

Military Kayaking

Listing of military books about, or with mention of, kayaks. Initially compiled January 2010 by Tony Ford & Paul Caffyn updated 19-09-2012

Camsell, Don: ***Black Water***; 2000; 1 85227 873 0; Virgin; HB 210pp, plus glossary; No index; 16 photos – no canoes; Life in the SBS in the 1970s to 1990s Detailed account of a Swimmer Canoeist's service life from basic training to the time he left the Service as a Warrant Officer. Don Camsell saw service in Oman, Norway, Northern Ireland and the Falklands. He also worked with intelligence, in Northern Ireland, undercover, including infiltration and observation using canoes. He also mentions the use of canoes in the Falkland War, and work against drug traffickers. His was a varied life and the book gives a valuable insight into the life in the SBS, and his contempt for the SAS.

Cole, Barbara: ***The Elite - The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service***; 1984; Three Knights Publishing, South Africa; HB 449 pp, 26 maps; both b&w and colour plate sections, bibliography and index. Section in 'The War Escalates' titled 'Cockleshell Heroes', with foldboats used on Lake Cabora Bassa in 1977.

Connor, Ken: ***Ghosts - An illustrated Story of the SAS***; 2000; 0 304 35248 9; Cassell; HB 224pp; heavily illustrated; glossary; little about the use of canoes, but a short piece about Boat Troop operations in the Falkland; a little about the founding of the SAS, otherwise from the 1960s onwards.

Cook, Graeme: ***Small Boat Raiders***; 1977; HB; four chapters covering 'The Charioteers' – mini submarine raid on the Tirpitz; Coastal Marauders – the motor boat raid on St Nazaire; Canoe Attack – an abbreviated account of Hasler's raid on Bordeaux; and "Death on a Divine Wind – suicide missions by the Japanese. It appears much of the book is from extracts from other, more detailed, accounts; bibliography.

Connell, Brian: ***Return of the Tiger***; 1960 (r/pr 1961); Evan Bros Ltd UK; HB 207pp, 23 b&w plates. Well researched account of WWII operations Jaywick and Rimau, led by Ivan Lyon, against Japanese shipping in Singapore - *Jaywick* in 1943 was a daring but successful foldboat raid from a former Japanese fishing boat, which carried men and kayaks from Exmouth in Western Australia. *Rimau* was a disastrous 2nd attempt using Sleeping Beauties launched from a commandeered junk. No one survived; all were either killed or executed by the Japanese.

Courtney, G.B: ***SBS in World War Two - The Story of the Original Special Boat Section of the Army Commandos***; 1983; 7090-1291-8; Robert Hale, London; HB 242 pp; 28 b&w photos, bibliography, index,. The author is youngest brother of Roger Courtney who founded the SBS in 1940. First part on raids in the Med, the second titled the United Kingdom includes formation & training, with a chapter on 'Canoes and Canoeing'. Third section covers Australia and the Far East to the end of the war. A well researched book on the history of the SBS, with detailed information on operations and deserves a place in any library on canoeing history.

Davies, Barry: ***Complete Encyclopedia of the SAS***; 1998; 1 85227 707 6; Virgin HB;

Dourlien, Peter: ***Inside North Pole***; 1953; Kimber HB; (Resistance movement & escape by canoe)

Ferguson, Bernard: ***The Watery Maze – Story of Combined Ops***; 1961; Collins HB

Ford, Ken: *The Cockleshell Raid - Bordeaux 1942*; 2010; 978-1-84603-693-4; Osprey Publishing UK, SB 64pp, index, bibliography. Well illustrated - with paintings, photographs, diagrams and maps – account of the Gironde Estuary raid by five double ‘cockles’ or foldboats and the escape of the only two survivors, Hasler and Sparks.

Hampshire A Cecil: *The Secret Navies*; 1978; 0 7183 0195 1; HB

Hampshire A Cecil: *Undercover Sailors*; 1981; 0 7183 0368 7; Kimberly HB

Hoen, John : *Commando Kayak – The man behind Australian folboats*. 2011; 3 033 01717 7Hirsch Pub Switzerland. A4 size, s/b, 104 pp; photos, selected bibliography, index.

Mostly about the author’s father’s development of folding kayaks for the Australian military in WW2 and tedious dealings with both bureaucracy and an unscrupulous competitor. Only brief mention of actual operations in a summary list. More information on Australian foldboat and commando WW2 raids in a SK article June 2012.

Review: SK April 2012 by Joel McNamara

Hunter, Robin: *True Stories of the SBS*; 1999; 0 7535 0267 4; SB

Ladd, James: *Commandos & Rangers of World War II*; 1978; 0 356 08432 9; Macdonald & Jane’s HB

Ladd, James D.: *SBS The Invisible Raiders - The History of the Special Boat Squadron from WWII to the Present*; 1983; 0-85368-593-2; Book Club Associates, London; 283pp, index, 10 maps, 28 b&w photo. Part One details the development of the SBS and raids in the Mediterranean and Europe 1941 - 1945. The Bordeaux and Singapore raids are mentioned briefly but Ladd misnames the Krait the Kwike. Part Two covers the Navy SBS with continuing wars up to the 1982 Falklands conflict.

Review: ‘TSCN’ No.69/p8, by John Kirk-Anderson

Ladd James D.: *SAS Operations*; 1986; Leisure Circle; HB

Ladd James D.: *Assault from the Sea 1939-1945*; 1976; David & Charles; HB

Ladd James D.: *The Royal Marines 1919-1980*; 1980; 0 7106 0011 9 Janes; HB

Lodwick, John: *Raiders from the Sea - The Story of the Special Boat Service in WWII*; 1990; 1-85367-068-5; Greenhill Books London, HB 240pp, 5 maps, 35 b&w photos. First published as *The Filibusters: The Story of the Special Boat Service in 1947*, this new edition in 1990. Lodwick served with the SBS in the Mediterranean. Mostly on raids in the Mediterranean but no index.

Lucas Phillips, C.E.: *Cockleshell Heroes*; 1956; Heinemann London; HB 252 pp, map on endpapers, 33 small photos also diagrams drawn by Blondie Hasler inserted in the text; Part one describes the planning of the folboat raid against German shipping in the Gironde Estuary; Part Two the raid, and Part Three the escape and evasion of Hasler and Sparks to Spain, the subsequent capture and execution of four of the paddlers; one of the six appendices discusses the film of the raid. A Pan paperback edition was published in 1957, with 18 b&w photos in a central plate section. A Pan Books soft-cover version was published in 2007 (978-0-330-45469-8).

Macksey, Kenneth: *Commando Strike (Amphibious raiding in WWII)*; 1985; Leo Cooper &

Guild Publishing; HB

Macksey, Kenneth: *Godwin's Saga: A Commando Epic*; 1987; 0 08 034742 8; Elsevier; HB

McDonald, Gabrielle: *New Zealand's Secret Heroes – Don Stott and the 'Z' special unit'* 1991; 0 7900 0126 7; s/b, Reed NZ; 168 pp; bibliography, index, b&w photos. Chapters on both operations, Jaywick and Rimau.

McKie, Ronald: *The Heroes*; 1960; Angus & Robertson, Australia; HB 285 pp, 4 maps, 21 b&w photos. A second 1960 account, mainly about the audacious Operation *Jaywick* raid in 1943 with limpet mining from double folding kayaks of Japanese shipping in Singapore Harbour, and *Rimau*, the disastrous second raid which was to use Sleeping Beauties; last chapters on the mock trial and execution of the last of the *Rimau* survivors.

Mercer, Peter: *Not by Strength by Guile: The Amazing True Story of My Life in the SBS*; 2000; 1 85782 368 0; Blake Publishing; HB (comment by PH – www suggestions that this book is a fake)

Messenger, Charles: *The Commandos 1940-1946*; 1985 & 1991; 0 586 21034 2; SB

Miller, Russell: *The Commandos*; 1981; 0 8094 3401 6 & 0 8094 3399 0; HB

Neville, Ralph: *Survey by Starlight: A True Story of Reconnaissance Work in the Mediterranean*; 1949; Hodder & Stoughton; HB (Exploits of COPPs). 1949; Hodder & Stoughton, London; HB; b&w photos and maps throughout. Reprinted 1957 in s/b by H&S as *Prelude to Assault*.

A rare insight into secret operations on enemy coastlines, with the activities of the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties who used double kayaks to survey and reconnaissance enemy beaches before allied landings in the Middle East and Europe, mostly, although they were also deployed in the Far East. The usual crew was a Navy navigator (for selecting the right beach) and an Army officer who carried out soil tests (to see that the sand on the beach was sturdy enough to land tanks etc.) and to check on beach defenses and other things related to beach landings. The teams were normally taken to within a few miles of an enemy shore, by submarine, and then let loose in their kayaks. After the survey the team paddled out to sea, where they were picked up again by the submarine. One survey mission to Sicily failed to meet the sub and paddled on to Malta!

Oakley Derek: *Behind Japanese Lines: the untold story of Royal Marine Detachment 385*; 1996; [Royal Marines Historical Society]

Parker, John: *SBS The Inside Story of the Special Boat Service*; 1997; 0 7472 1976 1; Headline Publishing UK; HB 311pp, d/j; four b&w photo plate sections, index, brief bibliography. Describes in three sections the formation of SBS, *Legends and Heroes 1940 – 45*, *Peace and Wars 1945 – 1970*, *A New Kind of War 1970 to the Present*. Claims of authentic detail are dispelled with glaring errors on operations Jaywick and Rimau which were not SBS operations anyway.
Also printed in s/b 0 7472 5723; X Headline.

Pitt, Barrie: *Special Boat Squadron - The Story of the SBS in the Mediterranean*; 1983; Century Publishing, London; HB 212pp; 10 maps, 28 b&w photos, index, 0-7126-0180-2. Chronological list of operations from 1940 to April 1945, with an epilogue and brief list of sources.

Rees, Quentin: *The Cockleshell Canoes - British Military Canoes of World War Two*; 2008; 1-84868-065-4; Amberley UK; SB 320 pp; brief bibliography and extensive list of endnotes; no index; well illustrated with b&w photos inserted with the text. A rather detailed account of the development of the 'cockle' kayaks and mechanized canoes during WWII; very dry reading with only brief mentions of wartime raids. The book is let down badly by the lack of an index. A second edition contains an additional chapter.

Reviews: TSCN No. 144/p.20 by Alan Bye;
SK Feb. 2011/p.14 by Joel McNamara

Rees, Quentin: *Cockleshell Heroes - The Final Witness*; 2010; 978-1 84868-861-2; Amberley UK; HB 320 pp; comprehensive source/quote listing, bibliography, index; well illustrated with b&w photos, maps and figures inserted with the text. The first section is titled the (Operation) Frankton Raid and concludes with biographies of all the men who took part; Part Two (Timely Lives) includes a chapter of the cockle designer; the third section titles 'Remembering' notes the film, memorials and anniversaries and brief notes on the French folk who helped Hasler and Sparks escape to Spain.

Robertson, Terence: *The Ship with Two Captains*; 1957; Evans Bros

Ryan, Mann & Stilwell: *Encyclopedia of the World's Special Forces*; 2003; Amber Books; HB

Silver, Lynette: *The Heroes of Rimau*; 1990; 1-86351-018-4; Sally Milner Australia; SB 314pp; 8 maps, 48 b&w plates, extensive source listing and bibliography. The most comprehensive book to date on WWII Operations Jaywick and Rimau, mounted against Japanese shipping in Singapore Harbour. With 31 year's research by Major Tom Hall, Silver writes of the fate of the 23 Rimau men, who were shot by the Japanese, died of injuries or were executed a month before the end of the war. McKie's 1960 book 'The Heroes' is strangely missing from the bibliography.

Silver, Lynette: *Krait: The Fishing Boat That Went to War*; 1992; 1-86351-063-X; Sally Milner Australia; SB 181pp; 34 b&w plates, 7 maps, index. Well researched story of the captured Japanese fishing boat that took the crew and paddlers of Op. Jaywick close to Singapore in 1943, with one of the most audacious amphibious raids by kayak. *Krait* is moored in Sydney (Australia), at the National Maritime Museum. Appendices include crew lists and a comprehensive reference list of books, documents, periodicals and newspaper articles.

Southby-Taylor: *Blondie - A Biography of Lieutenant-Colonel H G Hasler*; 1998; 0-85052-516-0; Leo Copper, London; HB 412 pp; 48 b&w photos, bibliography, index. The cover claims Blondie was the founder of the SBS and modern single-handed ocean racing - both are journalistic licence. The first 10 chapters cover his early life, learning to canoe and sail, joining the Royal Marines in 1932, his leadership of the Cockleshell Heroes raid, and then his role with the last year of the Pacific war. The remaining 11 chapters are mostly related to sailing.

Review: TSCN No. 80/p.13 by John Kirk-Anderson

Sparks, William: *Cockleshell Commando: The Memoirs of Bill Sparks DSM*; 2002; 0-85052-929-8; Pen & Sword Books (Leo Cooper); HB 224pp; 30 b&w photos, 2 maps; index; Bill's memoirs covering Operation Frankton and his escape back to Britain, how he fought with the Greek Sacred Squadron and then how, bored with life as a bus driver, he

joined the Malayan Police and saw action aplenty during the Emergency. SB 146pp version (same photos, maps & index) 2009 by Leo Cooper (1-84415-894-2).

Sparks, William & Munn, Michael: *The Last of the Cockleshell Heroes - A World War Two Memoir*; 1992; 0-85052-297-8; Leo Cooper, London, HB 152pp; 8 b&w photos, 1 map, index; very readable account of Sparks joining the marines in 1939 as a 17 year old, his role in the folbot raid with Blondie Hasler on German shipping in the Gironde estuary and their escape to Gibraltar; it concludes with his having to sell his DSM to make ends meet. Softcover version published by Leo Cooper in 1995 (0-85052-465-2).
Review: TSCN No.72/p.8 by John Kirk-Anderson

Stead, Gordon W.: *A Leaf upon the Sea*; 1988; 0 7748 0299 5; U of BC Press; HB

Stevens, Gordon: *The Originals*; 2005 & 2006; 978 0 09 190182 0 & 0 09 190182 0; Random House SB (Assume other ISBN number refers to HB (Secret history of the birth of the SAS in their own words)

Stiff, Peter: *The Silent War: South African Recce Operations 1969-1994*; 1999; 0 620 24300 7; HB (two printings 1999)

Strutton, Bill & Pearson, Michael: *The Secret Invaders*; 1958; Hodder & Stoughton; HB; (COPPs Commandos & Cockleshell Heroes)

Taylor, Peter: *Allied Special Forces Insignia 1939-1948*; 2000; 0 85052 582 9; Leo Cooper; HB

Thompson, Macklin: *Kill The Tiger - The Truth about Operation Rimau*; 2002; 0-7336-1448-5; Hodder Australia; SB 306pp, 21 b&w plates, 2 maps, list of sources, index. Recap of Operations Jaywick and the disastrous Rimau and why the men of Rimau were betrayed by the failure of the submarine to pick them up.
Review: TSCN No.100/p.15 by P. Caffyn

Thompson, Julian: *War Behind Enemy Lines*; 1998; 0 283 06253 3; Sidgwick & Jackson & IWM; HB; also released 1999 in SB (0 330 36761). Chapter on Canoe Operations in Europe 1942, and mention of operations Jaywick and Rimau.

Trenowden, Iam: *Stealthily by Night - Clandestine Beach Reconnaissance and Operations in WWII*; 1995; 0-947554 54 8; HB; The history of COPP

Warner, Philip: *The Special Air Service*; 1971 & 1972; William Kimber & Co; HB

Welham, Michael: *Combat Frogmen*; 1989; 1 85260 217 1; Patrick Stephens Ltd

Woods, Rex: *Special Commando: Wartime Adventures of Lt. Col. Robert Wilson DSO*; 1985; 07183 0570 1; Kimber; HB

Wright Lt Cdr, Bruce S.: *The Frogmen of Burma*; 1968; William Kimble; HB; Sea Reconnaissance Unit

Wynyard, Noel: *Winning Hazard*; 1947; Sampson Low, UK; HB 181pp; Account of Op. Jaywick, written under a pen name by the widow of 2nd in command Donald Davidson. Limpet mine attack mounted against Japanese shipping in Singapore Harbour, from three kayaks, dropped by the fishing boat *Krait*. All 14 men (crew and paddlers) returned safely to Exmouth in WA.

Notes

SBS – three separate groups:

- a) Special Boat Section of the Army commandos, founded in July 1940, by Roger Courtney absorbed four years later by the Royal Marines
- b) Special Boat Squadron of the SAS, formed in Sept. 1942
- c) Special Boat Squadron of the Royal Marines, formed after the war from the Royal Marine Boom Patrol Detachment (RMBPD).

Abbreviations:

Abbreviations:

TSCN *The Sea Canoeist Newsletter NZ*

SK *Sea Kayaker USA*

HB hardcover or casebound

s/b soft cover

p/b paperback

d/j dust-jacket

pp number of pages