

G rard Pichot (1921 - 2010)

Born in the small village of Tourtenay (in the region of Deux-S vres where the school of our former French partners is also located), the young farmer G rard Pichot joined the French resistance movement “*Organisation Civile et Militaire*” at the young age of 22.



Having been brought up as a republican with humanistic values, it was self-evident for him and his whole family to join the resistance against the Nazi occupation. Therefore, G rard, along with his father L once Pichot, his father-in-law, his brother-in-law and a few other resistance fighters formed a group of clandestine resistance fighters that undertook several paramilitary missions against the occupiers.

In June 1943, the group’s mission was to find and save material in two containers on parachutes dropped from British planes. The material was brought to the village and hidden away from the Nazis in secret cellars. But the Nazis, who knew of such clandestine missions, investigated and caught most members of the group on August 9, 1943. G rard Pichot, who was not at his farm that day, was caught 10 days later (August 19, 1943).

After some weeks in prison (in Poitiers), he was deported to the concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany on January 1944.

The concentration camp Buchenwald was close to several military production sites where the Nazis made forced labour workers produce airplanes, rockets and other military weapons mostly in underground production sites, one of these being called “Mittelbau Dora”.

On November 10, 1944, G rard Pichot was transferred from concentration camp Buchenwald to the “Dora” production site where he first had to work in a unit transporting material to the underground site. Later he was shifted to the depot which eased his life a bit.

When in early April 1945, the concentration camp was liberated, G rard Pichot finally was free and after a long dangerous trip, he returned to Paris on May 8, 1945 – the day when Nazi Germany surrendered and the war was over.

G rard Pichot and other surviving resistance fighters founded the “Conservatoire de la R sistance et de la D portation” (an organisation commemorating the Nazi occupation and the French resistance against it) in 1986. G rard Pichot’s tireless efforts after the war were focussed on the young generations: he addressed students to teach them the values that the resistance movement had fought for and called young people to stay alert whenever human rights are endangered and to stand up for the values of humanity.