

La fin d'un résistant : André Bazeau.



Témoignage de Madame Josette Bazeau-Bussy, fille d'André Bazeau à propos de la mort de son père, André Bazeau.

*Mon père a été recruté dans la Saône-et-Loire, en zone libre où il allait régulièrement, étant chauffeur-livreur de boissons aux établissements Boudot à Lavoncourt. Ayant rencontré un responsable de maquis en 1941, M Heinzlé, dit "Julot", il a accepté d'entrer dans la Résistance comme agent de liaison entre les différents maquis de la Haute-Saône puis comme responsable B.O.A pour les parachutages.*

*Les maquisards à ce moment-là, n'étaient pas très bien vus par certains Français à qui le régime de Vichy convenait très bien.*

*Le maquis de Confracourt était composé de Louis Guerrin et Serge son fils, Auguste Mortier, E Pasquet, François Dija (père) et les réfractaires au STO : Émile Jacquin, Pierre Bégeot, André Arnault, Jean Taponnot. Il y avait aussi Robert Ponsot, M Hubacher notre boulanger qui leur portait du pain (c'est le père de Mme Denise Mortier). Ernest Raclot (père d'Alfred) leur portait à manger au bois.*

Mon père a reçu l'ordre de Londres de trouver un terrain et préparer la réception d'un parachutage avec d'autres maquisards : Émile Jacquin, Auguste Mortier, Louis Guerrin et son fils Serge, Pierre Bégeot et le Commandant Roch qui supervisait tous les maquis, pour la nuit du 9 au 10 septembre 1944. Ce fut le lieu-dit "La Cadette" sur le territoire de Confracourt

Émile Jacquin, prenait les messages chez Richardot au moulin, chez les grands parents de Claude et Marie-Rose Boulot, ce qui n'était pas sans risques. Le message de Londres était : "Ne louvoyez pas sur le rail" trois fois.

Le parachutage s'est à peu près bien passé : des armes ainsi que trois hommes : un colonel américain, Walter Booth, et deux Anglais. Mais il manquait de l'armement.

Le colonel est revenu presque chaque année à Confracourt. Je l'ai bien connu. Les Anglais, eux, ne sont pas revenus. Le parachutage s'était bien passé. Le colonel avait été reçu chez M et Mme Patillot où habite Raymond Raclot. Il se cachait là.

M et Mme Patillot sont les parents de Denise Patillot-Lamblin qui est en retraite de l'enseignement à Chantes.

Mon père était responsable de ce parachutage. Le chef des résistants de Confracourt était le commandant Roch, gendre du docteur Blanchard de Vauconcourt.

Le lendemain, mon père était chez ma grand-mère, mère de maman, lorsque le frère de maman est venu lui dire : « Il faut te sauver au maquis, les boches sont dans le pays ! ». Il faut dire aussi que l'armée SS s'était arrêtée parce qu'à hauteur de la laiterie, un gendarme de Combeaufontaine, sur sa moto, le fusil en bandoulière, parlait avec une jeune fille de Confracourt. Ce gendarme qui a commis là une grosse erreur, était lui aussi résistant.

Si les SS n'avaient pas vu ces personnages parler (avec une arme de surcroît), ils ne se seraient pas arrêtés. Le gendarme a réussi à fuir, lui.

Mon oncle, entre temps, était allé se cacher dans une maison située rue du Caron, mais les Allemands l'ont pris.

Mon père - avec son vélo - est monté au chemin du cimetière (mais avec dans sa poche, le relevé du parachutage destiné au commandant Roch et son revolver). Au virage, près de la croix, il s'est arrêté près de Mme Armande Pasquet et lui a dit qu'il rejoignait le maquis parce que les "boches" étaient au pays. Et puis il s'est retourné et a dit à Armande : « Voilà les Russes, je vais partir avec eux ». Tout à coup il a vu que c'étaient les "boches", il a dit : « Je suis perdu ! ».

Ils l'ont emmené à la laiterie où ils l'ont questionné "comme savaient le faire des SS".

Plus tard, Robert Ponsot m'a déclaré : « Je ne veux pas te dire ce qu'ils lui ont fait subir... ». Mon père disait aux SS : « Je ne connais personne. Je ne suis pas d'ici ».

Après, ils l'ont mis contre les portes de grange de chez Bessière (chez Françoise Faivre). "L'interrogatoire" a continué. Mme Marthe Bessière voulait ouvrir les portes de la grange pour qu'il se sauve, mais ils l'auraient tuée.

Puis ils l'ont enfermé dans la cave de la mairie et tous les hommes de Confracourt dans la salle au-dessus.

Le frère de maman était avec mon père à la cave. Mon père lui disait : « Tu diras que tu ne me connais pas, moi je suis perdu ».

Le plus gradé des SS l'a interrogé pour savoir s'il y avait des résistants au bois. Il a toujours dit qu'il n'était pas d'ici. M Soubriard, un habitant du pays

(Alsacien) a tenté de faire libérer mon père, mais peine perdue ! Ma grand-mère est allée parlementer pour son fils (le frère de maman). Ils lui ont dit qu'il serait relâché faute de preuves. Puis elle a demandé ce qu'ils allaient faire de mon père, la réponse a été : « Demain, il sera passé par les armes... » (donc le 11 septembre 1944). Ma grand-mère a eu un malaise (c'était son gendre).

Les maquisards voulaient attaquer la mairie, mais le Commandant Roch n'a pas voulu : « Trop risqué. Ils vont brûler tout le pays ».

Après des coups de fouet dans le dos, les poignets cassés, ils l'ont emmené sur le chemin de la scierie où l'on suppose qu'ils lui ont fait creuser son trou, peu profond. M Gauthier a entendu les coups de fusils. Un peu plus tard, il est allé sur place. Il a vu ses pieds qui dépassaient et là M Pasquet l'a ramené sur son chariot chez ma grand-mère (ou habite M Charlier).

Il avait trente ans, maman vingt-neuf ans et moi deux ans. Il a été enterré trois jours après parce qu'il fallait attendre des gradés venus de loin. Il paraît qu'il y avait une foule énorme et des drapeaux de partout (c'était encore la guerre).

Mon père a obtenu la Légion d'Honneur, la Médaille de la Résistance, la Médaille Militaire avec palme et une médaille américaine (très belle) que le Colonel Booth a demandé aux autorités américaines pour lui avoir sauvé la vie en ne le dénonçant pas.

Le colonel Booth revenait souvent au pays. Il se rendait à chaque fois sur la tombe de mon père où il se tenait au garde-à-vous. Il voulait m'emmener en vacances en Californie (j'avais une dizaine d'années). Maman n'a pas voulu...

Maman et moi devions aller aux Invalides pour la remise des médailles. Hélas, nous n'avons pas pu. C'est un officier résistant de Vesoul, M Claude Vougnon originaire de Vaivre, qui me les a remises (j'avais dix-sept ans) au monument du maquis à Confracourt avec la musique militaire de Vesoul et beaucoup de monde. C'était bouleversant. Maman m'avait dit : « Tu ne pleureras pas ». Je n'ai pas pleuré, mais elle si, je la voyais.

Pendant la cérémonie j'écoutais les oiseaux.

Je me rends souvent au monument du maquis et j'entends encore les oiseaux...

Avec mon fils, nous porterons les médailles de mon cher père au musée de la Résistance à Besançon.

Il faut dire également que le père de maman fut tué vers Notre-Dame de Lorette où il est enterré. Il est mort le 20 janvier 1915 à l'âge de trente-cinq ans. Maman est née le 17 mars 1915. Ma grand-mère avait déjà deux filles...

Les guerres apportent des décennies de malheur dans les familles et cela continue.

*Le Général de Division René-Louis Omnes (C.R.) alias "Simoun".*

*Madame, fille d'un brave.*

*C'est avec émotion que je lis le décès de votre mère, épouse d'André Bazeau "La Biche" patron dans mon secteur du B.O.A.*

*Il avait organisé nos trois parachutages ... nous nous entendions bien et il est venu plusieurs fois à mon quartier. Sa disparition fut un choc. Chaque fois que je le fais je revivie sa mémoire ... dans les lycées et collèges.*

*Je vous présente en mon propre nom et surtout de la part de tous les survivants du Mages 82, mes très respectueuses condoléances.*

*Veuillez agréer également l'expression de mes hommages et de mes sentiments affectueux.*

*rue Rebeval - 75019 Paris*

*Fam et Écl. :*

*rue Jean Rogé - 70170 Port sur Saône*

*René Omnes*

*Écl. :*

Page suivante : Relation de son séjour au maquis de Confracourt par le Colonel Walter Booth.

La traduction est en cours et sera ajoutée au document lorsqu'elle sera disponible.



# The Shrine

By Waller B. Booth

The village of Confrancourt nestles in rolling, wooded country in the French Department of the Haute-Saone near the latter's capital city of Vesoul and not far from the Swiss and German frontiers. It has, as it has had for centuries, some 200 inhabitants.

About one and a half kilometers north of the village is the wood, the Bois de Confrancourt, and at the edge of the village, on the road to bois, is a church.

In the churchyard, just past the gate and to the left, lies a grave which is always tidy and adorned with flowers. There is no tombstone, just a wooden cross ornamented with flagstone and tinzel, to which are affixed two enamelled plaques. One was placed there by the Association of French War Veterans to indicate the last resting place of one of their members. The other says, "To My Husband, Who Died for France."

The grave is that of Andre Gaston Bazeau who, on or about the 12th of September, 1944, at the age of 30, died not only for France but for principle and for his comrades of the Maquis, of whom I am honored to have been one.

To me and those others who are living because of his courage and sacrifice, Andre Bazeau's grave is a shrine, and a symbol.

OSS-FFI "Mission Marcel" consisting of four young officers, two American and two French, and myself, was parachuted to the Maquis de Confrancourt on the night of September 9, 1944. Our mission was to aid Maquis in every way possible and to provide combat intelligence for the allied forces. Scheduled for early August, our departure had been twice postponed and we had missed the August moon.

By the time we were dropped, the Haute-Saone was swarming with German troops withdrawing from the west and south. Confrancourt, lying on a narrow, unpaved country road between two highways used heavily by the Germans in their retreat, offered an excellent base for the work for which we had trained so long.

Upon our arrival, we were warmly welcomed by a surprised "Reception Committee," which had been expecting only a supply drop and no "boodies." The commander of the Maquis, a former major in the Chasseurs Alpins, the "Blue Devils" of World War I, was also present. The latter, who went by the "nom de guerre" of Darc, appeared pleased to have reinforcements, no matter how small, and was happy to receive first hand information of friends and events amongst the Free French under Generals De Gaulle and Koenig in London.

Darc chatted with us while the "Reception Committee" attended to finding the containers of supplies, arms, and ammunition which had been dropped with us, and loading them on to horse carts.

I had noticed an attractive young woman in the group that greeted us. This surprised me for I had not expected to find any pretty girls engaged in the dangerous business of receiving aerial deliveries right under the noses of the Germans. As I was talking to Darc the young woman passed near us and I asked who she was.

"That's Mme. Bazeau," he said. "She looks feminine, I know, but she's very strong. And that Hercules," he indicated a broad shouldered man putting a container single-handedly onto a cart. "Is Bazeau, her husband. They're two of the best." As I was to learn later, he was not exaggerating.

THE "CHAMP de parachute," the drop zone, lay between the village and the wood and when the first cart was loaded it set off in the direction of the latter. Nothing, in the bright moonlight, my look of inquiry, Darc said: "My troops are in the bois. I have a headquarters in the village and a command post in the wood. You see," he went on, "the Maquis consists of more than merely the citizens of Confrancourt. I have men from all over France, and, very important, I have a 'Force de Surprise.' You and your officers will sleep in the village tonight but in the morning I will take you to the wood and show you."

When the last cart had trundled off, with Bazeau and two other men serving as scouts to avoid ambush, we proceeded cautiously to Confrancourt. It was 2 a.m. when we entered the hamlet and in the moonlight and dark shadows, the old stone buildings looked like a stage set from "Cyrano de Bergerac." It seemed incongruous that danger and evil could have any place amidst such beauty. But that they did was vividly emphasized to us as we huddled behind a wall of the town hall while the scouts checked with wives whose husbands were members of the "Reception Committee." A trick of the Gestapo was to lie in wait in homes where the man of the house was absent after nightfall.

Darc had us called early, provided us, to our surprise, with what he called a "petit dejeuner anglais" of eggs and bacon, and, accompanied by three of his staff, took us off to the bois to inspect the troops. The junior officers went ahead and Darc and I followed at a slower pace. On the way he talked strictly "shop."

"The strength of the Maquis de Confrancourt," he said, "derives from the fact that there is not a traitor in the area; consequently, our operations have been exceptionally rewarding. Of course, this has attracted increasing attention and sooner or later the Boches (the always called the Germans Boches) will pin-point Confrancourt as the focus of activity. Normally, this would be fatal but we are very strong in two respects. First, we shall have excellent intelligence of his strengths and dispositions and he will know nothing about us."

"HOW CAN you say that?" I asked. "There may be no traitors in the area but the Gestapo are past masters at getting people who don't want to talk to do so."

"Correct," Darc replied. "But the people who aren't maquisards don't know anything. Every citizen around is a part of the 'Resistance' but only those who are active members of the FFI — the Maquis — come into the wood. The people are now wise to the ways of the Boche through happenings elsewhere and don't want to know more than they need to. What they don't know they can't be forced to tell; and they don't know about my surprise Force."

My curiosity overcame me. "I don't want to jump the gun, Major," I said, "but that is the second time you have mentioned your Surprise Force. Just what does it consist of?"

"That is the other respect in which we are strong," he

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answered, "formidable in fact. My Surprise Force consists of 769 combat veterans, well armed, equipped and supplied, and all in German uniforms." He paused, then continued, "It's one of the great stories of the war."

"But I don't understand," I said. "Where did they come from?"

"I will tell you very briefly," replied Darc, "as we have almost reached the wood. The men are Ukrainians who, like many other anti-Communists when the Boches invaded their country, defected to the Wehrmacht. This particular battalion are what, after three years, remains of a regiment of a Waffen SS division. They were cadred by 117 Boche SS officers and non-coms and three weeks ago sent to Dampierre, which is twenty kilometers from here, with the mission of wiping us out. They were told they were being sent to exterminate 'barbarians.' He stopped in his tracks. 'Barbarians!' he snorted. 'Imagine the dirty Boche calling the good people of the Haute-Saone barbarians!'

"WELL, ANYWAY," he went on, "after the battalion had been kept a week or more in a camp (Dampierre), the Ukrainians appeared to be better disposed toward the French than toward the Boches. Two of our young officers who had gone to school in Germany, when they heard this, asked permission to go down to Dampierre and see what they could do. To make a long story short, they returned 11 days later, which was six days ago, with 769 Ukrainian officers and men, 157 horses, 115 horse-drawn vehicles, three field kitchens, a field hospital and, in addition to a complete complement of small arms, heavy machine guns, light and heavy mortars and 57 mm anti-tank guns, together with large stores of ammunition for all of the weapons. They had fomented, organized and led a mutiny of the Ukrainians in which all the Boches were killed."

It was an amazing recital. The achievement of the two young men was tantamount to having killed 117 enemy and captured 769 with all their arms and equipment. In addition, they had increased the strength and firepower of their own forces many times over. It was a graphic illustration of the disproportionate returns on investment that guerrilla warfare offers when skillfully waged. I agreed with the major; truly it was one of the great stories of the war.

We had entered the edge of the woods as Darc finished his tale and we of "Mission Marcel" found we had entered upon one of the busiest periods of our lives.

The first item on the agenda was the inspection of the troops, the maquisards, about whom the only thing uniform was the FFI band on their left arms, and the Ukrainians in smart German uniforms. Then we set about the task of knowing the people we needed to help us get on with our job. These were the intelligence officer of the Maquis, Bazeau (who had friends in all the surrounding villages and towns and, therefore, a large range of operation) and the two young Frenchmen who had insisted that guerrilla warfare was the only way to win and served as commander and executive officer of the battalion.

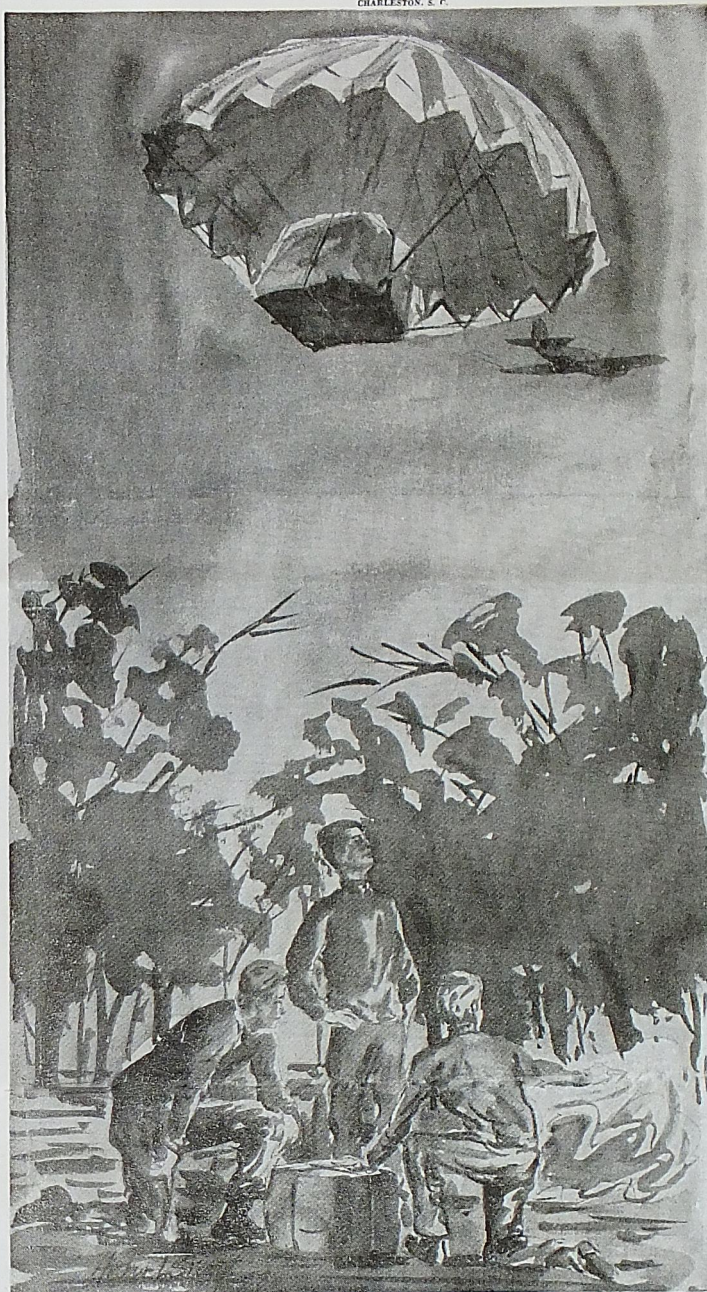
The latter were important because of their successful employment of the Ukrainians as decoys to lure the Germans into ambush. This provided prisoners, often wounded, who were shaken and demoralized, and, hence, lucrative sources of information.

WE RECEIVED the complete co-operation of all concerned and everything went very well indeed until the afternoon of the 12th when, as was inevitable and Darc had foreseen, the Germans moved in. We had ample warning and when the Nazi commander took over Confrancourt and established his headquarters there, he found only women, children and old men. All the younger men, with the exception of Bazeau who had gone down to Gray on an intelligence mission for us, were in the wood. The only surprising thing was the strength in which the enemy arrived. Columns poured in and by the end of the afternoon the wood was surrounded by a force of some 5,000, comprised of infantry, artillery and armor, under the command of a major general. Their deployment indicated that they would try to use the "hammer" of their artillery and armor to crush us against the "anvil" of their infantry around the opposite perimeter of the bois. In Confrancourt the old men and older boys, a total of 46, had been locked up in the town hall as hostages and stringent security measures had been taken there and in the neighboring villages. Nevertheless, there was an almost constant flow of information to the wood. Part of this came from scouts from the Maquis but it was largely the work of women, who served as observers, and children, who used ditches as communication trenches to get messages through to us.

As report after report of the continuing German build up reached us our situation began to appear to me to be pretty desperate. However, the confidence and evident competence of Darc, the determination of the maquisards, and the consideration that, instead of a handful of irregulars as the Germans thought, we had almost 900 well armed, experienced fighting men, served to revive my waning hope.

One important factor in our favor was that the enemy could make no dispositions of elements without our knowing about it almost immediately. On the other hand, anything he learned about us would be by trial and error, at the cost of heavy casualties. How wise Darc had been, I thought, to have kept the non-combatants out of the bois.

BY THE END of the day, the Nazi build-up had stopped,



"... THE DROP ZONE LAY BETWEEN THE VILLAGE AND THE WOOD ..."

the troops were in position and we knew we could expect the first attack at dawn. Darc called in his unit commanders just after nightfall and as he discussed his plans for defense with them and me, and gave his orders, I began to feel as cheerful as I had been trying to look. Then, a few minutes after the meeting had ended, he received catastrophic news: Bazeau had been picked up by a German patrol.

The maquisards could not believe it. Bazeau for four years, had eluded dozens of clever traps set by experts especially for him. It was unthinkable that he could have been taken by an ordinary military patrol. It had not occurred to anybody even to worry about the possibility. How it happened, or even why he was in the vicinity, was inexplicable. Nobody had had an opportunity to talk to him in Confrancourt. He had been there only for a short while and then loaded into a van and carted away. What we did know was that he would be tortured. The imponderable was whether he would break or not. On that our fate literally rested.

But he didn't break. The German launched attacks on three consecutive days and each time we struck back with something they obviously hadn't expected. Each time they suffered heavy casualties and ours were minimal. At the end of the third day we had committed every man and every weapon we had but, thanks to Bazeau's fortitude, they didn't know that. They withdrew from the area with us harassing them and we occupied and garrisoned not only Confrancourt but two other villages nearby.

There was great rejoicing in the villages but our elation was dampened by our concern about Bazeau. It was not until the next day his mutilated corpse was found. It was full evidence that Andre Gaston Bazeau, who had had so much to live for, had allowed himself to be tortured to death rather than betray his comrades in the cause in which he believed.

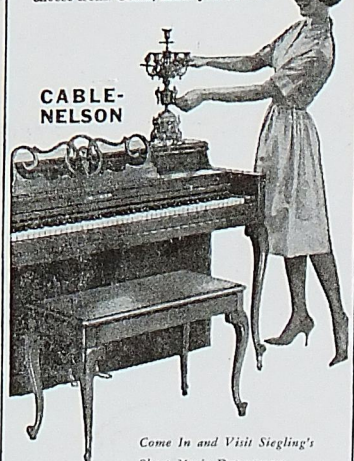
His torn body was laid to rest that same day, the 16th of September, in the churchyard at Confrancourt. In 1947, the United States government posthumously presented the Medal of Freedom with Gold Palm to Emilienne Gabrielle Marie, la Veuve Bazeau, in recognition of her husband's heroism.

As I had recommended the award, Mme. Bazeau wrote to thank me. Her letter ended: "Never shall I forget my joy at seeing men, as well as containers, dangling from your parachutes as they opened over Confrancourt. Though the following days brought tragedy to me personally, had I to live them over again I would not have my husband act other than he did."

Mme. Bazeau has not remarried. She still lives in Confrancourt and supplements her meager pension by dressmaking. At the end of each day, when the household chores are done, she makes her way to the churchyard to care for her husband's grave. Often the flowers she brings are augmented by those of citizens of that district of the Haute-Saone, and sometimes by tokens of grateful pilgrims like me who have occasionally been able to return to the shrine.

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