

# Georges Paulin (1902-1942), a legendary dentist, a Resistance hero

By

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Georges Paulin (1902-1942) (Paulin, 2008).

## *A modest childhood...brilliant studies*

Georges Paulin was born in Paris in 1902. From a humble background, he was a gifted child who soon got bored in school. Very early, he showed outstanding drawing skills. In 1918, his mother was killed during the bombings of the capital. He would never fully get over it.

At the age of 14, he became a dental technician and was soon recognized for his talents. He opened his own business and went back to school to become a dental surgeon. Following in his brother's footsteps, he graduated from Garancière. This professional activity only helped him to finance his passion.

## *A beneficial rain*

*"It was in 1927 that his research began. He was leaning against the window of his dental prosthesis laboratory in Nice when a violent and stormy shower fell on the city. On the opposite pavement stood a magnificent Delage convertible and in spite of all his efforts, its owner could not close the hood before the leather and velvet interior had been flooded. For Georges Paulin, it suddenly clicked."* (Paulin (b), 2006)

## *The Eclipse system*

In 1931, Georges Paulin made himself known for his invention of the coupé/convertible with the help of the coachbuilder Marcel Pourtout of whom he became the regular designer. He left his dental office at that time. Paulin invented the Eclipse system, that is the first power-operated retractable hardtop for which he registered a patent. He made a "10-scale" model of a Citroen Rosalie that ran on electricity. Although in the middle of the elaboration of the front-wheel drive and full of enthusiasm about his project, Citroen did not follow. With the help of a financial partner and following Paulin's plans, Pourtout built a 4 seat Coach Hotchkiss for the 1933 show. Unable to agree on the redistribution of the benefits, the project was aborted. The two men produced a variety of brands (Renault, Delage, Bentley, etc.) and models, and a certain amount of quite exceptional coached cars.

### *The trial against Peugeot*

After borrowing some money from a relative, Georges created a second prototype on a Peugeot frame provided by the car-dealer Darl'mat who was filled with enthusiasm and launched the 401 and 601 production, modified by Pourtout. Paulin proposed a new system in the context of the creation of the 302 and 402 Eclipse which is still revolutionary nowadays for the retractable hardtop does not encroach upon the volume of the trunk. His reputation growing more and more every day, he designed the Darl'mat Peugeot roadsters, two of which were used in 1937 and 1938 at Le Mans (Paulin (b), 2006).

*“The contract signed between Peugeot and Paulin was ending when the 402 was launched. The new salary proposed by the builder was considered too low by Paulin. They went to trial and the law supported Peugeot which was then allowed to use the patent as it wanted. This was a real blow for Georges Paulin who was a passionate man and not inclined to compromise with the company.”* (Paulin (b), 2006)

### *Engineer at Bentley*

In 1937, André Embiricos, a banker and Nicky Embiricos's brother, who was an amateur racing driver for Bugatti and ERA, became the owner of a Bentley frame. The French representative of this brand advised him to have it designed by Paulin and Pourtout. The latter suggested an original design of it in 1938. Its design made this an exceptional vehicle with performances defying all the norms of the time. Likely to beat Mercedes, this car was shown from exhibition to exhibition in France and then Germany. In 1939, tired of not being able to own it, André Embiricos sold it (Lamendin, 2007). It only reappeared in Le Mans in 1949 where it participated in three races in a row. In 2000, it won an elegance contest in California (Paulin (b), 2006). The 1937 Delage won the Vuiton Award in 2006. This car, which is worth three million euros, was exhibited on the Champs Elysées (Paulin, 2008). According to American and English specialists, Paulin is still considered today as the most gifted automobile designer of the inter-war period.

At the end of 1939, following difficult negotiations, Georges, who had been deeply affected by the trial he lost against Peugeot, agreed to become a consulting engineer and aerodynamicist for the Rolls Royce/Peugeot group who had been enticed by his previous works. In 1940, the German bombings put an end to their partnership by partially destroying the result of their collaboration in the harbor of Dieppe (Paulin (b), 2006).

### *The freedom fighter*

Georges Paulin highly esteemed his German rivals and only yearned for peace. He, however, could not get over his mother's death. On June 18, 1940, while he was an engineer in a military aeronautic factory, he pledged, in a letter written to one of his English friends, not to surrender and not to acknowledge Marshal Petain as their leader whom he partly blamed for the French debacle. In 1940, in the non-occupied zone, he met Walter Sleator, a MI6 or a Secret Intelligence agent. Sleator led the network from Madrid and provided the first radio set connected to London (Paulin (c), 2006).

### *The Phill intelligence network*

*“This network was called Phill. It included 14 people, many of whom regularly and illegally crossed the forbidden zone and who took down the plans, the equipment, the strength of the air base of the Luftwaffe. All the data was transmitted to London subsequently guiding the intervention of the British fighter aircrafts and fighter bombers. This network was made up of*

*men and women who did not have any help to rescue them on the spot and who carried out their missions while spending their own money. It was only near the end of 1941 that they first received funds from England.”(Paulin (c), 2006)*

### *The Actions of the Phill Network*

Since the armistice, the Renault factories modified their French tanks on behalf of the Werhmacht. Paulin and his comrades set up with London the destruction of these factories located in the suburbs of Paris. Once the plan set up, the RAF bombed the site and achieved its goals although at the expense of thousands of civilians’ lives (Paulin (c), 2006).

*“In 1941, the Phill network informed MI6 of the extent of the German research on the jet engine and the progress of the prototype plans.”*

### *Back to his first loves*

*“Georges Paulin and his comrades had a fictitious or a part-time professional activity so as to cover their spying activity. Thus, Georges, who had been a dentist, began in November 1940 to work for Durren-Berger, a French dentist from Alsace who spoke German fluently and who had already treated members of the German embassy well before the outbreak of the war. This office had by then attracted remarkable customers: ambassador Otto Abetz, Minister Schleier, Minister Rode, General von Stülpnagel who led the French troops in France, Hermann Brandl also known as Otto, Chief of the Abwehr in France, Daniel Dubois the French number one of the Gestapo in Paris, Captain Otto Rahn sent by Himmler, consuls Quiring and Studer, etc. Yet, well before the war, Durren-Berger was already an agent from the 2<sup>nd</sup> office of the French army and during the occupation until 1942, he pursued his spying activity for the 2<sup>nd</sup> bureau of Vichy. This source of information was worth a considerable amount. Part of the information gathered by Durren-Berger was transmitted to the English by the chief of the intelligence service: lieutenant colonel Perruche. Durren-Berger did not know anything about Georges Paulin’s spying activity and neither did Georges Paulin about Durren-Berger’s.*

*The height of daring was such that, from November 1940 to October 1941, Georges Paulin treated Dubois, the traitor who was hunting him up without knowing who he was. They were on good terms with each other and Dubois told his secretary, Miss Méry, that he highly respected Georges Paulin.” (Paulin (c), 2006)*

Agents from the Phill network followed one another in Paulin’s dental office. In the course of their comings and goings through the office, they randomly met those German personalities. The information was dropped off in a hollow statue in Paulin’s office. The Germans never noticed anything (Paulin (c), 2006).

### *Arrest*

In November 1941, after having being denounced by a Swiss German “friend”, they were arrested under the order of Otto and Radecke from the Abwehr. It was Lafont, the head of the French Gestapo in Lauriston Street, and three of his fellows who were in charge of carrying out this mission. Durren-Berger, who was terrified, delivered all the dental files concerning the members of the Phill network who, then, all got arrested.

Georges Paulin was handed over to Otto. Dubois would later confide to Durren-Berger that Paulin never uttered a single word during eight days of questioning. The Resistance fighters were kept for four months and none of the Phill network, whether known or not by the Swiss German or by Durren-Berger had been harassed. Despite inhuman treatments inflicted to them, none of them who got arrested denounced their “free” comrades.” (Paulin (c), 2006)

They were tried in Paris on March 20, 1942 and sentenced to death. During the trial, Judge Eckard paid tribute to their patriotism stating that *“it was honorable for a Frenchman to*

*disobey the French government.*” This same judge highlighted the fact that the Abwehr, the German intelligence service, had paid the whistleblower 400 000 francs per captured Resistance fighter (Paulin (c), 2006).

During four months, they were tortured and lived in slow agony. Paulin had his neck and chest put in plaster to get tied down to the execution post. He told Abbot Stock, who accompanied him during his last hours, that he died on the week of the anniversary of his mother’s death, and to those who wanted to avenge him, he left those last words: “*Do not avenge me, I love you.*” They were shot at Mount Valérien (Paulin (c), 2006).

*After....*

In 1945, Paulin was awarded the war cross with a vermeil star and was acknowledged under military order by General de Gaulle. In 1964, the administration declared that Georges Paulin died for France. In 1967, he was posthumously awarded the rank of lieutenant of the French army and in 1969, he was awarded the Resistance medal (Paulin (c), 2006).

In the year 2000, his name and those of thousands others were engraved on the silent bell paying a tribute to the victims of Mount Valérien. In 2006, Mayor Bertrand Delanoë had a tablet in memory of Georges Paulin set on the number 3 of the “place du 18 juin 1940”. The same year, a legion of honor request was submitted by the Paulin family who received a flat refusal by the Ministry of Defense (Paulin (c), 2006).

In 1945, the whistleblower fled to Switzerland where he was never bothered. Durren-Berger was sentenced to death on November 15, 1945, reprieved on November 18 and then freed in 1951.

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