

Name: Frank Hubert Tuck

Born: 36 May 1914

Frank's Story

Frank Tuck was born in Guernsey and is best known for his leading role in the most controversial act of resistance and the resulting trials in the Island during the German occupation.



Frank, along with many of his fellow police officers in Guernsey, broke into German food stores and redistribute the food to Islanders in need. They were inspired by the BBC broadcasts of 'Colonel Britton' on the European service, who gave regular advice to the occupied peoples of Europe on how to carry out acts of sabotage. Most of the policemen were of military age and would rather have been in the armed forces.

The thefts took place during the winter and spring of 1941-2, and so many policemen were involved that it was impossible to keep track of who was doing what on different shifts. They also entered civilian stores run by people trading preferentially with the Germans.

In March 1942 they were caught red-handed by the Germans and 16 policemen were imprisoned locally for four weeks where forged confessions were extracted through interrogations on decreasing rations, beatings, threats and sleep deprivation.

The men were tried by the German court in April 1942 and by the Royal Court in June 1942; the local authorities punished them for breaking into local stores. It was a show trial. Nearly all of the men were given long sentences of hard labour to be served on the continent. They were deported to France in mid-June 1942 but, by early August, many were taken to Germany for forced labour.

Frank Tuck was sent to a total of six Nazi prisons and Neuoffingen labour camp, where he built and repaired the railways. He carried railway sleepers, dug cable trenches and unloaded trucks of stones under the eye of sadistically brutal guards, who tortured and beat the malnourished and freezing men. Frank was here for 2½ years and was liberated from a death march towards Dachau concentration camp by the Americans in April 1945.

For the rest of his life, Frank suffered from debilitating back problems after beatings in the camp. He also caught TB in the camp and had part of a lung removed, and had nervous breakdowns caused by PTSD. Frank, like the other Guernsey policemen, never cleared their names and the judgements against them made by the Royal Court in Guernsey still stand today, long after their deaths.

Things to discuss

- The policemen believed that they were carrying out acts of resistance, but the local authorities in Guernsey said that they were abusing their position and bringing shame on the Island. What do you think? Was this a black and white case?
- Frank Tuck was given a sentence of 3 years and 6 months. Do you think that the punishment fitted the crime? Why do you think that the men were given long sentences?
- Should the policemen today be recognized as heroes, villains or neither? Why?