

## Commémoration de la rafle et déportation du 18 août 1944

### Témoignage d'Angleterre

Les familles des parachutistes Anglais étaient présentes par la pensée

Voici le geste émouvant de Jane, fille de Len Owens \* : Jane accompagnée de son fils Chris est allée déposer un bouquet de fleurs au pied du Phantom Memorial en hommage aux Déportés de Mousseley et vallée du Rabodeau (voir les quelques images ci après)

Une leçon, de Mémoire et de Respect !

*\* Petit rappel :*

*Le sergent Len Owens était le principal transmetteur de l'Opération Loyton, une de ses plus solides mémoires par conséquent C'est lui qui a fait ériger le Phantom Memorial, en hommage à tous ceux qui ont perdu leur vie pour et au cours de celle ci : 39 parachutistes britanniques dont 3 de ses compagnons du F Phantom et les « résistants ordinaires » de Mousseley et alentour qui « ont payé si cher de les avoir soutenu » Il a fait graver dans le bronze à leur intention ce profond sentiment qui n'a jamais quitté ces « Anglais de Loyton » : « nous avons envers eux une dette que nous ne saurons jamais rembourser »*

Pour en savoir plus sur Len Owens. Cliquer <http://www.resistance-deportation.org/spip.php?article217>



## THE BIGGER PICTURE

Alsace and Lorraine are French provinces on the border with Germany. Before the First World War they belonged to Germany, but in 1918 the territory was given back to France. For 8 years before the outbreak of WW2 the French had been building the Maginot Line which fortified their frontier with Germany. This created great resentment in Germany, and Hitler promised to reclaim them.

In June 1940, only nine months after the start of WW2, the Germans re-established the previous Treaty of Frankfurt Frontier of 1871. This frontier used the Vosges Mountains as a natural defence barrier.

The west face of these mountains was considered by the Germans as a "buffer zone" to protect their own territory. Moussey and nearby villages are situated in the middle of this area and life soon became very harsh, with many people wanting to flee to other parts of France where life was considered less severe.

The French Resistance (Maquis) became very active, assisting over 15,000 Alsatian and Jewish people, British and American Airmen, and Germans unsympathetic to Hitler, to escape out of the area over the high mountain passes.

On 13th August 1944, Operation Loyton commenced. It lasted for 11 weeks and was centred mainly around the tiny village of Moussey. During this period all the men of Moussey were interrogated by the German Einsatz Kommandos and asked to provide information. Every one remained silent and as a result they were all deported to concentration camps.

Nine other villages, all within a 10 mile radius of Moussey, also suffered a similar fate.

In total, 966 men were arrested and deported to concentration camps. 661 were never to return home. 23 more were shot and killed in the area.

Left behind in the Rabodeau Valley were 450 widows and 750 orphans.

In 2001 these "children" established *L'Association des Orphelins de Déportés*.

The historical context together with the geographical location of these village helps to explain why these villages were singled out and received such brutal treatment.



Historique de la Résistance dans la vallée du Rabodeau. Bilan des rafles et déportations



1 Deported  
1 Killed

5 Deported  
5 Killed

10 MILES

Beautiful Bloom

LET US NOT FORGET 70 YEARS ON  
Honoring the Memory of the  
brave people of Moussey, Vosges,  
France, at the surrounding Rabodeau  
Valley who lost their lives, or whose  
lives were deeply scarred by the events  
of 18th August 1944.  
From the family of the late Len Divers.



