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978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

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## France under Fire

“We request an immediate favor of you, to build a shelter for us women and small children, because we have absolutely no place to take refuge and we are terrified!” This French mother’s petition sent to her mayor on the eve of Germany’s 1940 invasion of France reveals civilians’ security concerns unleashed by the Blitzkrieg fighting tactics of World War II. Unprepared for air warfare’s assault on civilian psyches, French planners were among the first in history to respond to civilian security challenges posed by aerial bombardment. *France under Fire* offers a social, political, and military examination of the origins of the French refugee crisis of 1940, a mass displacement of 8 million civilians fleeing German combatants. Scattered throughout a divided France, refugees turned to German Occupation officials and Vichy administrators for relief and repatriation. Their solutions raised questions about occupying powers’ obligations to civilians and elicited new definitions of refugees’ rights.

NICOLE DOMBROWSKI RISSER is Associate Professor of History at Towson University in Maryland. She is editor of *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted With or Without Consent* (1998).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by  
Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107025325](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107025325)

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First published 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Risser, Nicole Dombrowski, author.

France under fire : German invasion, civilian flight and family survival during World War II / Nicole Dombrowski Risser.  
pages cm. – (Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-02532-5 (hardback)

1. France – History – German occupation, 1940–1945. 2. War – Protection of civilians – France. 3. World War, 1939–1945 – Civilian relief – France. 4. World War, 1939–1945 – Refugees. 5. World War, 1939–1945 – France. I. Title.

D802.F8R564 2012

940.53'44–dc23

2012016904

ISBN 978-1-107-02532-5 Hardback

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Frontmatter

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For Jim

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Frontmatter

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978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

---

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of maps</i>	ix
<i>List of tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction: no more “behind the lines”	1
<b>Part I Civilians in the line of fire</b>	<b>15</b>
1 Securing the homeland	17
2 Mothers move against military and bureaucratic entrenchment	54
3 Pulling the plug on the city of lights	86
4 Civilian survival on the open road	109
<b>Part II Refugees, rights, and return in a divided land</b>	<b>139</b>
5 Provincial towns feed and shelter refugees	141
6 Paving the road for refugees’ return	179
7 German exclusions inaugurate a policy of ethnic cleansing	204
8 Disappointment and despair in the Occupied Zone	237
Conclusion	268
<i>Bibliography</i>	290
<i>Index</i>	308
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival  
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Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Illustrations

---

1 Janine Flanet, Paris 1942	<i>page</i> 115
2 Refugees applying for permission to repatriate home	139
3 Monument in Père Lachaise Cemetery	288



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival  
during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Maps

---

1	Map of divided France	<i>page</i> 19
2	German annexations, 1933–1942	23
3	Departments of France	140

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Tables

---

1	“Minimum for family existence”	<i>page 47</i>
2	Departmental and regional refugee counts for the second and third weeks of June 1940	144
3	Declaration of incurred and planned expenses for “Work Programs for Demobilized Soldiers and Refugees,” prefect of Corrèze, Alfred Papinot, August 3, 1940	172
4	City of Tulle, applications for repatriation received from refugees originating from regions other than the Paris region, August 10, 1940	217
5	Reported refugee population in Corrèze, December 1, 1940	231
6	Number of refugees receiving allocations from the municipality of Brive-la-Gaillarde, by department of origin, nationality and/or race, February 1, 1941	232
7	Daily rationing in Charente, November 1940	244
8	Population figures for Pas-de-Calais and Nord, March 1941	256
9	Destruction to Pas-de-Calais and Nord, May 1940–March 1941	261
10	Evacuation plans for Nord and Pas-de-Calais, March 1941	263

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Acknowledgments

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Many institutions and individuals have made the research and writing of this book possible.

First, I warmly thank Lewis Bateman and, especially, Michael Watson at Cambridge University Press. I would also like to thank the anonymous readers for their valuable suggestions on the manuscript and supporting the book's publication.

Two years of research in Paris, Corrèze, and the Marne were funded by a Chateaubriand administered French Government Research grant and the Franco-American Bicentennial Fellowship. An Andrew W. Mellon Junior Faculty Research Award allowed me to return to France for a summer to complete the final dissertation research. The Prize Teaching Fellowship at New York University (NYU) funded me through two years of writing. Supplemental research was funded by Princeton University's Committee for Research in the Humanities and a Princeton Faculty Summer Research Award. A Towson University Faculty Development Research Award funded a semester of sabbatical in Paris, allowing me to complete the book's final research.

I wish to acknowledge Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Daniel Brewer for permission to reprint, as part of Chapter 8, my contribution, "In Search of Civilian Safe Spaces: Re-evacuation of Nord and Pas-de-Calais in Response to British Bombing, September 1940–March 1941," to their edited volume, *France and Its Spaces of War: Experience, Memory, Image* (2009: 59–72). Martin S. Alexander generously shared his current research, "The Republic at War: The French Army and the Fight for France, 1939–1940."

In Paris at the Archives nationales, Chantal Bonnazi helped me identify key collections. Thanks to the generosity of Pierre Petitmengin, I enjoyed two years of access to the library at the École normale supérieure, rue d'Ulm. Jean-Pierre Azéma and Michel Winock welcomed me into their seminar on wartime France at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris, and offered advice on research and secondary sources. Michelle Perrot allowed me to attend her seminar on Women in Modern France

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## xii Acknowledgments

at Université de Paris Diderot (VII). In Reims, I received valuable aid from Jean-Pierre Husson, affiliated with the Université de Reims. In Corrèze, Guy Quincy at the Archives départementales familiarized me with local archival collections and offered me daily rides up the little mountain to the archives.

A number of French families in Reims hosted me for several months and placed me in contact with participants of the exodus. I especially thank Maurice and Marie-Pascale Cérisola and their children, Thomas, Adeline, Timothy, and Charlotte. The Cérisola's were supreme hosts and connected me to many individuals in Reims. Pierre Husson and Christelle Pierre introduced me to veterans of the exodus and helped me locate sources at the Bibliothèque Carnegie de Reims. Thierry and France Gosset connected me to Renaud Poirer and other individuals in the champagne world. The family of Anne D'Argent kindly hosted me.

In Corrèze, Louis Dalm introduced me to families who had hosted refugees. Régine and Alain Kaneko welcomed me in Nyons and introduced me to many participants in the war, especially René Brès who shared his stories of resistance and inspired my initial interest in wartime France.

In Paris I also enjoyed a supportive community of young American scholars. I thank Clare Crowston, Cynthia Cupples, Lisa DiCaprio, Jennifer Hecht, Hilary Jewett, Cheryl A. Koos, Janine Lanza, Mindy Roseman, John Savage, Lynn Sharp, and Victoria Thompson. Parisian friends and colleagues guided me through the cultural divides that often confront Americans in Paris. Laure Léveillé, Jack and Marie-Jo Léveillé, Frédéric Attal, Thomas Hafen, Carolle von Ins, Cécilia Bouzard, Olivier De Col, and their families made sure that I enjoyed the best of French life and cuisine. I can never thank them enough for entering into our Franco-American friendship.

In New York a vibrant group of friends and colleagues discussed history and politics and helped with revisions. I thank Aline Baehler, Caitlin Barbakoff, Valentjn Bivank, Deborah Brody, Anne-Sophie Cerisola, G. Daniel Cohen, Mark Giaimo, Savario Giovacchini, Carolyn Helmke, Matthew Hockenos, Wendy Holliday, Jennifer Homans, Steve Hubbell, Sarah Judson, Edward Kastenmeier, Dan Katz, Peter Lang, Nancy Mykoff, Timothy Pytell, Marybeth Shaw, Amy Sittler, Tracy Tullis, and especially Iris Derbsch.

At NYU, I enjoyed the privilege of excellent faculty readers. Herrick Chapman commented on the last draft of my dissertation. Susan Ware helped me think more critically about women's history questions. Jerrold Seigel pushed me to re-conceptualize key interpretive ideas.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Acknowledgments

xiii

Marilyn Young allowed me to hold a conference on women and war, which helped me contextualize French civilians' experience in a more global framework.

At Princeton University I met Arno Mayer, who not only deepened my love of European history, but as a survivor of the exodus from Luxembourg, shared his memories with me. Arno read through my entire manuscript and saved me from several errors. Most importantly, he reminded me that as a historian, "chronology was my friend." Robert Darnton shared with me stories about his mother's career as a young female journalist in Paris and inspired me to read American journalistic accounts of the war. I deepened my understanding of the Third Republic precepting in Philip Nord's course on Modern France. Stephen Kotkin insisted I think more politically about historical structures in a comparative framework. William Chester Jordan invited me to present a chapter to the Princeton faculty. I received helpful feedback from a number of colleagues, especially David Allyn, Ben Alpers, Hilary Bernstein, Peter Lake, and Suzanne Marchand.

At Towson University and in the greater Baltimore–Washington DC area, I have enjoyed invaluable collegial support. Cindy Gissendanner and Mark Whitman supported two separate semesters of maternity leave. Former deans, Dan Jones and Beverly Leetch approved both leaves. I received generous support for graduate research assistance from the Towson University College of Liberal Arts. Dorian Cole, Lisa Hammond, Peter Krause, and Hugh Weigel helped with research. Christine Adams, Linda Bishai, Rita Costa-Gomes, Julie Fette, William Friend, Marion Hughes, Joshua Humphries, Michael Korzi, Paul Miller, Tracy Miller, Katharine Norris, and Ronn Pineo have read and commented on various chapters or offered support. Professor Emeritus Karl Larew provided a stream of invaluable wartime novels and memoirs. Benjamin Zajicek has been a great sounding board at the end of this process. Emily Daugherty, our secretary, has provided unmatched administrative assistance.

A trio of incredible women has inspired me intellectually and professionally. Sally Charnow, Jair Kessler, and Molly Nolan have guided me along at different stages of this work. Sally and Molly have read significant portions of versions of this manuscript and made critically important comments. Without Jair Kessler none of the research, travel, or career advancement would have been possible. Jair has not only guided the Institute of French Studies at NYU and helped manage the Remarque Institute as its administrative director, but she has facilitated the encounter and advancement of a generation of graduate students and scholars. Three invitations to Remarque Institute seminars in

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02532-5 - France under Fire: German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv Acknowledgments

Vienna (1995), New York (1996), and Kandersteg (2011) introduced me to a group of international scholars whose work has especially pushed me to understand French history in the larger European framework. I wish to especially thank Katherine E. Fleming for organizing the 2011 Kandersteg seminar honoring Tony Judt, which brought together many of his students and colleagues, inspiring me through the final revisions of this book.

Two scholars have had the greatest impact on my life and work, but are certainly not responsible for any of this work's failings, which are solely my own. Jack Fruchtman, Jr. has mentored me since I became an assistant professor at Towson University. Jack has been instrumental in helping me see this book through to publication. I thank him for his inspiration and guidance.

I had the greatest fortune to study at NYU under Tony Judt. Tony helped me conceptualize this project from its beginnings. He insisted that I travel to local archives, read local histories, and meet with exodus veterans. He also ensured the financial support necessary for such travel. Throughout the long revision process Tony read and re-read many versions and offered criticism and valuable comments. He was always generous with his advice, time, and friendship. My debt and thanks to Tony is immeasurable, as is the amount I miss him.

My family has lived with this project for many years, patiently accompanying me on trips to France, allowing me time to cloister myself to "write." I thank my parents, Jerome and Sue Ellen Dombrowski for their unwavering support. My children, Olivia and Michael, have forced me to strive for a balanced and joyous lifestyle. However, in writing this book, I have been reminded daily that, with the exception of Olivia's first year, our nation has been at war throughout my children's young lives. As a mother, I have appreciated being able to raise them in a relatively safe environment despite 9/11 and its consequences. I cannot help but recognize how many families elsewhere in our world live in war-torn societies, motivating me to complete this book, if for no other reason than to honor the sacrifices of the millions of families who struggled to survive the twentieth century's brutal wars.

The completion of this work would not have been possible without my husband, Jim Risser's steady encouragement. He has read and commented on the entire manuscript many times, sustaining me through the years of research and revision. His patience and love for our family allowed me to finish this work. I thank him and lovingly dedicate this book to him.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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AN	Archives nationales de la France
ADC	Archives départementales de la Corrèze
ADM	Archives départementales de la Marne
AMBG	Archives municipales de Brive-la-Gaillarde
AMVR	Archives municipales de la ville de Reims
BDIC	Bibliothèque Documentaire Information Contemporaine
DGGFTO	Délégation générale du Gouvernement français pour les territoires occupés
IDP	internally displaced person
MBF	Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich
MBH	German Military Administration in Belgium
PCF	Parti communiste français
PSF	Parti socialiste français
PoW	prisoner of war
PTT	Poste télégraphe et téléphone
RAF	Royal Air Force
SHAT	Service historique de l'armée de la terre
SFIO	Section française de l'internationale d'ouvrière
SNCF	Société Nationale des Chemins de fer français (French National Railway)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees