked, foods, clothes, animals, furniture and some valuable object were steal. Some houses were also flood. Italians soldiers were still in the village, then the carabineer controlled our identity. After that, we saw German Soldiers with their dogs, who occupied the villages. They had set up the curfew at 9 p.m. The German Occupation were very harsh, the conditions dreadful. It was the darkest period of my entirely life.

