

Name: Marie Ozanne

Born: Guernsey, 10 September 1905 – 25 February 1943

Marie's Story

Marie Ozanne was born in Guernsey in 1906 to a religious family who were all members of the Salvation Army. She is remembered for having directly and openly challenged the German commandant in the Island for his persecution of victims of Nazism.



Before the war, Marie Ozanne spent time in France and Belgium, spiritually advising disadvantaged women. For this service she was promoted to Major in the Salvation Army. She returned to Guernsey in March 1940 on a break, and became trapped by the German invasion. She subsequently became a temporary officer in charge of the St Sampson's Corps of the Army, organizing prayer meetings and engaging in charitable work.

In early 1941, the Germans banned the Salvation Army and the wearing of its uniform, and closed the halls where the Salvationists worshipped. Marie Ozanne refused to comply with the ban and continued to wear her uniform and perform Bible-readings in public. She also visited the Kommandant to demand that the halls be reopened and that Salvationists be allowed to worship freely. She was arrested and intimidated.

In June 1941, after the Third Order against the Jews was registered in the Royal Court, Marie wrote to the Feldkommandant to condemn the persecution of the Jews.

In November 1941, her family began to feed and support the Dutch, Belgian and French forced labourers brought to the island to work for the Organization Todt. Their prison was near her house and after hearing about and seeing their ill-treatment, she wrote again to the Feldkommandant to protest, and to warn that German rule could not last.

She was arrested in September 1942 and sent to Guernsey prison to await court martial. While in prison, she refused to retract a single word of her complaint. From her cell she wrote again to condemn the deportation of Islanders to civilian internment camps and offered to go with them. She was let out of prison in mid-October after her health began to fail.

In November she was diagnosed with a stomach abscess. She grew weaker and, without antibiotics, she developed septicaemia and died in February 1943 aged 37.

Things to discuss

- Why was Marie Ozanne motivated to stand up for the persecuted? Does such motivation always require a religious faith?
- Why did she write letters to the German Feldkommandant without trying to disguise her identity or address? What were the implications of this?
- Why did Marie stand up for foreigners to the Island, such as Jews and forced labourers? What does this tell us about standing up for people to whom we have no direct connection?
- Do you think that Marie stood a chance of being successful in her complaints? Do you think that she knew this? Why did she still go ahead and stand up to the Germans?