

NOOR INAYAT KHAN



Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan was born in Moscow in 1914 to an American mother and an Indian father who was a Sufi preacher and a classical musician. Just before the onset of World War I, her family left Russia for England. In 1920, the family moved to Suresnes, near Paris, where she went to school and later attended Sorbonne and the Paris Conservatory. Following the fall of France during World War II, the family escaped to England where Noor joined the

CROIX DE GUERRE CITATION

On the proposition of the Minister of the Armies, the President of the Provisional Government of the Republic, Chief of the Armies, Minister of National Defence, cites to the order of the army corps.

A/S/O Nora Inayat Khan, WAAF

Sent into France by Lysander on June 16th 1943, as a wireless operator with the mission of assuring transmissions between London and an organization of the Resistance in the Paris area. Shortly after her arrival a series of arrests broke up the organisation. Obliged to flee, she nevertheless continued to fulfil her mission under the most difficult conditions. Falling into an ambush at Grignon, in July 1943, her comrades and she managed to escape after having killed or wounded the Germans who were trying to stop them. She was finally arrested in October 1943 and

Women's Auxiliary Air Force in 1940 and trained as a wireless operator. On 8 February 1943, she was recruited into the France Section of the Special Operations Executive – a British secret service created in 1940 to conduct espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in German-occupied territories, and to help local resistance movements in those territories. She went on to become the first female radio operator infiltrated into occupied France in June 1943. She was captured by Nazi forces in October 1943 and, a few months later, deported to Dachau concentration camp where she was tortured and executed on 13 September 1944,



aged just 30 years. In April 1945, seven months after her execution, Dachau was liberated.

2. In recognition of her immense bravery, Noor Inayat Khan was awarded the French Resistance Medal and France's highest civilian honour, the Croix de Guerre, on 16 January 1946, as well as a posthumous George Cross by Britain on 5 April 1949.
3. On 10 November 2025, the French postal service, La Poste, honoured Noor with a stamp issued in memory of the Figures of the Resistance who fought against Nazi Germany. She was among a dozen war heroes and heroines chosen on the set of stamps issued to mark 80 years since the end of World War II.
4. A plaque outside her childhood home in Suresnes says:

Here lived Noor Inayat Khan 1914-44

Called Madeleine in the Resistance

Shot at Dachau

Radio Operator for the Buckmaster network

In recognition of her sacrifice for France, a public square in Suresnes is now named 'Cours Madeleine' after her.

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