



THE CELLS OF THE CELL AREA

An area of isolation, of punishment or of relegation, the cells of the segregation quarters alone symbolize the suffering of prison. To the obsolescence, the insalubrities and the odor of the waste bucket suffered by those inmates who are crammed with three or four others into a cell meant for one person, add: cold, hunger, lice, vermin who swarm in the infested straw mattresses laid on the floor...Morse code allowed communication with the neighboring cells, whereas the graffiti carved on the walls are the memory of interminable hours of detention.

During the war, this cell, like many others, sees several types of inmates pass through. Among them are a few dozen resisters who start arriving at the beginning of 1943. From Director Lassalle, they obtain their regrouping on the first floor in order to prevent cohabitation with the common criminals installed on the ground floor, with the second floor being reserved for “collaborators” (accused of espionage for the Germans): this is the first political claim in all of the French prisons.

It is from these cells that the resisters will revive *La Marseillaise* (patriotic chant of the French Revolution and national hymn of the French Republic) intoned by their twelve comrades, the morning of February 23, 1944, before being shot right next door, in the court adjoining the segregated quarters.

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Sources : Amicale des anciens détenus patriotes de la centrale d'Eysses, *L'insurrection d'Eysses*, éditions sociales, 1974. Corinne Jaladieu, *La prison politique sous Vichy. L'exemple des centrales d'Eysses et de Rennes*, L'Harmattan, 2007.