

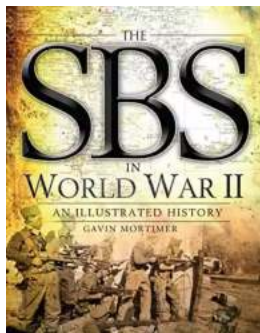
# The Untold Stories of The Special Boat Service (SBS) in World War II - Unveiling the Heroes

During World War II, the Special Boat Service (SBS) emerged as the elite naval special forces unit of the British Royal Navy. Often overshadowed by its sister organization, the Special Air Service (SAS), the SBS played a crucial role behind the scenes, executing daring and audacious missions that shaped the outcome of the war.

Operating in the darkest corners of the globe, the SBS carried out clandestine operations in all theaters of war, from the jungles of South East Asia to the deserts of North Africa and the beaches of Normandy.

## The Birth of the SBS

Formed in 1940 by Roger Courtney, a British Army officer, the SBS had its origins in the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPP), whose primary objective was to gather intelligence along enemy coastlines. Recognizing the potential of such specialized units, the SBS was established, drawing volunteers from both the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.



## The SBS in World War II: An Illustrated History

by Gavin Mortimer (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 257 pages



Equipped with small, fast boats known as "maiale" or "chariots," the SBS conducted reconnaissance, sabotage, and direct action missions against enemy targets. Their contributions did not go unnoticed, and they quickly gained a reputation for their bravery, resourcefulness, and resilience.

## **The Mediterranean Theater**

One of the SBS's most significant contributions during World War II was in the Mediterranean theater. Operating alongside the SAS, they wreaked havoc on Axis supply lines and disrupted critical coastal defenses. Their nighttime raids on enemy-held islands and harbors proved invaluable, as they destroyed enemy vessels and rendered entire naval bases inoperable.

In one daring operation, the SBS penetrated the heavily fortified port of Benghazi in Libya. Under the cover of darkness, they disabled several enemy ships and inflicted significant damage, forcing the Axis powers to divert resources to repair the port and disrupting their supply chain.

## **The Far East Campaign**

As the war progressed, the SBS played a pivotal role in the Far East campaign against the Japanese. They conducted reconnaissance missions, gathered intelligence, and disrupted Japanese naval operations, often behind enemy lines in the treacherous jungles of Burma and Malaya.

One of their most remarkable achievements was the capture of a Japanese-held island in the Gulf of Martaban, off the coast of Burma. Guided by local fishermen, a small SBS team slipped past enemy patrols and seized the island, holding out

against overwhelming odds until reinforcements arrived. This audacious operation severely hampered Japanese operations and bolstered British morale in the region.

## **The Normandy Landings**

The SBS was also heavily involved in the preparations for the Normandy landings in 1944. Their expertise in beach reconnaissance proved invaluable as they scouted the landing sites, identifying potential obstacles and hazards. They provided detailed intelligence to the invasion planners, enabling them to adjust their strategies and ensure a smoother landing for the Allied forces.

On D-Day itself, SBS teams equipped with inflatable boats were responsible for guiding landing craft towards the beaches and providing crucial support to the initial assault waves. Their knowledge of the coastline and determination under fire played a vital role in the success of the amphibious operation.

## **The Legacy of the SBS**

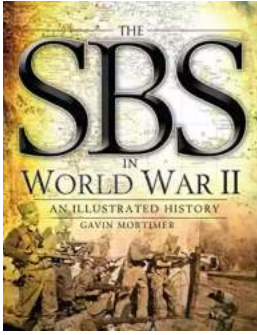
Despite facing formidable challenges and operating in secrecy, the SBS achieved remarkable successes throughout World War II. Many of their exploits remained classified for decades, and it wasn't until much later that the extraordinary heroism and sacrifices of these unsung heroes came to light.

The legacy of the SBS continues to this day, as modern-day special forces units draw inspiration from their expertise and courage. Their contributions to the war effort must never be forgotten, and their stories serve as a reminder of the unwavering determination and resilience exhibited by those who serve.

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The Special Boat Squadron was Britain's most exclusive Special Forces unit during World War II. Highly trained, totally secretive and utterly ruthless, the SBS was established as an entity in its own right in early 1943, having previously operated under the auspices of the SAS during the war in North Africa. Unlike its sister unit, which numbered more than 1,000 men, the SBS never comprised more than 100. Led by men such as the famed Victoria Cross recipient Anders Lassen, the SBS went from island to island in the Mediterranean, landing in the dead of night in small fishing boats and launching savage hit and run raids on the Germans. By the end of the war they had served in Italy, the Balkans and mainland Greece, and following the cessation of hostilities their deeds were airbrushed out of history by an establishment that had never warmed to their piratical exploits. Through unrivalled access to the SBS archives and interviews with the surviving members of the unit, Gavin Mortimer has pieced together the dramatic exploits of this elite fighting force, fully illustrated with images of their daring actions, finally granting the unit the recognition they so richly deserved.



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