

Ginette Mars *alias* Claude Vaillant (1925 – 2013)

Ginette Mars was born and raised in Paris before her family moved to the town of Sainte-Néomaye (in the region Deux-Sèvres where the school of our former partners is located) in 1938.

Both her father, a police officer, and her mother were active in the resistance movement. At the young age of only 17 and a half, Ginette returned to Paris to join a group of resistance fighters and partisans called “Michel”. In order to hide her real identity she called herself Claude Vaillant from then on.



Ginette Mars / Claude Vaillant was a very courageous young woman, completing a large number of very dangerous missions:

- She wrote, printed and distributed resistance leaflets, and organized women’s demonstrations against supply shortages.
- After the Germans had introduced forced labour for all French men, she organized fake ID cards and papers and helped hiding a number of men.
- She also organized fake identities for the families of people who had been executed or deported to concentration camps – a very dangerous mission because these families were observed by the Nazis.
- As a member of the organization “L’Assistance française” she kept track of the executions, deportations, tortures and other atrocities committed by the Nazis and the collaborating French.

In June 1944, while her father continued resistance in Paris (making use of his position as police officer), she and her mother returned to their house in Sainte-Néomaye. Until September she worked with the “Francs-Tireurs et Partisans” (irregular army and partisan organization that became a part of the regular army after WW II) as a liaison officer and was responsible for guiding allied parachutists to hiding places. And she took part in sabotage missions of blowing up railway lines and German trucks to cut supply lines.

After the region had been liberated by the allies in early September 1944, Claude Vaillant / Ginette Mars continued her valuable work in the French army as a secretary at the French army headquarters but returned to her civil life in June 1945.