

French Resistance fighters awarded honorary MBEs: 18 June 2020

- PM announces MBEs for veterans of the French Resistance, recognising their role defending the UK and France in WWII
- President Macron visits UK today to commemorate 80th Anniversary of General de Gaulle's broadcast from London
- PM and President Macron to hold a bilateral meeting, view WWII artefacts and watch a fly past by the RAF and the French Air Force

Four French Resistance fighters will receive honorary MBEs from Britain in recognition of their role defending the UK, France and other Allies in the Second World War.

Edgard Tupët-Thomé (aged 100), Daniel Bouyjou-Cordier (aged 99), Hubert Germain (aged 99) and Pierre Simonet (aged 98) are the four surviving 'Compagnons' of the Order of Liberation and played a significant role in facilitating the Allies' rapid advance through France following the invasion of Normandy in 1944.

Their nominations come as the Prime Minister welcomes French President Macron to London today (Thursday) to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of General de Gaulle's 'Appel', when Churchill gave special permission for de Gaulle to broadcast from the BBC directly to occupied France following the Nazi invasion. This moment is widely considered to be the origin of the French Resistance.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Eighty years ago Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the French Resistance, arrived in London knowing that the values of freedom, tolerance and democracy that Britain and France shared were under threat. He pledged that we would stand together to defend those values and protect our citizens from those bent on destroying us.

The four men we are honouring today – Pierre, Edgard, Daniel and Hubert – symbolise the enduring depth and strength of the friendship between our two countries. They are heroes, and I am immensely proud that as a nation we are paying tribute to their courage and sacrifice in defending us and the whole world from fascism.

The struggles we face today are different to those we confronted together 80 years ago. But I have no doubt that – working side by side – the UK and France will continue to rise to every new challenge and seize every opportunity that lies ahead.

Following ceremonial events with the Prince of Wales today, President Macron

will be hosted by the Prime Minister in Downing Street. The leaders will view artefacts documenting General de Gaulle's time in London and his close partnership with Winston Churchill – including their letters. They will also hold a bilateral meeting to discuss a range of issues, including our shared battle against coronavirus.

The Prime Minister and President Macron will also watch a flypast together, performed by the Red Arrows and their French equivalent, La Patrouille de France – who are flying over London to mark the anniversary of the Appel.

The honorary MBEs will be presented at a ceremony in France in the coming months.

Notes to Editors

- The veterans are being recognised for 'services to the United Kingdom in the Second World War'. The title of 'honorary MBE' – which is awarded to foreign nationals – makes the recipients honorary members of the Order of Chivalry and allows them to use the initials 'MBE' after their name.
- Edgard Tupët-Thomé was born on 19 April, 1920 in Bourg-la-Reine (Seine). He took part as a Sergeant in the attacks in Lorraine in September 1939 and then in Belgium in May 1940. His unit was part of the defending force during the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and he went on to become a Lieutenant in the 4th Air Infantry Battalion, completing several parachute missions.
- Pierre Simonet was born on 27 October, 1921 in Hanoi. He was part of the Expeditionary Force whose mission was to rally French West Africa (AOF) to Free France in Dakar. Throughout the war he took part in various campaigns including in France and Italy. Second Lieutenant Simonet flew a total of 137 war missions in 250 flying hours and was awarded four commendations.
- Daniel Bouyjou-Cordier was born on 10 August 1920 in Bordeaux (Gironde). He enlisted with his comrades in the "Légion de Gaulle" on 28 June 1940. He was parachuted into France near Montluçon on July 26, 1942 as a radio operator. In March 1944, he was pursued by the Gestapo and escaped through the Pyrenees before travelling to England at the end of May 1944 and being appointed head of the Bureau of Intelligence and Action's agent parachuting section.
- Hubert Germain was born on August 6, 1920 in Paris. He engaged in the Free French Forces from the outset and went on to serve in Egypt, Tunisia and Italy. He took part in the landing in Provence in August 1944 and in the liberation of Toulon, the Rhone Valley and Lyon. He then took part in the Vosges and Alsace campaigns and ended the war in the southern Alps.

Photos of the four recipients are available below:

In Downing Street the Prime Minister and President will view artefacts including the 'Order de la Liberation' – a Cross of Lorraine in crystal glass gifted from General De Gaulle to Churchill, a microphone from the 1940s similar to that used by de Gaulle to broadcast his 'Appel' and a letter from General de Gaulle to Winston Churchill dated 23 June 1940 in which he discusses the launch of the French Resistance.