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Captain Isidore Newman, SOE

MARTIN SUGARMAN

Isidore ('Izzy') Newman was born in Leeds on 26 January 1916, the son of Joseph and Mrs Tilly Newman (née Cohen), pious and poor Jews who had arrived as immigrants to Britain from Lithuania in 1909. Joseph's original surname had been Naviprutsky, but this was changed when they immigrated.¹ He was one of thirteen brothers and sisters, most of whom stayed on the Continent and perished in the Holocaust. Two younger brothers, however, escaped with the Polish army in 1939 and eventually reached Israel where their families still live.²

The Newmans were married at New Briggate Synagogue, Leeds, on 11 June 1912, prior to which Joseph had been living at 8 Gledhow Terrace and Tilly at 22 Whitelock Street.³ Both were tailors and pressers. They lived at 11 Kepler Street (or Grove),⁴ Leeds, at the time of Isidore's birth.⁵

Isidore was the middle of three brothers. The older was Benny (Bernard), born in 1914,⁶ who, although extremely clever, developed acute mental illness as a young man (he had to leave school in the sixth form having shown great promise) and was in and out of institutions much of his life.⁷ He died in Hull at some time in the 1970s or 80s. The other brother, Montague, seventeen months younger, was slightly physically disabled. He eventually became a medical technician in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, married a non-Jewish woman and appears to have lost touch with the family after Joseph and Tilly died.

The family moved to Durham in 1922 when Isidore was six years old. An old friend, Dr Nat Cannon (aged ninety-four at the time of writing and living in Vancouver), remembers clearly that the family lived at 6 Cross

¹ Correspondence, Nov. 2005, with Graham Newman, London, Isidore's second cousin.

² Correspondence, Nov. 2005, with Eric Newman, Leeds, Isidore's first cousin and father of Graham.

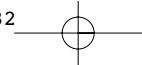
³ Newmans' marriage certificate; information from Murray Freedman, Leeds branch of the JHSE.

⁴ Information from Vivien Cartwright, Leeds Local Studies Library.

⁵ Isidore's birth certificate; information from David Lewis, Archivist of the Hull Synagogue and Jewish Community.

⁶ Yorkshire birth, marriages and deaths website: www.yorkshirebmd.org.

⁷ Undated letter from the late Ronald Oliver, who knew the Newman brothers, to Mike Robson, Johnston's Grammar School historian; copy in author's collection.



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Street and that Isidore's uncle Isaac Cohen (Tilly's brother) lived at 9 Cross Street. The *Durham City Directory* for 1931 listed Joseph and Isaac as 'general dealers'.⁸ Both Isidore and Nat attended St Margaret's Elementary School (on the honours board at the school, listing the pupils who went on to grammar school, Isidore's name was added in 1927)⁹ and later Johnston's Grammar School. Isidore attended the synagogue (then at 107 Laburnum Avenue) of the small Durham community, where his father was a cantor.¹⁰

Isidore was a keen athlete, enjoying cricket, football, swimming and cycling,¹¹ but he was especially interested in learning French. He successfully completed his matriculation (aged sixteen) and Higher School Certificate (at eighteen) and went up to Durham University (Armstrong College, Newcastle, then part of Durham University) in 1934 to read French, English and Latin. Here, he and Nat Cannon (studying Medicine), with their slight Geordie accents, met on occasion, although Nat was four years older. As Isidore wrote in his SOE file on 18 August 1941,

The exciting life of a young student began for me; I studied, I played games, I was interested in everything . . . French language, literature and customs was my special study. In June 1936, at the beginning of the holidays, I decided to go to Belgium with a friend (I corresponded with a young Belgian student at that time). We left Dover for Ostend, then for Brussels. As it was necessary for us to write a thesis for our BA degree, we installed ourselves at the University there – in the 'Cité estudiantine' in order to use the books in the library. When the thesis was finished, we went to Bruges and to Blankenberge, then to the French coast for a few days; finally from Antwerp, we returned to England. In 1937 I obtained my BA degree (2nd class honours) and in 1938, after a year of study, I obtained the DThPT (Diploma in the Theory and Practice of Teaching¹²) from Kings College Newcastle. I left the University and settled in Hull as a teacher in a Primary School.

Meanwhile, Isidore's father had become bankrupt by 1938 (though he later became a successful cloth merchant) and moved with his family to Hull, where he was able to find only a more poorly paid job. This was as *shomer* (literally, 'guard' or 'keeper', who ensures that food sold in the

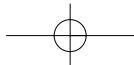
⁸ Correspondence, Oct. 2005, with Dr Cannon, with thanks to S. Oldsburgh, Newcastle Jewish Community. *Durham City Directory* (1931) 15, with thanks to J. Rodgerson, Clayport Local Studies Library, Durham.

⁹ Information from the Headteacher, Mrs D. Mowbray-Pape; booklet celebrating the hundredth anniversary published by the school (1961), 25, with thanks to J. Rodgerson, *ibid.*

¹⁰ L. Olsover, *The Jewish Communities of North East England* (Ashley Mark Publishing, Blaydon-on-Tyne 1981) 296.

¹¹ National Archive, Kew (henceforth NA), HS9/1096/2 (henceforth HS9/1096), Isidore's personal SOE file.

¹² Information from Dr M. Stansfield, University of Durham Archives.



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community's shops and prepared for weddings, bar mitzvahs and other events, is strictly kosher) to the local Jewish community¹³ as well as *Shammes* (beadle) and *Baal Tephilah* (literally, 'Master of Prayers', who leads prayers in the synagogue and who, like the *shomer*, tends to be poorly paid) to the now disbanded Hull Central Synagogue. This was located in Cogan Street, but was bombed during the War and later moved to Park Street. The Newmans lived at 62 Etherington Drive and later at 137 Clumber Street, Princes Avenue.¹⁴ Joseph, who in 1958 was listed as 'Beadle and Collector' in the congregation's annual report, died on 10 April 1966 aged eighty-six. Tilly had died on 28 March 1956 aged sixty-seven; both are buried in Ella Street Jewish cemetery.¹⁵

It was in Hull that Isidore became engaged, but it has so far not been possible to discover the name of the lady.¹⁶ A contemporary of Isidore remembers one of the women of the community saying that Isidore's mother felt that his looks and education made him a good catch for any local Jewish girl.¹⁷ Rita Charnah, who knew Isidore in Hull, reported that her brother Aubrey Gordon had been a fellow teacher with Isidore at Middleton Street Boys Primary School (records show that Isidore began teaching there in September 1938, aged twenty-two; the school closed in 1941 and the building was demolished in 1994)¹⁸ and that they often played cricket and football together for the Judeans, the local Jewish athletic club.¹⁹ Rita also knew that Isidore was a boyfriend of her cousin Dorothy Marks, also a primary-school teacher in Hull, and that she may have been the mystery fiancée. Other sources suggest the lady might have been Rita Cuckle²⁰ who, according to her husband, Lesley Simmons,²¹ had described Isidore as very handsome with a widow's peak hairline who spoke perfect French, and whom she had dated on several occasions.

Judah Rose and his wife Rhoda became good friends of Isidore (whom they nicknamed 'Winkie') because Dolly (Dorothy) lived nearby and she often brought him to their house on Sundays to play music and have tea.²²

¹³ Information from P. Coupland, Hull branch of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (hereafter AJEX).

¹⁴ AJEX Jewish Chaplain card for Isidore Newman, AJEX Jewish Military Museum, London.

¹⁵ Annual Report of the Hull Central Hebrew Congregation, 1958–9, information from D. Lewis, Hull Jewish Community Archives.

¹⁶ HS9/1096.

¹⁷ F. Wolfson, telephone interview, Nov. 2005.

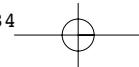
¹⁸ No school records from that period survive. Minutes of the Hull City Education Authority Staffing Sub-Committee, with thanks to P. Leaver, Hull City Archives.

¹⁹ Telephone conversation with R. Charnah (Cuckle), Nov. 2005.

²⁰ Telephone call from A. Coupland, Hull, Nov. 2005.

²¹ Telephone call from L. Simmons, Jan. 2006, with thanks to his nephew H. Cuckle, Leeds and Hull.

²² Telephone call from J. Rose, Nov. 2005, with thanks to Judge Israel Finestein.



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Plate 1 Isidore Newman during a cycle excursion from Hull, together with Dolly Marks, his girlfriend (left), and Rhoda, wife of his friend Judah Rose, in about 1939.
(Photograph in the possession of Judah Rose.)

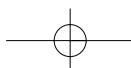
Isidore was full of good humour, and all four would often go cycling in the countryside around Hull. Judah remembers that Isidore was a smoker and once accidentally burnt a hole in the arm of their settee. The settee – with the hole – remained in Judah's house until quite recently, as a sad reminder of friendship with a young man who became a brave SOE agent.

From Hull, Isidore joined the army on 29 August 1940 (number 2350538) and trained as a radio telegraphist with the Royal Corps of Signals (RCOS) at Catterick for six months. Here he was seen by a Jewish Army Chaplain, the Reverend P. Cohen, on 22 September and given the standard Military Jewish Prayer Book and Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz's *Book of Jewish Thoughts*. Cohen saw him again on 1 December.

After a posting to Scarborough Isidore was sent to Kent for four months as a signaller. He was then commissioned as First Lieutenant (number 216306) and finished training on 9 July 1941, from where he went to Sheffield with the 12th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment.

Soon after, Isidore appears to have been stationed with a Royal Artillery battery in Hull. Malcolm Shields (then Schultz) remembers that Isidore used frequently to come for Friday evening meals at his house on Kingston Road, because his mother and Isidore's mother had been childhood friends.²³ Malcolm, then in the Army cadets at Hymers School, asked Isidore if he could arrange for the cadets to come and visit the AA battery

²³ Telephone call from M. Shields, Jan. 2006.



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on Costello playing fields in west Hull, where they were stationed to defend the city. Isidore promised to see what he could do and a few days later rang to say he had organized such a visit. Malcolm remembers with great glee how almost a hundred boys were taken to the battery and how Isidore had set up a full dry-run demonstration of how the guns worked, lasting the whole afternoon. He described Isidore as a handsome and athletic man to whom the boys looked up.

On 1 August 1941 Isidore Newman was sent for Wireless Officer training with SOE, in Colonel Buckmaster's F (French) Section, where he appears to have been a successful student. A report of 7 August 1941 by one of his trainers, Lance Corporal MacAlister, stated that 'he was in good physical condition. ... standing 1.8 meters tall, dark, with black hair, brown eyes and good looking; above average intelligence ... and after only 2 weeks had a good knowledge of French and French customs; he enjoys the training but has written some indiscreet letters' (perhaps to his fiancée or parents?). Again on 14 August, 'he is self assured and thinks with precision', and on 28 August, 'sometimes seems depressed ... he went for a long walk yesterday saying he was suffering from nostalgia (?). His French vocabulary is improving and he does excellent work instructing other students in Morse code. Colloquial French not good but he is a patient and excellent teacher of wireless and Morse.'²⁴

At some stage Isidore met Leo Marks, Chef de Codage at SOE, who taught all the agents the required skills in coding and decoding messages. He later described Isidore as 'one of Buckmaster's best operators'.²⁵

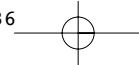
In a second report by a Corporal Edgar on 23 October 1941 Isidore is described as 'good at PT; knows a lot and so this makes him a little unpopular with others in the group'. By 27 October a cryptic message from SOE said that it had 'been decided that the progress he [Newman] has made justifies his selection for work of a very responsible nature abroad. . . kindly take the necessary action and (get him) posted to us from 1.11.41'.²⁶ On 1 November he was duly promoted to Second Lieutenant and given the training name 'Athlete'. On 16 December he received a postcard from the Jewish Chaplain congratulating him on his promotion. Later he had a spell in hospital, having broken his leg while training in Scotland (the family story, according to Hillel Bender, married to Isidore's cousin Sheila Cohen, was that it occurred while parachute training, though for SOE agents this usually took place at Ringway, near Manchester).²⁷ He was visited in a hospital by the Reverend Chait of the Army Jewish Chaplaincy on 4 and 25

²⁴ HS9/1006.

²⁵ L. Marks, *Between Silk and Cyanide* (London 1998) 80.

²⁶ HS9/1096.

²⁷ Telephone conversation with H. Bender, now of Cheltenham, then of Newcastle, Nov. 2005.



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February 1942.²⁸ Rita Cuckle remembers him coming home on leave with a limp, probably in late 1941, which he attributed to a training or car accident.²⁹

First Mission into France

Isidore was sent into the field in southern France with the code-name 'Julien' (Georges 49 Wireless Officer)³⁰ and Mathieu Elliot, with the false name of Joseph Nemorin, on 31 March 1942. He was to work with agent 'Olive' (or Lieutenant Francis Basin), in Operation 'Dividend', with circuit 'Donkeyman'. Fortunately, the famous SOE agent Peter Churchill (or Raoul or Michel, later married to the agent Odette Sansom, GC) was to accompany Isidore, with the agents Edward Zeff and two others, and has left a vivid account of this episode in his book, which I unapologetically paraphrase in the following paragraphs, since it gives a detailed and vivid picture of a typical clandestine operation.³¹

Churchill first met Isidore at the London headquarters of SOE, describing him as 'tall, dark and in his early 20s'. With him was Edward Zeff, another Jewish wireless operator, 'short and middle-aged', also to be inserted into France (Zeff was later captured, but survived the war in a prison camp). They both spoke 'faultless, rapid French and their appearances', Churchill was pleased to note, 'were such that they would pass unnoticed in any French crowd, train or restaurant'. With their French clothes and accessories in their suitcases, Isidore and Zeff were each given a money belt with 100,000 francs and smaller notes for their wallets. They also carried false identity cards and various passes, photographs, old newspaper clippings and local tram tickets as evidence of the cover stories which they had committed to memory.

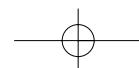
On 26 February all three took the train to Bristol and then flew on a Curtis CW20 aircraft to Gibraltar. There they were met by a Captain Benson of Military Intelligence, who took them to the Rock Hotel. Their submarine transport was going to be delayed due to the Malta crises, so they used their time practising landing with the folboat canoes from the sea beside the airfield, and also how to climb down at night from a submarine into a floating boat, in the centre of Gibraltar harbour.

²⁸ AJEX Jewish Chaplain card, AJEX Military Museum.

²⁹ Rita is said to have told this story to the *Hull Daily Mail* in Nov. 1946, but the Cuckle family have been unable to trace the article.

³⁰ E. G. Boxshall and M. R. D. Foot, 'Chronology of SOE Operations with the Resistance in France in WW2' [by 1960] sections 17 and 22; MS, Imperial War Museum, London (hereafter IWM).

³¹ P. Churchill, *Duel of Wits* (London 1957) 15–33.



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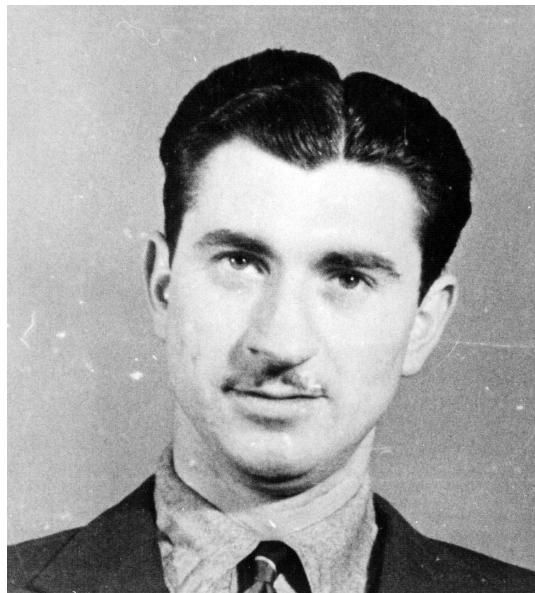


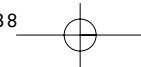
Plate 2 Captain Isidore Newman, the agent.
Photograph preserved in his file in the
National Archives.

They finally departed at the end of March by submarine P42 (HMS *Unbroken*, commanded by Lieutenant Alistair Mars), to the Riviera at Antibes in France.

The craft was small, but the officers and petty officers were kind in giving up their bunks for the ten-day voyage, for there were two other agents with them to be dropped at another location by Churchill, making five extra passengers. All five agents were given naval overalls for the voyage, to cover their French suits. Despite frequent excursions to the bridge each night for fresh air, Zeff suffered from claustrophobia, but Isidore seemed to enjoy the strong camaraderie with the crew, each admiring the courage required to do the others' work.

After nine days they reached the Riviera coast and patrolled back and forth at night on the surface, allowing Churchill to reconnoitre where they were to land and to pinpoint the bay and buildings he knew from a previous mission weeks before. Next dawn they dived and, using the periscope, Churchill precisely located his landing site at Antibes. That night, by a half moon, they surfaced four miles offshore.

Suddenly Mars spotted a fishing boat coming in their direction, which



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later turned out to be an SOE felucca trying to land other agents in an uncoordinated operation. Churchill had to abort his landing for that night, causing consternation among the agents.

The following day, submerged, the submarine again cruised back and forth looking for the right landing place, while Churchill, to pass the time, drew a plan of the site showing the concrete steps leading up from the rocky beach to circular gardens above and the view along Avenue Maréchal Foch, up to house number 31. This was the rendezvous, the home of the Jewish Resistance leader Dr Louis Levy ('Louis of Antibes') whom Churchill knew well.³²

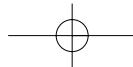
Darkness fell, the town lights went on and the inhabitants slept. At midnight the submarine surfaced slowly. From two miles out they spotted some powerful unidentified lights moving inshore, which later turned out to be highly illuminated French fishing boats. Nevertheless, Captain Mars ordered the folboats to the forward hatch and told Churchill he should go ahead and disembark. He would watch for his pencil torch light on his way back. This took place on the night of 21 April as Operation 'Delay II' (Churchill calls it 'Operation A').³³ Churchill slid down a rope into the folboat with one radio and suitcase already placed on the aft thwart, 1500 yards from shore. A French-speaking agent stood on the bridge to deal with any inquisitive French fisherman. He would say they were a French submarine from Toulon laying mines, and that they had better get away. The machine guns and three-inch gun were also manned in case of need.

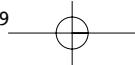
Churchill intended to land, unload and hide the case and radio in the gardens and then return for the second boat, with Isidore and Zeff and the second radio and case. But he was interrupted by one of the brightly lit fishing boats and immediately paddled hurriedly back to the submarine. There he breathlessly recited to Mars what had happened, but Mars, calmly amused, told him a fishing boat had come to the submarine too and said they were about to make for home – it was safe to return to shore. Isidore and Zeff were already in their boat and waiting for him 200 yards to starboard. Churchill paddled to them and they all set off towards the dark shore. Churchill went too fast, however, and turning, realized he had lost the other boat in the dark. He turned again and after 100 yards found them. He told them sharply to speed up, but Isidore told Churchill that his speed was leaving a highly visible phosphorescent wake and he needed to slow down. They agreed to approach at only 2 knots.

They almost ran aground on the treacherous rocks, but finally found the concrete steps. Churchill unloaded his canoe, exchanged his gum boots for

³² E. H. Cookridge, *Inside SOE: The Story of Special Operations in Western Europe, 1940–45* (London 1966) 151–9.

³³ B. Richards, *Secret Flotillas* (London 2004) 365; Churchill (see n. 31) 20.





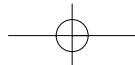
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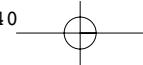
plimsolls and turned his boat round ready for a rapid departure. He then held Isidore's canoe while they disembarked. After tying the empty canoe to his stern, he carried the case and radio, separately, up the steps – leaving Isidore and Zeff below – keeping one hand free to hold his Colt revolver in case of meeting uninvited guests. He returned to bring Isidore and Zeff up to the gardens, and left them hiding in the bushes while he went to check the location of the Levy house. They would know when he came back as he would whistle the tune of 'Le Madelon'. Suddenly, two French policemen on bikes approached with headlights on, but they all ducked, and they passed by, oblivious of the hidden men.

In the dark, Churchill had difficulty finding the correct road he thought he knew well, searching in all directions and careful to whistle the tune each time he passed Isidore and Zeff. It was 3 am and light was approaching. Suddenly he found the Avenue and went straight to no. 31, where Dr Levy's name plaque was clearly fixed to the wall. Relieved, he returned to his comrades and explained where they had to go and that they had to return before dawn for the other radio and case that he would now fetch and hide. They all shook hands; nothing was said but Churchill wrote 'there was a world of feeling in our handclasps'.

Churchill returned to the submarine for the second radio and case, but the current had forced the vessel nearer to shore and sideways. Using his flashlight he soon found them, however. Second-in-command Lieutenant Haddow (killed later in the War) helped him load the radio and case into the folboat and told him to hurry back as dawn was fast arriving. As Churchill again approached the steps he noticed several shadowy figures moving around. He drew his revolver and placed it on the bow with lanyard attached, then turned the boat in case he had to make a quick retreat. Then he spotted a bald head which could only have been that of his old friend Dr Levy (three years later Levy was betrayed and died on a forced march between Nazi death camps).

Warmly shaking hands and without taking breath, Levy with good humour asked Churchill for the false baptismal certificates he had ordered for his daughters (Levy had bought a house in his daughters' names and needed the certificates in case the Germans should try and confiscate it from him as a Jew. They were later dropped by parachute and had the desired effect.) Churchill replied with equal humour that he had brought agents and radios, so why worry about paperwork? Peering around, he demanded to know who these other men were with Isidore and Zeff. 'Some of the gang to watch the fun', said Levy. Churchill agreed with Levy to take agent Bernard (Emmanuel d'Astier, a French naval officer) back with him in the folboats. They all shook hands and Churchill disappeared into the night, back to P42.





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Others in the welcoming party had included Henry Frager ('Paul', a French architect and agent who served as an artillery officer in both World Wars and was later betrayed and executed by the Nazis) and Guillain de Benouville. In their slightly different account they remembered, 'from our little boat I watched the submarine surface slowly, with tears in my eyes ... from England they had come to fight on our side ... for France ... the sailors threw a rope to us and pulled our boat alongside. The three agents jumped down, shook hands and stuffed packets of cigarettes into our pockets. We embraced them, patted their shoulders, their faces. ... you must remember that for us this was the first sign of action against the German conquerors of Europe by our friends, the free Anglo-Saxons. "What a joy", cried Henry Frager, and we all repeated his words.'³⁴

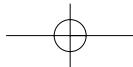
Isidore described the mission in a report written on his return from France. The first two weeks, which were quiet, were spent finding a suitable safe house for his radio transmissions, not too surrounded by other buildings. But after a short time his French agent Olive was arrested and replaced by 'Baptiste' who took up residence in the house opposite. This agent was careless with security matters and Isidore reported his unease to his colleagues, the agents 'Hilaire' and 'Arnaud' (the radio operator Adam/Adolphe Rabinovitz, another Jewish SOE agent, who worked for Churchill after Isidore left for England; later murdered by the Gestapo). On one occasion, Baptiste had openly called on Isidore at 9.30 pm, behaving in a highly suspicious manner in the street and unnecessarily arousing the curiosity of an Italian woman living nearby. A second agent, 'Carte' (a well-known French artist, André Girard),³⁵ came as a replacement, but he too proved difficult, insisting Isidore send messages only as he, Carte, submitted them, leaving no room for Isidore's own training and initiative in abbreviating them. Owing to his behaviour with Newman and others, he was not used by SOE again.

One evening the police arrived at Isidore's house and Carte warned him to go to a known safe house, belonging to a Dr Picot in Cannes. But Picot's wife refused to take the risk and Isidore was forced to move on to yet another unsuitable house, under surveillance by the police, belonging to the agent 'Baron'. Ultimately, by night's end, he was forced to find his own residence.

Isidore sought assistance from the agents 'Romano' and 'Audouard' of the Resistance group 'Croupier' which had given him excellent help in the past. Carte, however, had fallen out with this group and objected, but as Isidore had been looked after for months in Audouard's house he ignored Carte, who then threatened never again to help him.

³⁴ Cookridge (see n. 32) 151–9.

³⁵ NA, SOE file HS6/382.



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At this point, Raoul (Churchill) who until then had been friendly and helpful, became authoritarian, accusing Isidore of taking too long to decipher messages, among other things. He ordered him to transmit only in the early morning, even though he knew this to be the most unsatisfactory time to do so. Police surveillance increased and Isidore suggested he take a two-week break, allowing Arnaud to fill in for him. But Raoul refused, blaming Isidore for arguing with Carte, despite Isidore's protests about Carte's unreasonable behaviour towards him.

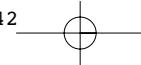
Raoul then ordered Isidore back to London by the next felucca, for breaking with Carte, accusing Isidore of being dangerous to the discipline of the group – clearly an absurd charge. Isidore asked to be moved to another group, but Raoul refused and said 'No, you will take the boat. If you don't take it, I will'. He ordered Isidore to pass his set, codes and crystals to Arnaud, presenting him with a major dilemma, as orders from London were that the wireless operator is always master of his own set. Isidore contemplated leaving the area and contacting London himself to ask for instructions, but eventually gave in. Raoul ordered him to speak to nobody and to leave for the group 'Antibes' at Marseilles to await the felucca. As the boat did not arrive, Isidore went to Arles to the agent 'Ulysse' to try to contact London. When Carte and Raoul found out they were furious, even though the Arles group wanted to keep Isidore as their wireless officer, swapping him for Ulysse. This was turned down and, very unhappy, Isidore began his return to London, reaching Britain on 23 November 1942.

Extracting Isidore was carried out as Operation 'Watchman 3/Overgrow/Dubonnet' on the night of 3/4 November at Port Miou. With him were John A. R. Starr (the younger brother of the agent George Starr), the agents 'Richard', his son and 'Quintet' Jaboume. Being inserted were George Starr, Marcus Bloom,³⁶ Mary Herbert, Mme M. T. le Chêne and Odette Sansom – a famous team.³⁷

In his debrief report Isidore wrote how he had witnessed Carte's bad treatment of the agent 'Hilaire' after he had broken his leg in his parachute jump into France, leaving him to recover in an unoccupied house with insufficient food, as a result of which his morale suffered badly. Hilaire later refused to work further with Carte, finding his own house and withholding the address from Carte. Isidore noted too that Romano had also been badly treated by Carte, who had refused help from Romano's enthusiastic 'Croupier' group, who had found many safe houses for agents in southern France and were devoted to helping the Allies. He failed to recognize their huge potential.

³⁶ M. Sugarman, 'Lieutenant Marcus Bloom: a Jewish hero of the SOE' *Jewish Historical Studies* 39 (2004) 183–96.

³⁷ Richards (see n. 33) 215.



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Isidore ended his report by saying he had received only 10,000 francs from Olive at the beginning of his mission and nothing in the field, despite the initial agreement from Major Bodington in London. He also asked that a BBC radio message be sent to his friends in the Resistance to let them know he was safely back in England, to read 'Vous serez toujours dans mon coeur. Mille baisers d'André', to be transmitted on Wednesday 25 November 1942.

Peter Churchill's account bears out Newman's report. M. R. D. Foot neatly summarized how 'Newman quarrelled with Girard, who had no appreciation of the dangers Newman ran, and insisted – to Churchill's as well as Newman's horror – on having his verbose messages transmitted exactly as written. This was more than Newman's professional integrity could stand. Churchill thought it of overriding importance to keep on good terms with Gerard, so he reluctantly sent Newman home on the November felucca. Newman expressed himself forcibly, on reaching London, at Churchill's treatment of him, but appears later to have relented.'³⁸

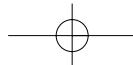
Churchill's own account is more detailed.³⁹ He had been asked to return to Antibes in late August 1942, dropping by parachute near Montpellier and making his way to Cannes. He and Isidore met on the day he arrived at Villa Isabel in the Route de Fréjus, owned by Baron de Malval, the agent 'Antoine' (Adam Rabinovitz also often worked from this location⁴⁰). They had a joyful reunion dinner, since Isidore was looking forward to working for him, but Isidore told him the local set-up was not a happy one as Carte was too demanding concerning radio transmissions by Isidore, insisting on messages being sent always from the one safe house, a highly dangerous practice as it would ease the finding of the radio by German detector vans. Cannes was also a major attraction for the Resistance, as Isidore's radio was the only working one in the region and meant contact with the outside world. All of this placed huge pressure on Isidore. After dinner, Isidore handed Churchill a message from London and then went to bed.

Next day they met again after lunch at the pre-arranged rendezvous at the Jardins Fleuries, beside the Majestic Hotel in the shop of Roger and Germaine Renaudi. This fancy-goods and buttons shop had an entrance into the gardens and another to the street behind, with views through a curtain both ways in case of uninvited guests. It was the Carte group meeting place. Isidore handed Churchill the day's decoded messages, written in neat block letters on a small piece of paper:

³⁸ M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France* (London 2004) 187.

³⁹ Churchill (see n. 31) 97–133.

⁴⁰ Richards (see n. 33) 365.



Captain Isidore Newman

NUMBER 57

FOR MICHEL [Churchill]

REPEAT STAND BY TONIGHT WATCHMAN [a Felucca insertion] BRINGING SIX AGENTS INDEPENDENT STOP ONE TON MATERIALS TO BE SUNK WITH LINE TO BUOY POINTE DE LESQUILLON COLLECT ONE TON TINNED FOOD STOP MAXIMUM PASSENGERS RETURN PIERROT AND WIRELESS OFFICER OTHERS TO LEAVE SPACE RAF MEN EMBARKING ELSEWHERE STOP SIGNAL BOAT TO SHORE RED M FOR MOTHER SHORE TO BOAT WHITE O FOR OSCAR ENDS.

NUMBER 58

FOR MICHEL

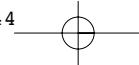
WELL DONE HALIFAX REAR GUNNER SAW YOU SPINNING. KEEP W/T MESSAGES YOUR LENGTH GOOD LUCK LOVE AND KISSES ENDS.

Churchill asked the reason for the 'soppy stuff' at the end and Isidore explained that it helped confuse decoders. Churchill wrote down and told Isidore to send 'YOUR 57/8 OK STOP NUTS ENDS'. Incredulous, Isidore asked if he was sure he wanted that message sent. Churchill confirmed and added, 'Perhaps they will sack me and give me a job in the Cabinet!'

Noticing many comings and goings in the shop, mostly of people not actually buying anything, Churchill commented that security was lax. Isidore explained that the naturalness of the people did the job instead; there was no cloak and dagger whispering that would give the game away, even though that was what they were taught to use in training. In reply Churchill pointed out that, as a result, any one person caught would know too much about everything, but Isidore maintained that it was unavoidable. Churchill decided he was going to take matters in hand. Finally, Isidore gave Churchill a run-down on what the individual group members did, and then they parted company. Churchill was extremely nervous about Isidore being mixed up with such lax and dangerous methods.

At a meeting in the house later that day Carte complained to Churchill that Isidore was undisciplined because he openly criticized the length of messages Carte asked to be sent. Churchill tried tactfully to explain that their training was only to send messages that are urgent and short. Carte replied that all his messages were urgent and if Isidore did not comply, he wanted a new wireless officer. Churchill said he would consider this. He could see that a problem was brewing between these two dedicated and determined men.

The following day Isidore took Churchill to meet the Jewish second in command of the group, Porthos. The Gestapo in Paris had a million-franc price (about £5500 at that time) on his head. Churchill's thoughts were that if he was as clever and resourceful as all the other Jewish agents, all would be well. Porthos, who was known to have been exceptionally



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bad on security, was betrayed and executed by the Nazis later in the War.⁴¹

In Report 1 to London, submitted on 10 September 1942, Churchill mentions that Isidore was overworked and had a fever, often refusing food as he was too busy, and sapping his long-term health and energy.⁴² So Ulysse was helping Isidore with decoding tasks. In Report 3 of 18 September he describes Isidore as ‘working like a Trojan’ and would be pleased to ‘recommend him for great devotion to duty’.⁴³ Report 4 of 24 September describes how Isidore had to leave town on several occasions as it appeared that copies of his messages had been left carelessly lying about in the houses of group members.

The 8 October report (no. 7) describes a tense meeting with Carte at which Churchill defended Isidore – and Britain – against slanderous allegations of poor support. Churchill made it clear to Carte that Isidore had been a wireless officer for six months and was working exceedingly long hours under constant stress and fear of betrayal or discovery. If he sometimes lost his temper and used bad language, it was perfectly understandable. Excellent wireless officers were rare and he, Churchill, had never had any problems with him. It was also clear (though Churchill kept this to himself) that the much slower courier system was used to send and receive messages via Spain due to Carte’s behaviour towards Isidore, and that this was causing grave problems for the Resistance groups and their work.⁴⁴ But because of the danger a rift would pose, Churchill reluctantly said that Isidore would have to be sent home.

The news was broken gently by Churchill, who confessed to liking Isidore at all levels. Isidore was much hurt, but Churchill insisted he needed a break anyway, and that he should put all the problems with Carte in his debriefing report when he returned to London. Meanwhile he was to ‘behave’ with Carte – though it turns out he did not.

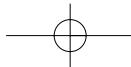
Isidore had done well, transmitting more than two hundred messages to London over a period of eight months, many of them sent from Villa Isabel. An unsigned report in the SOE files says that Isidore was ‘an extremely capable radio operator – technically the best we have ever had – but his temper was uncertain and he was not a diplomat’; ‘he maintained almost daily W/T communication and ... in spite of the strain of operating in occupied territory and the constant efforts made [by the enemy] to detect his set, he seldom missed a schedule [pre-arranged transmission], and his messages were always clear and accurate’. Basin, who survived the war, described Isidore thus: ‘Poor Julien, he was an excellent radio operator,

⁴¹ Ibid. 319.

⁴² Ibid. 115.

⁴³ Ibid. 119.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 131.



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cheerful, hardworking and courageous'.⁴⁵ While in France Isidore had been promoted to Captain (on 21 September 1942).

SOE wanted Isidore to return to the field with the December moon, to a new area, and he readily agreed. First he was to report to Training School S2 for one to two weeks to learn the latest radio techniques. Unable to return by the December moon, however, he started the course instead on 31 December 1942.

In March 1943 Peter Churchill bumped into Isidore at SOE headquarters, wearing his General Service uniform and three Captain's pips. On his left breast was the ribbon of the MBE. Churchill wrote, 'He paid me the great compliment of asking if he might be my radio operator again'. But this was not to be.⁴⁶

Sometime in early 1943 Isidore by chance met his cousin William Wolfe Newman, a doctor and Captain in the RAMC, at a station in London. In a telephone interview with Eric, William's brother, in November 2005, he said that the one abiding memory he had of Isidore was the story of this meeting told him by William. Isidore and William shook hands and chatted, but as they parted on that platform, Isidore said that he was going into France and that he would probably never see him again. William was indeed the last family member to see Isidore alive. Rita Cuckle also related how Isidore was due to come to tea with her on 48-hour leave, but called to say he could not make it 'as there was a flap on'. She never saw or heard from him again.

Again into France

Isidore left by Lysander aircraft for his second mission on the night of 19/20 July 1943. He was piloted by Flying Officer 'Mac' McCairns in operation 'Athlete' after a two-day wait due to bad weather. McCairns wrote that the weather during the flight was very bad over the Channel and that he had fifty minutes of strenuous flying to endure.⁴⁷ With the additional code name of 'Pepe' and the false name of Pierre Jacques Nerrault, Isidore was to work in the Rouen area with the agent 'Clément' (Major Staunton or Phillip Liewer) for the 'Salesman' Circuit. He came down just east of Tours on a landing area codenamed 'Grippe',⁴⁸ with agent 'Anthelme'.⁴⁹

Much of what is known about this mission comes from a report by Staff

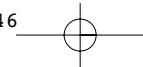
⁴⁵ Cookridge (see n. 32) 151–9.

⁴⁶ Churchill (see n. 31) 126.

⁴⁷ H. Verity, *We Landed by Moonlight* (Trowbridge 1995) 198.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Foot (see n. 38) 361, note 38.



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Sergeant J. M. Clark of 327 Field Security/Intelligence, British Liberation Army, written in 1945. Clark arrived in Rouen in October 1945 and was introduced to Mme Denise Desvaux (of 2 Rue de Fontenelle, previously of Rue Jeanne d'Arc), well-known couturière. She told Clark how her friend had introduced her to Captain Charles Clément of the Normandy Resistance and that she had agreed to have Isidore, posing as her nephew, billeted with her for eight months from August 1943. Desvaux knew what Isidore's job was and described how he sent radio messages daily, either from her house or from other safe locations in Rouen. She also met French comrades of Isidore, and named Serge and a Lieutenant Henri Pacquot (later evacuated to England after being wounded in a firefight with a German patrol).

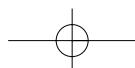
Other members of his group described Isidore as extremely security-minded, never transmitting from the same place twice and often cycling a thousand miles a month to achieve this. He would travel up to forty miles from Rouen before sending messages. Major General Gubbins, Commander of SOE, later wrote in the citation for Isidore's MBE that he worked untiringly in an area thick with enemy troops and Gestapo, making possible the delivery of arms to his circuit on a large scale.⁵⁰ Altogether on this mission Isidore had sent fifty-four messages to London.

Isidore remained in Desvaux's home till March 1944 when Serge was arrested by the Rouen Gestapo (Clement was in England) and under torture apparently named others in the Resistance. The Gestapo, accompanied by a French Inspector Ali, then raided Desvaux's home on 9 or 10 March and arrested both Desvaux and Isidore. There is no evidence that Isidore's radio had been detected by a German listening van, as some sources suggest. A document in Isidore's SOE file claims that he had worked almost alone with the commander of the Rouen Resistance, code-named Lieutenant 'Cicero'; it may have been he who gave Isidore away, as on that March evening they had arranged to meet for dinner.⁵¹ He and Mme Desvaux were taken for interrogation to the Palais de Justice in Rouen, and London was informed on 11 March. More than eighty other agents were also arrested.

A week later, Desvaux was released, thanks, as she explained, to the fact that she and Isidore had a pre-arranged story to exonerate her from any knowledge of Isidore's activities. Isidore's possessions were confiscated, including 50,000 francs intended for the Resistance. Desvaux was able to visit him in prison and take him food and other comforts, and he gave her his mother's address in Hull. She was told by the Germans that as a British

⁵⁰ Citation for MBE, 21 November 1945, printed in the *JC* 12 April 1946, p. 14.

⁵¹ HS9/1096.



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officer Isidore would be treated as a prisoner of war and might even be exchanged.

In April part of the Palais de Justice was destroyed in an air raid and Isidore and Serge were taken to Paris, to 3 Rue des Etats Unis, a private house that had been turned into a Gestapo prison, although this was not reported to London until 27 June. The agent George Starr said he saw Isidore for two or three days at the Gestapo interrogation centre in Paris at the notorious 84 Avenue Foch, where he was put in Starr's cell while Starr himself was kept in the guard room. Isidore had apparently recognized a tie Starr was wearing, that he himself had bought in Selfridge's in London. Starr says Isidore then disappeared, perhaps back to Rue des Etats Unis.⁵² Another report claimed that Isidore was transferred to the German transit prison at Compiègne, which was the usual route for captured agents. It appears he was taken to Dara in Silesia and then to Ravitsch together with the agent Rousset ('Leopold').

After the war Denise Desvaux wrote to Isidore's mother. She described him as a sweet and charming man and said she had been a second mother to him, enjoying their trips to Paris and listening to his plans for postwar life. He had apparently sent at least one letter to his mother, via another agent who was extracted to England. Desvaux went on to say that Isidore felt happy and secure in her home, always looking forward to returning there after his long journeys to carry out his transmissions. She ended by saying that she hoped to visit Mrs Newman in Hull. But there is no indication that this ever happened.

Isidore's parents were sceptical about her account, however, and after receiving Desvaux's letter, Joseph Newman wrote to the War Office on 20 November 1945 to ask why the Gestapo had released her so quickly. How did they know Isidore was a British officer? Did she in fact betray him?⁵³ It will probably never be known.

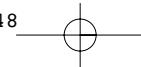
Mauthausen

Isidore's end was similarly tragic to that of Marcus Bloom, another courageous British Jewish SOE officer.⁵⁴ From the fortress camp of Ravitsch on the Polish–Silesian border near Breslau, Isidore was taken to Gusen, near Linz in Austria, one of many satellite camps of Mauthausen, probably in August 1944, and then to Mauthausen itself at the beginning of September.

⁵² G. Starr, debriefing report, May 1945, IWM, Vera Atkins Archive (hereafter Atkins Archive) Box 1, file 2/1/9-10.

⁵³ NA HS9/1096/2.

⁵⁴ Sugarman (see n. 36) esp. pages 191ff.



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A French captain, Rousset (already an inmate at Ravitsch) reported seeing forty-seven Allied agents arrive together in April 1944, among them Bloom and Newman. He said they were wearing blue prison uniforms with a white triangle marked 'I' on the back, and were kept together in the same wing. In August they were marched west to Gusen as the Russians advanced. The agents remained a tight-knit group and were much admired by the other prisoners for their dignified and disciplined behaviour.

Following the failed attempt on Hitler's life on 30 July 1944, Keitel issued orders to Nazi camp commandants on 18 August to deal severely with 'terrorists and saboteurs'. So on 2 September the agents were taken from Gusen to the dark, granite fortress of the Mauthausen death and labour camp. Section 16 of the camp record for that date states, 'arrivals ... 47 allied soldiers; 39 Dutch, 7 Britons; 1 USA'. Isidore was listed as prisoner number 96535 in documents found after the war.⁵⁵

On the third afternoon, each agent was ordered to open his shirt and the numbers from 1 to 47 were painted on their chests.⁵⁶ On the morning of 6 September he and his comrades were formed up outside their cavernous cell under heavy guard and marched towards the notorious camp quarry and down the 180 steps into its bowels, where the other emaciated camp inmates stood in silent witness. An SS officer moved forward and screamed at the first man (a Dutchman) in English, 'You will go over there and pick up a big stone and put it on your shoulder. You then run up the stairs.' As the Dutchman climbed, the officer shouted '*Feuer!*' and the prisoner fell dead. This horrific charade was designed to comply with Keitel's order that the men should be shot 'while trying to escape'. Marcus Bloom and Isidore Newman were murdered in the same way at Mauthausen death camp on 6 September 1944, together with the forty-five others, mostly Dutch agents, and have no known grave. The *Jewish Chronicle* announced Isidore's death on 13 July 1945.⁵⁷

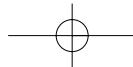
Rousset said, in a postwar debriefing,⁵⁸ that after his own interrogation on 18 April 1944 he had been taken from 3 Rue des Etats Unis to a bus in which other captured agents including 'Pepe'/Newman and his organizer Claude Malraux (brother of André) were already seated. With nineteen others they were driven to Fresnes prison outside Paris and then to a railway station at Vaire-sur-Marne. From there they were taken via Maastricht, Düsseldorf, Leipzig and Dresden, to Breslau and Ravitsch. There there they were put in chains but allowed to speak to each other, and

⁵⁵ IWM, Atkins Archive, Box 1, Mauthausen folder.

⁵⁶ Sugarman (see n. 36) 194.

⁵⁷ JC 13 July 1945, p. 5.

⁵⁸ NA, SOE file HS6/578.



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they managed to persuade a Georgian SS guard to post a list of prisoners to Clement via an agent called Charles at Rue St Ferdinand in Paris, pretending it was a letter to a relative. This reached London. They were badly treated, in solitary confinement with bad food, and handcuffed at night, wearing convict clothing. They were put to rope-making during the day and had only half an hour of exercise daily. On 19 May Rousset was sent back to France and never saw Isidore until that day in Mauthausen.

Tributes

General Gubbins's citation for Isidore's MBE concludes: 'For his courage and devotion to duty during his two clandestine missions in Occupied France, it is recommended that Captain Newman be appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (Military Division)'. This was gazetted on 31 January 1946 and announced in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 2 February. Isidore was also given a posthumous Mention in Despatches. The family received several letters from members of Isidore's French Resistance colleagues, praising his work.⁵⁹ An official War Office letter to the family said: 'I have known your son since he joined this department in the summer of 1941 and have taken pride in his work and career. He was one of the keenest and ablest of men and has done an important job ... [He] made a very important contribution towards the liberation of Europe, with the minimum loss of lives to our Allied Armies and the civilian population of France'.⁶⁰

Squadron Officer Vera Atkins (née Rosenberg), the formidable Jewish Administration Officer of F Section, SOE, wrote on 6 June 1945 to a Mr Wolff of 13 Bowlalley Lane, Hull (perhaps a friend of the Newman family) to express 'the deep regret of herself and Colonel Buckmaster [Commanding Officer of F Section], on the death of this gallant officer we knew so well'.⁶¹ It was she who had seen an American Intelligence report naming the murdered agents at Mauthausen and noticed that Newman had been recorded on the list as Matthieu, one of his code names. She corrected it in her own hand.⁶² From the French side, Marcel Ruby, a young, decorated Resistance worker at the time, described Isidore as 'a particularly able man, hard working and very brave'.⁶³

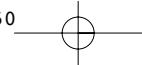
⁵⁹ *Hull Daily Mail* 16 June 1945.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, *The Times* 13 May 1945 p. 7 and *Daily Mail* 13 May 1945 front page.

⁶¹ IWM, Atkins Archive (see n. 55). For Vera Atkins/Rosenberg see S. Helm, *A Life in Secrets: The Story of Vera Atkins* (London 2005); M. Sugarman, 'Two Jewish heroines of the SOE' *Trans JHSE XXXV* (2000) 309–28; also in *Bulletin of the Military History Society* (Feb. 2000) 127–45.

⁶² IWM, Atkins Archive (see n. 55).

⁶³ Marcel Ruby, 'F Section SOE: The Story of the Buckmaster Network' (London 1985) 120.



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Maurice Buckmaster's more detailed appreciation of Isidore was published in the *Hull Daily Mail* in November 1946, and reproduced in the same paper on 13 September 2004, near the sixtieth anniversary of Isidore's death:

At great personal risk he continued for many months to transmit and receive Morse messages to and from Supreme Allied HQ... essential to the successful execution of our part of the war effort. This consisted of supplying liaison officers, arms and ammunition and explosives to French patriots who would thus be able to co-ordinate their efforts to liberate their country. Having successfully completed his first mission in the south east of France, he returned to London and volunteered to return again to another part of France. ... After carrying out invaluable work in reconstituting a previously decimated resistance group in Normandy, he was arrested by the German forces and executed. Never did he betray any secret information despite intense pressure on him to do so. His colleagues have spoken in glowing terms of his readiness to help at all times and of imperturbable sangfroid. I am happy to record this tribute to a very brave man of whom the French Resistance chiefs, as well as his British compatriots, are and always will be proud.

Before he died in 1992, Buckmaster gave a copy of a French book to Ronald Oliver, a school friend of the Newmans, about the French Resistance, which mentions 'La mort de Izzy Newman, l'excellent radio "Julien" dans la Resistance'.⁶⁴

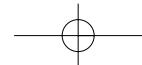
Peter Churchill wrote in a letter to the Arnhem Jewish veteran Lionel Cuckle (of the Hull branch of AJEX), 'you will see in my book *Duel of Wits* that Newman was not the only Jew to cover himself in glory – they were legion' (as quoted in the *Hull Daily Mail* of November 1946).

Newman's group had had many successes during his time as wireless officer, including the sinking of a 900-ton German minesweeper at Rouen in September 1943; the destruction of an aluminium-alloy factory at Deville, which produced material for the Luftwaffe, in October 1943; the destruction of electricity supplies at Yainville and Dieppedelle; the derailing of a German troop train, causing many deaths and casualties, also in October 1943; and the transfer to London of much intelligence on German naval dispositions at Le Havre.⁶⁵

A member of the Hull community, Warren Winetroube, who was articled as a solicitor at the time, told the author how, from the time Isidore was declared missing, Joseph Newman haunted the offices of his law firm, Myer

⁶⁴ Oliver letter (see n. 7).

⁶⁵ NA, SOE file HS6/469.



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Wolff. For more than two years Joseph pleaded with them to write on his behalf to the War Office concerning the whereabouts of his son. They helped as much as they could. Rita Cuckle also often visited the Newman family after the War to console and support them.

Joseph and Tilly Newman made their first trip to London to receive their son's MBE from the king on 2 December 1947, who expressed his pleasure at being able to acknowledge Isidore Newman's gallantry in this way.⁶⁶ Members of the local Jewish community remember how Isidore's parents had idolized him.⁶⁷ He had been a handsome and scholarly man with a bright future, who had broken from relative poverty into the teaching profession in the 1930s, no mean feat for a working-class Jewish boy. Joseph and Tilly never recovered from his death. Almost until his death, Joseph Newman could be seen with the Hull AJEX contingent marching proudly on Remembrance Day with his son's medals pinned on his right breast.⁶⁸

Isidore Newman is remembered on the Memorial to the Missing, Panel 21, Column 3, at Brookwood Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Surrey,⁶⁹ at the SOE French Section memorial at Valençay near Paris and on the Roll of Honour of the Pryme Street Synagogue in Hull (erected by the Hull branch of AJEX in November 1994, fifty years after his death). He is also remembered on a Dutch war memorial with many Dutch SOE agents and Marcus Bloom. (The writer has not been able to determine its location, but it is possibly at Mauthausen camp itself). At his old grammar school in Durham (now on a new site as a comprehensive at Crossgate Moor), Isidore's name is inscribed on a war memorial in the main school hall.⁷⁰ The two Second World War panels were added in June 1948, alongside those of the First War, following a service of Remembrance.⁷¹ After the War, Isidore's uncle Isaac endowed a prize for French at the school in his memory.⁷² This fell into disuse for some years, but was revived at a ceremony in the Gala Theatre, Durham, in September 2006, as an award for the leading Sixth Form linguist.⁷³

Curiously, however, Isidore seems not to be recorded on a Durham, Newcastle or Hull City war memorial.

On his parents' gravestones at the Ella Street Jewish cemetery in Hull,

⁶⁶ *Hull Daily Mail* 18 October and 6 December 1947; announced in the *Jewish Year Book* (1947) 313, and in the *Hull Daily Mail* 13 September 2004 p. 53.

⁶⁷ Testimony from R. Charnah.

⁶⁸ Letter of Oct. 2005 from P. Coupland, Hull branch of AJEX.

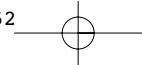
⁶⁹ See the CWGC website www.cwgc.org.uk.

⁷⁰ Information from D. Scrivens, Johnston's School.

⁷¹ M. Robson, *History of Durham Johnston's School* (Durham 1998) 109.

⁷² Ibid. 108.

⁷³ Telephone conversation in Nov. 2005 with B. Clark, Johnston's School.



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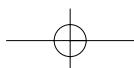


Plate 3 The inscription in memory of Isidore Newman on his parents' grave in Hull.

the inscription reads in Hebrew, 'In memory of the soul of our soldier, Isidore son of Joseph [Isser bar Yosef] who was taken in war on the 18th day of the month of Ellul 5704', and in English, 'Captain Isidore Newman, MBE, beloved son of Joseph and Tilly Newman, died 6th Sept^r 1944 aged 28 years, whose high courage and magnificent leadership was an inspiration to all those with whom he served, whose memory they will forever honour. He died as he lived – bravely'.

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AJEX; John Dickson, North East War Memorials Association; Keith Feldman, *Jewish Chronicle* Librarian; Judge Israel Finestein; Murray Freedman, Leeds JHSE; Paul Leaver, Hull City Archives; David Lewis, Hull Jewish Community Archives; Mrs D. Mowbray-Pape, St Margaret's School, Durham; Eric and Graham Newman, Leeds and London; Susan Oldsburgh, Newcastle Jewish Community; Mike Robson, Johnston's School historian; Jacqui Rodgerson, Clayport Local Studies Library, Durham; Geoffrey Rossman, Newcastle-upon-Tyne AJEX; *Hull Daily Mail* Archives; Mark Seaman of the Cabinet Office (formerly of the Imperial War Museum and SOE specialist) for his guidance; Lesley Simmons, Howard Cuckle and Fran Harris, Hull; Dr M. Stansfield, University of Durham Archives; Warren Winetroube, Hull.

ADDENDA

Addendum I

It is regretted that Martin Sugarman's article 'Breaking the Codes: Jewish personnel at Bletchley Park', in *Jewish Historical Studies* 40 (2005) misquotes Ruth Sebag-Montefiore's book *A Family Patchwork: Five Generations of an Anglo-Jewish Family* (London 1987). The passage from the foot of page 237 to the top of page 237, which is presented as a quotation, was not written by her. In particular, Ruth Sebag-Montefiore wishes to point out that her descriptions of how Miss Montgomery's 'agile mind was hidden behind a deceptively gentle Miss-Marple-like exterior' (p. 112), her nondescript 'appearance' and the Jarman's 'lively cockney sense of humour' (p. 113) were misreported. This part of Martin Sugarman's paper should therefore be amended in the light of the original text.

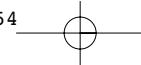
Addendum II

Since the publication of Martin Sugarman's article 'More than just a few: Jewish pilots and aircrew in the Battle of Britain', *JHS* 38 (2003) 183–204, the author has identified three further Jewish personnel and discovered additional information on one individual previously listed.

Additional entries

81887 Emil Fechtner, Pilot Officer, Czech 310 Squadron,⁷⁴ was born on 16 September 1916 and escaped the Czech Air Force on 15 March 1939 to join

⁷⁴ Kenneth G. Wynn, *Men of the Battle of Britain* (Selsdon, Surrey, 1999) 161.



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the Foreign Legion in France. He was seconded to the l'Armée de l'Air in September 1939, escaped to England after France fell and was posted to Duxford on the formation of the Czech 310 Squadron on 12 July 1940. He crashed accidentally on 1 August and landed after a collision at Upwood on 15 August; shot down a 110 on 26 August and a Dorner 215 on 31 August, in Hurricane V3889, which was damaged; and shot down a 110 on 3 September 3 and a Dorner 215 on 18 September. He was awarded the DFC in October 1940, but was killed in a crash landing at Duxford on 29 October 1940, after a collision with Pilot Officer J. M. Maly. He was buried at Brookwood.

81945 Vilem Goth, Pilot Officer, Czech Squadrons 310 and 501,⁷⁵ was born on 22 April 1915 and joined 310 Squadron at Duxford on 10 July 1940. He shot down two 110s over Southend on 7 September, but his Hurricane V6643 was damaged, forcing him to land at Whitmans Farm, Purleigh. He joined 501 Squadron at Kenley in October 1940, but was killed on 25 October in a collision with Pilot Officer K. W. Mackenzie during combat over Tenterden, crashing in Hurricane 2903 in Bridgehurst Wood, Marden. He is buried at Sittingbourne and Milton Cemetery, Kent

787527 Oldrich Kestler, Sergeant Pilot, Czech 111 Squadron,⁷⁶ was born in Cizice on 18 March 1920, joined 111 Squadron at Dyce on 19 October 1940, and later 605 Squadron. On 7 April 1941 he collided in Hurricane Z318 with Spitfire P 8315, flown by Sergeant Martinec, who was Czech. Both were killed. He was awarded the Czech Military Cross and was buried at Market Drayton, Shropshire.

Supplementary information

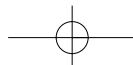
Further to information already published, Joe Klein, a Flight Sergeant, joined 234 Squadron at St Eval on 6 August 1940 and was posted to Warmwell with 152 Squadron on 5 October 1940.

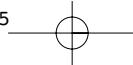
Addendum III

Since the publication of Martin Sugarmans' article entitled 'Lieutenant Marcus Bloom: A Jewish hero of the SOE' in *Jewish Historical Studies* 39 (2004) 183–96, the author has discovered the following supplementary information.

⁷⁵ Ibid 195.

⁷⁶ Ibid 279. See also, for all three men, Erich Kulka, *Zide v československém vojsku na zapade* (Národní Vojsko, Praha, 1992).





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Contrary to the approval expressed about Marcus Bloom's suitability on page 186, and footnote 11, one finds that 'Roger de Wesselow (Major, Coldstream Guards),⁷⁷ head of an F Section Training School at Wanborough, in an official training report, remarks that "physical effort seems to come hard to this pink yid"', and that Bloom 'keeps under his shell the usual racial nimbleness'.⁷⁸ In the same report, a Lt R. F. Turner describes Marcus as 'slightly Jewish in his outlook and appearance'. Both reflect the prejudices of the writers' class and time.

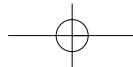
Marcus Bloom's Paramilitary report from Majors Watt and Bush at Arisaig (Scotland) on 15 May 1942 stated that his physical training had improved greatly despite his size, but that rope, fieldcraft and close combat work were not too good ('Cannot imagine him really getting tough with anyone'). However, with weapons, explosives and signalling he was very good, as was report writing, mapwork, tactics, boatwork and navigation. On a two-day course at Loughborough (21–2 August 1942), training Sergeants Stebbing-Allen and Fox reported to Captain Angelo and Hilton and Major Lee that Marcus had done remarkable work with complete mastery and that he was painstaking and intelligent. He had passed all the tests in Making Initial Contacts ('natural manner, remembering the password in a crowded café'), Following Suspects ('did not lose his man, good use of cover'), Boîtes aux Lettres ('finding and retrieving messages, hiding messages'), Message Passing ('did not arouse suspicion in a crowded café'), Verbal Messages ('passed perfectly despite distracting deliberate interruptions'), Cover Conversations ('perfectly arranged before questioning with another student'), Interrogation ('had a false life history and documents all convincingly carried out') and Security ('discreet, always hiding his wireless and papers and keeping door locked').

The author was fortunate to meet Dr Premysl (Prem) Dobias, aged ninety-four and living in London, who had been a clerk at Mauthausen Camp.⁷⁹ Prem, a Doctor of Law from Charles University in Prague, had been a non-Jewish Czech political prisoner at Mauthausen and remembered Bloom well. He had been brought to Prem's desk on his arrival in September 1944 to be registered as an inmate, on a small transport, suggesting they were prisoners deemed 'dangerous to the Reich'. Marcus was 'dressed in civilian clothes, looking haggard but still confident'. Prem related how his whole demeanour was that of an 'honourable British Officer who clearly had open and courageous contempt for the SS' who were standing around and

⁷⁷ Marcus Binney, *Secret War Heroes of the SOE* (London 2005) 242.

⁷⁸ PRO HS9/166/7; Sarah Helm, *A Life in Secrets – The Story of Vera Atkins* (London 2005) 286.

⁷⁹ He spoke briefly to the audience after the film at a viewing of Rex Bloomstein's documentary 'KZ' at the Jewish Film Festival, London, on 6 November 2006.



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bullying everyone into speeding up the clerical procedures. As a prisoner himself, Prem was not permitted to talk to him, but managed 'a few whispered words under his breath as he typed out Marcus's details'. He described Marcus as a true 'mensch', using the Yiddish word, and developed an immediate respect for him in those few minutes that they met. He never saw him again.

