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FRANÇOIS GROSJEAN

FIDO: French Pilot and Security Service Double Agent *Malgré Lui*

Very few World War II double agents remain to be discovered. But one, FIDO (Roger Grosjean),¹ is little known and receives hardly any mention in the literature on double agents.² For example, John C. Masterman had only this to say about him:

Other recruits of 1943 included FIDO, who arrived in July, a French air force pilot whose primary mission was to steal an airplane in this country and fly back to the Germans. In addition, he was to send information on aviation, concentration of troops and aircraft, and technical matters. He could write secret letters but had no method of receiving messages or instructions.³

FIDO's file has not yet been released by the United Kingdom's Security Service (MI5). When I wrote to them in 2004 to enquire about Roger Grosjean, my father,⁴ I received a cryptic reply stating, "We are not in a position to say whether we hold a record for your father. Any record we might have would be unlikely to be releasable in the foreseeable future."

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Further efforts through the British Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, and the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on National Records and Archives, not to mention a letter to then-Prime Minister Tony Blair, were to no avail.

Why is FIDO's case interesting? Several reasons come to mind. The first is that the story of double agents is always fascinating, not only because of their activities but also because they manipulate others and are in turn manipulated by them. This was true of Grosjean, who wanted to go to England to continue the war against the Germans but who, upon accepting to work for the Security Service, relinquished active combat duties. The second reason is that there were very few French double agents controlled by MI5 during the war. Intelligence historian Nigel West writes that only two French double agents were run by B1(a) so as to avoid run-ins with the French, as well as to prevent revealing something of "B" Division's activities, something the British clearly did not want to do.⁵ Finally, the reasons that FIDO's file has still not been released more than thirty years after his death, and why MI5 is unwilling to acknowledge it even has it, are interesting to conjecture. This may be for political reasons (keeping the Entente Cordiale as cordial as possible, even for events so far away) or simply because some of the people involved are still alive, such as the "English girl" Grosjean was engaged to in May 1944, as Guy Liddell reported in his diary.⁶

THE FRENCH FIGHTER PILOT

Roger Grosjean was born in Chalon-sur-Saône on 25 July 1920, the son of Joseph Grosjean, a judge, and of Henriette Boudet-Cauquil. He spent his early years in the north of France, changing cities as his father changed postings (e.g., Lunéville, Briey, Lille, even Paris for a few years). From 1934 to 1938, he attended a well-known Catholic school, the Collège de Marcq en Baroeul, near Lille. Clearly more interested in sports than in his studies, he excelled in rugby and track and field. In the latter, he was a youth French record-holder in the discus. He passed the first part of his *baccalauréat* (the end of high school exam) but then veered off toward becoming a pilot. Accepted into the French Air Force pilot school in 1939, he was trained in Clermont-Ferrand and Ambérieu. After having obtained his pilot's license, he went on to specialize as a fighter pilot in Etampes, where he flew on Morane-Saulnier and Dewatine aircrafts. He graduated second of his class at the end of 1939.

During the *drôle de guerre* (the "phony war") period from September 1939 to May 1940, he stayed at Etampes and flew several missions. However, in early May 1940, just before the Germans invaded France, his plane was hit by Allied anti-aircraft fire and he was wounded. As a result, he was unable to take part in the Battle of France (10 May to 22 June 1940). Instead, he ferried planes to the rear as the Germans advanced on French airfields. When the armistice was signed, Grosjean remained in the Air Force (he

had signed up for five years) and was posted, first to Montpellier and then to the Fighter Group (GC) 2/1 in Le Luc, Var, part of Vichy France. The Germans allowed Vichy to keep a reduced army, air force, and navy to defend its territory. The mission given to Grosjean's group was to protect the French fleet in Toulon, which they did with their Bloch MB 152s. In late September 1941, the engine of the plane Grosjean was flying suddenly stopped and he crashed into a forest in Flassans-sur-Isole, Var. Badly wounded, he spent several months in a hospital (at the end of 1941 to the beginning of 1942), and then several more months convalescing in Lille, Orange, St. Maxime, etc. Recently accepted into officer school at Salon de Provence (he was a master sergeant by then), he was unable to attend. The first part of his Air Force career ended in November 1942 when the Germans invaded the unoccupied part of France and the remaining French military were demobilized. Much of what happened the following year probably had its roots in Grosjean's rather unhappy military career till then: he had missed the fighting in 1940 because of his first accident, he had been badly wounded in his second accident, and he had failed to go to officer school because of his injuries. Many of his friends were either in North Africa (he had asked to go there but his request was turned down) or in England fighting with the Free French Air Force or Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF). The 22-year-old trained fighter pilot was seeing no action; even worse, as of November 1942, he could no longer fly.

ACCEPTING THE GERMANS' PROPOSAL

The Grosjean LRC (London Reception Center) report⁷ indicates that, after having been released from the Air Force,⁸ Grosjean started law studies, first in Lille and then Paris. He rented a small flat in Paris at the beginning of 1943 and went to lectures, but clearly his mind was elsewhere. In his unpublished book,⁹ the main character, François Perrin (his own pseudonym later in the war), thinks of stealing a German plane and flying it to England, but he never does so as it is too dangerous. Around 7 May 1943, according to the LRC report, Grosjean met fellow pilots, Georges Montet and a Commandant Lacroix, at the Cercle Européen. The Cercle was a notorious meeting place for German officials and French collaborators. A question arises as to what Grosjean was doing there, as no evidence indicates that he was himself a collaborator.¹⁰ Montet, a lieutenant in the French Air Force, was currently head of the "Centre pour l'Espagne" (Center for Spain), a cover for the work he did for the Germans. One of his activities was to recruit pilots for them.¹¹ After being told that he missed flying, Montet proposed that Grosjean work as a ferry-pilot for Lufthansa. After telling him he would think about it, Grosjean phoned Montet the next day to tell him that he accepted.

This being a crucial first step in Grosjean's double agent life, asking what was going through his mind is warranted. Several options can be advanced. First, he may have thought that this was his chance of stealing a plane and flying it to England. But Lufthansa planes were rather slow workhorses, and he might well have been shot down, either by the Germans or the Allies, before reaching England. Was this a chance he was ready to take? Another aspect will need to be studied when his file becomes available. In two different documents—his book and his war CV—Grosjean writes that he was in contact with the British Intelligence Service at that time. In his book, "Perrin" mentions speaking to a British agent named "Richardson" who worked as an engineer in a battery and accumulator factory in Lille. If this is true, might Grosjean have phoned him and obtained his go-ahead?

A few days after their first encounter, Grosjean accepted to meet Montet at his apartment near the Champs-Élysées. Two other people were there: a German colonel in civilian clothes, who was introduced as "Pierre," and "Boris." Both were to play an important part in getting Grosjean over to England. According to French author Patrice Miannay,¹² "Pierre" was probably Pedro Köpke, who worked for the German Intelligence Service (Abwehr). In his book, Grosjean describes Pierre as rather small, well-built, blond but losing his hair, with blue eyes, and no accent in French. He had been in Spain during the Civil War and he lived at the Hôtel Louvois in Paris. "Pierre" told Grosjean that he had a more interesting job to offer him. He would be sent on a mission by the Germans to an Allied territory, where he would enlist in the Free French Air Force, and would thereafter send back information on aircraft, troops, weapons, instruments, and other technical matters by means of letters using secret ink. He was also to steal a plane equipped with new navigational equipment and fly it back to German-occupied territory. "Pierre" told him that the mission involved no danger and that he would be back in a few months. Grosjean expressed tentative acceptance. A few days went by and, finally, on 19 May, Grosjean told Montet that he accepted the assignment. Grosjean agreed that everything he would earn would be paid directly to his parents in Lille. In his book, Grosjean adds that he was to tell his parents that he would be sent to Spain on a business trip by the Vichy Government. He was also told, notably by Boris, that if he brought back an important and recent model of an airplane, he would be rewarded highly.¹³

Grosjean states that he saw "Richardson" again in Lille, who told him, "Don't worry about anything. You'll always be protected. You can leave feeling reassured." In two places in his book, Grosjean reiterates that this British secret agent assured him that the Security Service would look after him if he pretended to work for the Germans. Whether this is true or not will need to be confirmed when the MI5 file is finally released.

REACHING ENGLAND

Grosjean's passage to England with the help of the Germans, and then the British, is clearly explained in the LRC report.¹⁴ On 5 June 1943, Grosjean met "Pierre" at the Gare d'Austerlitz in Paris; they took the night train to Perpignan and arrived the next day around midday. "Pierre" told Grosjean to meet him in front of the post office at 4:30 p.m. "Pierre" arrived in a chauffeur-driven car and they drove to Le Boulou; a bit further on, they changed chauffeurs and drove on to Le Perthus, the French-Spanish border. Grosjean was given a German newspaper to read and told to act German and not to speak. They passed through the French, German, and Spanish controls without difficulty. They then drove on to Figueras, where they went to a large country mansion whose owner was a German in the ham-tinning business. Grosjean spent two nights there. During a conversation with his host, Grosjean was asked, "You are another aviator, aren't you?," showing that he had not been the first to go through with the help of the Germans.

An unknown German then took Grosjean to Barcelona, via Girona. "Pierre" ("Pedro" in Spain) and another man, "Gregoire," came to fetch Grosjean at a café and took him to a safe house, where Pedro told him he should grow a beard in order to look as if he had had a hard journey over the mountains. In his book, Grosjean writes that "Perrin" spent a week in an apartment near the General Hospital; surprisingly, it happened to belong to an English businessman. Though Perrin was locked inside he simply climbed out the window when he wanted to go outside.

The LRC report states that two days later, "Pierre"/"Pedro" came to give Grosjean his cover story for the British. He was to tell them that he had been in contact with an Allied organization in Paris and that they had sent him to Perpignan where, at the Café Thierry, he had obtained information on how to reach the Spanish border. "Pierre"/"Pedro" gave him several details, including the fact that he had obtained transportation from lorries until arriving in Barcelona on 11 June. He had paid the drivers for the lifts. Grosjean asked Pedro where he would be going. He was told North Africa or the UK. North African security controls were easier to pass through but the latest aircraft were to be found in the UK.

After several days, perhaps on June 14, "Grégoire" took Grosjean by taxi to a spot near the British Consulate, into which he walked and applied to be evacuated from Spain. He also went to the United States Consulate in the hope of being evacuated more rapidly. Grosjean spent a few more days in Barcelona, and during that time "Grégoire" gave him instruction in secret writing. He gave him a matchhead which he was to hold with a propelling pencil or tweezers for use in writing the letters; he also gave him a cover address in Barcelona. In his book, Grosjean adds a few details. "Perrin" was ordered to write to a fictional girlfriend, "Consuelo Stabilito," in

Barcelona. Enough room had to be left between the lines to write a second, hidden, letter in capital letters. For this second one, he was to use the special matchhead, which he would hide in the lining of his trousers. The secret letter had to be signed “Le chasseur” (The Hunter). Perrin was also given a phone number in Barcelona in case there was a problem.

According to the LRC report, when Grosjean returned to France with a stolen plane, he was to pretend that he was in trouble and waggle his aircraft’s wings to avoid being fired on. Upon landing, he was to ask to speak to a senior German officer and say that he belonged to the German Intelligence Service (Abwehr). He was also told that, should the Allies land in France, and if he himself was still in France at that time, he would be given prisoner-of-war papers and put in a camp. “Grégoire” warned him that if they did not hear from him after a certain time, he would be considered a traitor and reprisals would be taken against his family. In addition, he would be liquidated in the UK by the German “Special Brigade,” which was there for that purpose.

The Trek Begins Anew

On 19 June, unexpectedly rapidly, Grosjean was sent by the British Consulate to Saragossa in the company of two other French Air Force personnel, Capitaine Pichon and Sergent-Chef Olivarez. The LRC report states that he left so suddenly that there had been no time for him to receive final instructions from Pedro as to the precise objectives of his mission. Before his departure, Grosjean wrote a letter in secret ink saying that he was leaving for Lisbon. He wrote another one when he arrived in Lisbon. The LRC report notes the “startling similarity of this case to that of Feyguin,” who arrived in England in May/June via the same route and with the help of “Pierre”/“Pedro.” It even corresponds down to the small detail of Pedro leaving the final instructions until too late. One entry concerning Feyguin appears in Guy Liddell’s diary.¹⁵ Liddell, director of counterespionage in the Security Service (MI5) during the war, wrote on 30 June,

A French naval officer named Feyguin has arrived in this country. . . . [He was] recruited by the Germans for a mission for the Abwehr in this country. He was extremely badly trained. The French are anxious to use him as a double-cross but it is very doubtful whether he will be suitable for this purpose. He will probably go to Camp 020.

Grosjean’s journey across Spain and Portugal with his two companions is related in his unpublished book. They took the train to Saragossa, then Valladolid, and then Zamora. They then walked during five nights and changed guides twice. Grosjean describes the hardship of having to walk at night only, sleeping in forests and barns during the day, and having to

make detours to avoid the border patrols. They crossed the border over the Rio Douro and then took the train to Lamego, Porto, and finally Lisbon. Grosjean became, briefly, one of many agents and double agents in this city, either passing through or based there. For example, double agents such as CARELESS, CARROT, and TRICYCLE passed through Lisbon on their way to England. GARBO actually worked there for a while before moving to England.

In Lisbon, Grosjean reported to the British Embassy and had to wait for a few days for a seat on a plane to England. On 30 June, he was issued an affidavit (with photo) from the British Vice Consul indicating who he was and that he had no travel document “owing to circumstances beyond my control.” He needed this document “so that the necessary visa permitting me to proceed to the United Kingdom may be affixed thereto.” From Lisbon Grosjean wrote a postcard to his grandparents in Montpellier, France, indicating that he was filling the role of propaganda tourism inspector for Vichy and that he would be leaving Lisbon soon.¹⁶ As earlier noted, he had been asked to do this by the Germans when in Paris. So far, I have found no trace that the Vichy Government had collaborated in any way with the Germans to send Grosjean over to England. However, one gray area still needs to be elucidated: Grosjean had not been able to attend the officer training school in Salon de Provence because of his second accident. And yet, before leaving for England, he had apparently been appointed *sous-lieutenant* (the equivalent of pilot officer). Was it an automatic rank change upon demobilization that came through only a few months later? Or was it linked in some way to his pending journey to England? What is clear is that his new rank was accepted by the Free French Air Force when he joined them later on in the summer and, just a few months after that, he was promoted to full “Lieutenant.”

Grosjean took a night flight to England on 1 July and arrived in Bristol the next day. He was then interned in a transition center in Bromley for a week, and then in another center in Camberwell for the better part of the month while he waited for a place at the London Reception Centre (LRC). He finally arrived at the LRC on 24 July and was given number LRC 15, 766. As the LRC report states,

On the same day, (Grosjean) reported that he had something of importance to communicate. When he was seen, he stated that he had been recruited by the Germans for a mission in this country.

Grosjean spent some ten days there, being debriefed and then recruited by section B1(a) of the Security Service. In his diary, Guy Liddell wrote on 28 July:

Baxter reported on the case of a Frenchman called Grosjean who confessed on arrival that he had been recruited by the Germans. His case is somewhat similar to that of Feyguine [*sic*]. He had no intention

of carrying out his mission but was anxious to keep the fact to himself till he arrived in this country. He has spoken of a new type of secret ink which is in plastic form and can be used on a match. He also mentioned a new type of pencil holder which the Germans were issuing to their agents and which were used to hold the match.¹⁷

In his book, Grosjean writes that “Perrin” was interrogated for six days in Office 27, and that once he had signed his deposition, he met a tall man with graying hair and a cane, probably a colonel, who asked him to work with the British against the Germans. Perrin was told that they had studied his report carefully and had found it very useful; it offered many precise details which they either didn’t know or were vague about. They would use Perrin to correspond with the Germans since he had their trust. They wanted to find spies that were in Great Britain, as well as give the Germans false information as to their forces and other military aspects. He could choose to accept to work for them (he would then be allowed to fly but not above enemy territory) or to refuse (he would then become an Air Force instructor). In fact, Grosjean’s active fighter pilot career had come to an end right there. Both for his own safety, and because he knew too much, he would no longer be allowed to do what he enjoyed doing the most.

Perrin (Grosjean) accepted the Security Service’s offer and became thereby one of a select group of double-cross agents in World War II. He was told he would work with “Wilcox” and “Carnegie.” One of the two was most certainly Baxter and the other may have been Christopher Harmer. This information comes from Grosjean’s diary, where he wrote, a few months later, that he had an IS (Intelligence Service) appointment with Christopher and his friend. He was given MAYfair and FRObisher telephone numbers if he wanted to contact them.

Grosjean relates in his book that before leaving the LRC, “Perrin” was asked to write his first letter to Consuelo using the special matchhead. Following is a translation of the hidden letter that had to be in caps:¹⁸

FINALLY RELEASED FROM PATRIOTIC SCHOOL AND AM
FREE. STOP. EVERYTHING HAS GONE PERFECTLY UP TO
NOW. STOP. NO PROBLEMS AND NO SUSPICIONS. STOP.
BRITISH HAVE TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN ME. STOP. AM SURE
I CAN DO WHAT YOU REQUEST. STOP. HAVE FOUND OUT
IN PATRIOTIC SCHOOL THAT CORPORAL PETER CROSS IN
GUARDS ROOM ACCEPTS MESSAGES, LETTERS AND
ERRANDS WITH THE OUTSIDE FOR A SMALL FEE. STOP.
HAVE LEARNED THAT A SWISS, JOSEPH BONN, HAS BEEN
ARRESTED AS A SPY BY BRITISH AUTHORITIES. STOP. MY
PERMANENT ADDRESS IS INDICATED AFTER MY
SIGNATURE. STOP. PLEASE CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE
RECEIVED THIS LETTER. THE HUNTER.

Of course, the names are probably different and the wording may not be totally right, but it does give an idea of the kind of message that was probably sent to the Germans in Barcelona. Author Nigel West has reminded me how strategic the Security Service deception was. This is visible in the mention of “Corporal Peter Cross,” who was probably not a corporal at all but a member of the Security Service, ready to meet any German agent who would try to contact Grosjean. It is also evident in the reference to “Joseph Bonn.” His arrest was either true (some real information had to be given) or false, depending on what the Security Service wanted the Germans to know or infer.

Grosjean was released from the LRC on 5 August (this is stamped on his affidavit) along with several of his compatriots, and he then went to the Free French Air Force headquarters (Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres [FAFL]) to sign up. On 16 August, Guy Liddell wrote, “FIDO [xxxxx] has been taken on by B1(a),” and on 19 August, he stated, “FIDO has joined the French Air Force.”¹⁹ Clearly, the Security Service had worked out an agreement with the very highest echelons of the French Air Force to make room for Grosjean in their midst so as send the right signals to the Germans. Grosjean’s French Air Force file in Dijon reflects this. He was given a desk job at the Air Force General Staff, first in the “Chiffre” section (communication and codes), and then in the “Deuxième Bureau” (intelligence service). What is probable is that only a very few top French officers knew about his ties with the British. Other officers and men did not understand what his situation was, and some were suspicious of him as word may have gone around that Grosjean had contacted the Germans in Paris. In his book, Grosjean describes an interview “Perrin” had with the French counterintelligence service, the Bureau Central de Renseignements et d’Action (BCRA). He had been told by the British Security Service at Patriotic School not to tell them how he had come over to England with the help of the Germans, and he had promised to keep his status as double agent a total secret. Perrin was asked by the BCRA what kind of work he would be doing for the British, and he answered that he had promised not to say anything. The French captain interviewing him responded as follows:

Perrin, you are clearly forgetting that you are a French officer and that you have just signed on to be part of the Free French Forces. You cannot keep anything secret from the BCRA. Why didn’t you reserve the information you have for the French?

Perrin replied,

If I have acted in this way, it is that the German Intelligence Service have sent me to England with the aim of impeding the British Security Service; it seemed only natural, therefore, that I communicate with them directly.

Of course, the words uttered in 1943 were probably slightly different (Grosjean's book is dated 1954), but they do point to something that will trouble Grosjean throughout his stay—the fact of having to work for the British Security Service and not being able to inform his own intelligence service about his actions. This was the beginning of a rather miserable period of Grosjean's life.

FIDO AT WORK

As stated at the beginning, the FIDO file at MI5 has not yet been released but, fortunately, Grosjean's quite official French Air Force file, which gives a rather detailed description of his activities with the French during his stay in England, is available. In addition, his book, as well as his war diary, in which he relates what he did for the Security Service, are also at hand.

According to Grosjean's book, some fifteen days after his release from the LRC, his case officers gave him a rendezvous at 10 Dover Street. There he wrote a second letter to Consuelo. This is a translation of the secret ink part, as it appears in his book:²⁰

HAVE BEEN POSTED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS TO THE FRENCH AIR FORCE GENERAL STAFF BEFORE GOING TO FLY FOR THE RAF. STOP. WHAT SHOULD I DO? WAIT WHERE I AM OR GO AHEAD WITH FINAL MISSION WHICH I FEEL I CAN DO? STOP. IF YOU CAN SEND ME YOUR ORDERS, PLEASE DO SO. STOP. THE BOMBING ON THE 18TH DESTROYED THE EXCHANGE THAT RECEIVES MESSAGES FROM FRANCE. STOP. NOTHING ELSE OF IMPORTANCE TO REPORT. STOP. I REPEAT FOR THE SECOND AND LAST TIME MY ADDRESS. STOP. GOODBYE. THE HUNTER

Again, the content is probably not exactly what Grosjean wrote but the gist is there. The problem was that Grosjean had left Barcelona in a hurry and "Pierre"/"Pedro" had never told him how he would be contacted. Clearly, in this message, Perrin (as Grosjean) is trying to get the communication link open at both ends. In his book, Grosjean states that four more letters were sent before the end of the year. Answers probably didn't come through, however, since Guy Liddell writes in his 8 December entry:

SNIPER and FIDO and BRONX appear to be secure, but the first two have not yet really got going.²¹

Grosjean relates in his book the kind of work he did for the Free French Air Force's "Deuxième Bureau." One of his jobs was to make sure that French pilots had everything they needed in case they were shot down over France: Vichy identity papers, civilian clothes, money, addresses of safe houses, etc. Another was to debrief pilots who had been shot down over

France and who had managed to come back to England. Some had incredible stories to tell. He relates how two members of a Boston light bomber crew had crash-landed in France and had managed to escape from the wreckage unharmed. They took off their flying gear and, dressed in civilian clothes, stopped a bus going into town. On it, much to their horror, were two police officers who were asking passengers if they had seen a bomber crash-land nearby. The two answered that they had indeed seen it and they pointed in a given direction, away from the aircraft. They realized afterwards that both had been smoking Craven A cigarettes while talking to the police! Another pilot was shot down over Normandy and went to hide in Le Havre, where he had family. When things had quieted down a bit, he went to Bordeaux to see his fiancée. Within days, they got married and then the two of them came back to England via Spain and Portugal.

Working with his fellow pilots clearly revived Grosjean's desire to see action which he was not getting, neither in his office job nor in his letter-writing for the Security Service. So, on 23 September 1943, he wrote to the head of the Free French Air Force, General Martial Valin, and asked to be posted to the Fighter Group "Normandie" in Russia.²² His request received a favorable recommendation from a senior officer. However, marked in red across the top can be read, "Reste en Grande Bretagne" (Stays in Great Britain). Clearly, the Security Service had been contacted and had refused. They wanted him to stay close to them while they were attempting to get the Germans to react to the letters they were sending them through FIDO.

Even though some of his fellow pilots probably had reservations about him, Grosjean received the support of senior officers who knew the predicament he was in. One sign of this was his being chosen to broadcast on the BBC the New Year greetings of the Free French Air Force on 1 January 1944. Following is a translated extract of what he said on the program, "Quart d'heure français du matin":

You, my fellow compatriots, who are listening in France, and who wish to share our thoughts at this end of year, here is what I can tell you: all my fellow pilots from our squadrons, "Lorraine," "Alsace," "Ile-de-France," "Normandie," "Bretagne," "Picardie," are in communion with you today. They know that soon they will be fighting next to you as fellow combatants who have come together on our national soil.²³

A major change occurred in January of the new year, 1944. Grosjean had probably kept pestering his superiors about his wish to fly and do his job as a fighter pilot. In addition, the Security Service decided to show the Germans that Grosjean was indeed flying, and hence could very well steal a plane for them and fly it back to occupied territory. So, on 22 January, Grosjean was

sent to the RAF base in Caistor, Lincolnshire, for a refresher course on a two-engine plane, the Airspeed Oxford.²⁴ His first flight took place on 23 January, the first time he was back in a plane in more than a year! By 14 February, he had already logged in twenty-five hours of flying time. He was sometimes allowed to fly by himself, as he relates in his diary, but probably the tanks were not totally full (the British were constantly wary of their double agents). For several weeks, he either flew or trained on a Link Trainer so as to learn the Beam Approach (BABS).

While at Caistor, the “English girl” Liddell mentions in his diary²⁵ came to live with him on a farm where they rented a room. Named Sallie, they had met in London a few months before. When Grosjean wasn’t busy at the air base, they would go riding or help take care of animals on the farm. But the Security Service was never far away. On 18 March, Grosjean writes the following in his diary:

As for the IS matter, I had to go to Grantham (Lincolnshire) to meet Christopher and his friend. We worked until two in the morning; I wrote what was probably the most important letter asking for an answer on Radio Toulouse. If they said, “If you come back, do not ask me for my forgiveness” it would mean “Yes”; if they said, “Flowers are love messages” it would mean “No.”

In his book, Grosjean tells more about his meeting. “Perrin” indicated in the letter that he would be at RAF Poulton (Cheshire) in about a month to train on planes with special equipment for night flights and bad visibility flights. He wrote that at that point he would be ready to attempt to steal a plane and fly it to Stavanger, Norway. He asked for confirmation. Perrin was also asked to look over photographs of Germans in Paris, as well as Vichy people, to see if he recognized any. Among the photos were those of Montet, as well as “Pierre”/“Pedro.”

At one point, Grosjean had to go to the FAFL’s London Headquarters. He wrote in his diary that he talked to Admiral Muselier’s son,²⁶ who told him that he wasn’t liked very much among the FAFL community in London. Grosjean wondered why, but he showed his defiance by writing that he would show them what he could do as a pilot after having started to fly again. He ended by writing: “How many of my fellow pilots are condemned to death in France like I am?” This clearly shows how difficult and frustrating it was for him to be a letter-writer and lure for the enemy instead of being a regular fighter pilot. It also shows that the Germans were now aware that he was working for the British. There wasn’t much hope, therefore, that the Grantham letter would produce anything.

In late March, Grosjean spent a week to ten days at RAF Poulton (Cheshire), where he continued training on the Beam Approach. Since a

Coastal Command squadron was there, he may have flown in one of their more recent planes. He then returned to Caistor, but by late April, he was back in London, where he lived with Sallie in the Gloucester Road area. On 14 May, he wrote in his diary,

I am still at Camberley, abandoned by my British friends, in bad terms and misunderstood by the General Staff. . . . I've decided to hang on, to do what I'm told to do until we can return to France where I'll reenter civilian life.

At precisely this time, 15 May, Guy Liddell brought together Tommy (Tar) Robertson, John Masterman, Hugh Astor, and Blanshard Stamp to talk about FIDO.²⁷ This shows that his case had continued until then. Liddell was perplexed that FIDO was sending parcels to his parents in Lille (probably through Portugal). In fact, this is not so surprising, as life was very difficult in occupied France at the time, and Grosjean's mother was ill (she was to die of cancer in 1948). Liddell continues:

Another point was the weakness of FIDO's cover story. Was it possible that the Germans had never bothered much about it as they really intended FIDO to plant himself on us and then double-cross us? In general, there seems to be some element of doubt about the case although the odds are that even if FIDO had intended to carry out his assignment, he gave up the project before he made his statement at the London Reception Centre.²⁸

Clearly, the Security Service had remained somewhat suspicious of Grosjean throughout his time with them. This said, they probably trusted him more than they mistrusted him, as can be seen in Guy Liddell's statement on page 92 of his diary: "He had no intention of carrying out his mission (for the Abwehr). . . ." My reading is that Grosjean never realized how difficult it would be to convince the British that he had simply used the Germans to come over to England. If he did indeed have a Security Service contact in France ("Richardson"), then maybe Grosjean had put too much faith in what he had told him, that is that the Security Service would take good care of him when he arrived in England. The remainder of the meeting was spent talking about what to do with FIDO. As Liddell wrote:

The point to be aimed at was to ensure that in so far as it might be humanly possible he did not get into a plane and fly it back to occupied territory. It was further necessary to ensure that he got no access to operational information of any kind and that he was as far away from the zone of operations as possible.

Without doubt, at this meeting the Security Service closed its FIDO file.

LIFE AFTER FIDO

The Security Service probably told their French Air Force contacts that Grosjean was no longer needed in England and requested that he be sent far away from where fighting was taking place. Hence, Grosjean was posted to Algiers and then to Meknes, Morocco. While in Algiers, he changed his identity to François Perrin so as to protect himself in case he ever fell into German hands. In Meknes, Grosjean (now officially known as Perrin) was an instructor on P39s for a number of months. At the end of November 1944, he returned to England for a short trip, as evidenced by the “Passenger Air Movement Notification” document dated 29 November that is in my possession. Why he was called back is open to conjecture. Was it to confront some of the people he had interacted with in Paris and Barcelona and who were now in British hands: Montet, Lacroix, “Pierre”/“Pedro,” “Boris,” “Grégoire”? At the end of the year, Grosjean was sent to the Lille Air Base and then down to Paris to work at the Air Ministry. He was employed there until the end of 1946.

Grosjean finished his career with the rank of Captain in the Air Force Reserves. He was given several decorations by the French Government, notably the Croix de Guerre and the Légion d’honneur. He was also one of a few to receive the Commemorative Medal of Voluntary Service for the Free French, along with a certificate on which General de Gaulle had handwritten his thanks to all those who had fought alongside him.

But clearly, Grosjean was disappointed by his military career, which was impeded by accidents at crucial times of his life, and by the ban on flying and fighting that the British had imposed on him while he was a double agent for them.

His transition period into civilian life was long and arduous. Grosjean tried his hand at various jobs including publishing and business, but with little success. Only in 1954 did things improve. He had followed courses on archaeology and had gone on digs with L’Abbé Breuil, the famous French archaeologist. He entered this new field and obtained a minor position at the French National Research Center (CNRS). In 1954, he asked to go to Corsica to study the megalithic civilization there. Few people believed he would find anything, but fate was good to him. Over the next twenty years, he uncovered quite splendid sculpted menhirs, at Filitosa and Cauria, for example, as well as megalithic fortified settlements such as Cucuruzzu. In the summer of 1975, at the height of his career and while working on his new museum in Sartene, Roger Grosjean died of a heart attack; he was only fifty-five years of age. Renown came to him only after death. He is now recognized as one of the founders of modern Corsican archaeology.

One final note: Roger Grosjean never talked to his family (his second wife, children) about his double agent status during the war. Thus, throughout his

life, he respected the promise he had made to the Security Service. He did let me read his unpublished book when I was thirteen, though. When I said how much I had enjoyed it, he replied, with a smile, that it was his attempt at being an author before he became an archaeologist. Never once did he ever tell me that he was François Perrin, the main character in the story. Only in these last years, several decades after his death, have I been able to uncover this dangerous, certainly frustrating, but also very courageous part of his life.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Nigel West confirmed in an e-mail message to me in 2005 that my father, Roger Grosjean, was a double agent. He then helped me discover the literature on the subject. Both Nigel West and Thaddeus Holt gave me very constructive feedback on a preliminary version of this article.
- ² FIDO is mentioned in the following few books: Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers* (London: Orion, 2005); John C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972); Nigel West, *MI5: British Security Service Operations 1909–1945* (London: Triad Grafton Books, 1981); Nigel West, *Introduction to John C. Masterman, The Double-Cross System* (London: Pimlico, 1995); Nigel West, ed., *The Guy Liddell Diaries, Vol. II, 1942–1945* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- ³ John C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System*, p. 143.
- ⁴ I need to say a few words here on the relationship that I had with my father who died in 1975. I never knew him well, as my parents separated when I was very young and I did not live with him and his second wife. I did spend a week or so in their Paris home, every year or two, on vacation from my various boarding schools, but I cannot say that I was very close to him. My interest in his war experience started only in 2003, almost thirty years after his death, when my stepmother gave me a box full of old family documents, some of which I mention here. My aim is to present the FIDO case as we know it today while we await the release of his file by MI5 and other documents that might still be found in the French and German national archives.
- ⁵ Nigel West, *MI5*, p. 291.
- ⁶ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, 2005, p. 196.
- ⁷ *Report on Roger Grosjean*, London Reception Centre (LRC) at the Royal Patriotic School operated by MI5, subsection B1d. Now document KV4/25 at the National Archives, Kew, England.
- ⁸ Roger Grosjean's French Air Force file is in the French Air Force Archives in Dijon, France. I perused it in June 2006 and photocopied numerous documents in it.
- ⁹ The manuscript of the book, *Le Soleil dans le Lion (The Sun Is in Leo)*, is dated 27 April, 1954. I can only suppose that Grosjean asked MI5 for permission to publish it and, upon receiving a negative answer, refrained from doing so. The

book is largely autobiographical, but it contains some fiction toward the end, notably concerning the main character's (Perrin) Air Force career after his double agent days. Whenever I refer to Grosjean's book, I use the name of the main character, Perrin, so as to clearly differentiate that source of information from the others. This said, the similarity of the LRC report on Grosjean's passage to England to Grosjean's description of Perrin's journey is amazing.

¹⁰ One of Grosjean's lifelong friends was Marcel Degliame, a famous member of the French Resistance who was made "Compagnon de la Libération" by de Gaulle, the highest honor given to those who had fought alongside him against the Germans. This fact, as well as Grosjean's many honors at the end of the war, most notably the Légion d'honneur, indicate clearly that he was not himself a collaborator.

¹¹ I owe this information to Patrice Miannay, an expert on French double agents during the war.

¹² See Patrice Miannay, *Dictionnaire des agents doubles dans la Résistance* (Paris: Cherche Midi, 2005).

¹³ All this is clearly stated in *Report on Roger Grosjean, LRC*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 83.

¹⁶ Both the affidavit and the postcard are in my possession.

¹⁷ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 92.

¹⁸ Roger Grosjean, *Le soleil dans le lion*, p. 145.

¹⁹ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, pp. 101, 103.

²⁰ Roger Grosjean, *Le soleil dans le lion*, p. 157.

²¹ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 152.

²² This letter is in his Air Force file.

²³ He transcribed his speech in his diary. I also possess a quite official document from the British Broadcasting Service asking him to come to Broadcasting House to prepare and deliver his message.

²⁴ His RAF training report is in my possession.

²⁵ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 196.

²⁶ Admiral Muselier had been the most senior French officer to join de Gaulle in London in 1940.

²⁷ Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 196.

²⁸ This extract and the next one are from Nigel West, *The Guy Liddell Diaries*, p. 196.