

# Looking For Trouble SAS To Gulf Command The Autobiography

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*Killing the Enemy* Adam Leong Kok Wey 2015-09-28 During World War II, the British formed a secret division, the 'SOE' or Special Operations Executive, in order to support resistance organisations in occupied Europe. It also engaged in 'targeted killing' - the assassination of enemy political and military leaders. The unit is famous for equipping its agents with tools for use behind enemy lines, such as folding motorbikes, miniature submarines and suicide pills disguised as coat buttons. But its activities are now also gaining attention as a forerunner to today's 'extra-legal' killings of wartime enemies in foreign territory, for example through the use of unmanned drones. Adam Leong's work evaluates the effectiveness of political assassination in wartime using four examples: Heydrich's assassination in Prague (Operation Anthropoid); the daring kidnap of Major General Kreipe in Crete by Patrick Leigh Fermor; the failed attempt to assassinate Rommel, known as Operation Flipper; and the American assassination of General Yamamoto.

**A History of Counterinsurgency [2 volumes]** Gregory Fremont-Barnes 2015-05-05 This two-volume history of counterinsurgency covers all the major and many of the lesser known examples of this widespread and enduring form of conflict, addressing the various measures employed in the attempt to overcome the insurgency and examining the individuals and organizations responsible for everything from counterterrorism to infrastructure building. • Provides an extremely broad coverage of counterinsurgency that spans the period from 1900 to the present day and addresses geographical areas such as Algeria, India, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan, Malaya, Cyprus, Vietnam, and many other regions and countries • Supplies historical and geographical perspectives that enable the reader to examine each chapter as an independent case study and compare and contrast each event with others to draw lessons across time • Includes an extensive bibliography that covers all aspects of modern counterinsurgency-based themes, including geographical regions, theory, and tactics

**British Strategy and Intelligence in the Suez Crisis** Danny Steed 2016-08-05 This book traces the activities of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS/MI6) and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) during the Suez Crisis, one of the most infamous episodes of British foreign policy. In doing so it identifies broader lessons not only about the events of 1956, but about the place of intelligence in strategy itself. It provides both an exploration of the relationship between intelligence and strategy at the conceptual level, and also a historical account, and strategic analysis of, the performance of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Secret Intelligence Service during this time. Focusing on the period immediately before, during, and after the crisis, Danny Steed brings together a complete picture of intelligence story in Britain that has so far eluded comprehensive treatment in the Suez historiography. Through extensive consultation of declassified archival sources, a re-examination of often referred to sources, and the employment of oral history, this study identifies the most significant lessons about the use of intelligence revealed by the Suez Crisis.

*Storm Command* Peter de la Billière 1995 'My primary aim in writing this book is to demonstrate the importance

of individual human beings in modern warfare. In the battle to drive the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, Coalition forces used every form of high-technology weapon available; yet in the end success depended on the performance of individuals, whether they were pilots, divers, tank drivers, mechanics, engineers, cooks, radio operators, infantrymen, nurses or officers of all ranks. It was these ordinary people who, at the end of the day, were going to put their lives on the line and risk their neck when their Government decided to go to war.' Gen. Sir Peter de la Billiere

**The Complete History of the SAS** Nigel McCrery 2021-06-18 Specializing in covert reconnaissance, counter-terrorism and hostage rescue, the SAS is one of the world's most famous, feared and respected elite fighting forces. This book tells the full, fascinating story of the regiment, from formation in the sand dunes of Africa during World War II to present action in the Middle East, and incorporates jungle, desert and urban warfare, counter-terrorism and an insider's view at the selection and training methods employed by this usually secretive unit. As well as an insightful foreword by Andy McNab – one of the most famous members of the SAS – this revised, updated edition includes completely new chapters, features and information, including Key Missions in WWII, The Battle of Mirbat, Iranian Embassy Siege, Kenyan Hotel Rescue and Victoria Cross Awards.

**Aden Insurgency** Jonathan Walker 2014-11-19 During the early 1960s the Cold War reached its climax. Britain's dwindling power in the Middle East was under siege from Arab nationalism, the Communist bloc and from American designs in the region. Aden, with its strategic military base and old Protectorate buffer zone, was soon the main battleground. The 1962 Egyptian-inspired coup in the neighbouring Kingdom of North Yemen further tightened the noose. So began a bitter and bloody insurgency war in South Arabia. British regular and special forces were soon pitted against growing and formidable insurgency forces, fighting both a war in the mountains and an urban conflict in the backstreets of Aden. Intelligence agencies vied for control of 'hearts and minds'. The British launched a clandestine war in Yemen to keep their enemies at bay. But still the situation in Aden spiralled out of control, culminating in a bloody slaughter in 1967. In that November, the British Army finally withdrew from South Arabia. Aden Insurgency is the extraordinary story of Britain's last colonial conflict. Using a wide range of recently released archive and eye-witness accounts, the author charts the collapse of the South Arabian state. Set against a background of ruthless political ambition, these events shaped the Yemen of today.

*The Regiment* Michael Asher 2008-05-29 From the bestselling author of *The Real Bravo Two Zero* comes the definitive history of the world's most elite fighting force - the SAS 'Breathtaking bravery, astonishing feats of endurance, raids and battles described with terrific immediacy and pace. Compelling and definitive . . . will surely not be bettered' Sunday Telegraph On 4 May 1980, seven terrorists holding twenty-one people captive in the Iranian Embassy in London's Prince's Gate, executed their first hostage. They threatened to kill another hostage every thirty minutes until their demands were met. Minutes later, armed men in black overalls and balaclavas shimmied down the roof on ropes and burst in through windows and doors. In seconds all but one of the terrorists

had been shot dead, the other captured. For most people, this was their first acquaintance with a unit that was soon to become the ideal of modern military excellence - the Special Air Service regiment. Few realized that the SAS had been in existence for almost forty years, playing a discreet, if not secret, role almost everywhere Britain had fought since World War II, and had been the prototype of all modern special forces units throughout the world. In *The Regiment*, Michael Asher - a former soldier in 23 SAS Regiment - examines the evolution of the special forces idea and investigates the real story behind the greatest military legend of the late twentieth century.

'Detailed, scathingly honest. Asher has brought the critical eye of the knowledgeable insider to his in-depth study of SAS operations and personalities' Herald Praise for Michael Asher: 'This is the most complete picture of the Sudanese campaigns that has yet been published . . . a vigorous and engrossing narrative' Philip Ziegler, Daily Telegraph 'A staggering achievement. Asher has delivered a scintillating tale of a period of history that deserves to be remembered' Guardian

Looking for Trouble Sir Peter De la Billière 1994-01-01

*In Pursuit of Conceptual Excellence* Markus M?der 2004 Originally presented as author's thesis (doctoral)--Universiteat, Zeurich, 2003/04.

**Looking for Trouble** Sir Peter De la Billière 1994 Storm Command was the account of the last command held by Britain's most decorated officer. Now, in Sir Peter de la Billiere's story leading up to the Gulf War, we have a portrait of life in the SAS and a soldier's view of almost every British Army action since World War II.

Clandestine Lives of Colonel David Smiley Jones Clive Jones 2019-05-21 Drawing on extensive interviews and archival research, this biography uncovers the motivations and ideals that informed Smiley's commitment to covert action and intelligence during the Second World War and early part of the Cold War, often among tribally based societies. With particular reference to operations in Albania, Oman and Yemen, it addresses the wider issues of accountability and control of clandestine operations.

*Confrontation, Strategy and War Termination* Christopher Tuck 2016-05-23 At the heart of this book is the problem of war termination. Britain won an almost unbroken string of tactical military victories during an undeclared war against the Republic of Indonesia in the 1960s, yet it proved difficult to translate this into strategic success. Using conflict termination theories, this book argues that British strategy during Confrontation was both exemplary and flawed, both of which need not be mutually exclusive. The British experience in Indonesia represents an illuminating case study of the difficulties associated with strategy and the successful termination of conflicts. The value of this book lies in two areas: as a contribution to the literature on British counter-insurgency operations and as a contribution to the debates on the problems of war termination in the context of strategic thought.

**Surrey Folk Tales** Janet Dowling 2011-11-30 Surrey's landscape, shaped by the Devil's mischief and the whims of dancing Pharisees, is home to a wealth of tales. For Surrey is a place where dragons have stalked, dripping poisoned saliva from their yellow teeth; a place where horses have sprouted wings in order to rescue bewitched villagers; a place where pumas with the gift of speech have prowled the countryside. From the legends of Stephen Langton to the marvels of Captain Salvin and his flying pig, Janet Dowling has vividly retold these myths and stories of Surrey, and brought to life the county's heroes, villains and saints.

**Monsoon Revolution** Abdel Razzaq Takriti 2013-08-15 The Dhufar revolution in Oman (1965-1976) was the longest running major armed struggle in the history of the Arabian Peninsula, Britain's last classic colonial war in the region, and one of the highlights of the Cold War in the Middle East. Monsoon Revolution retrieves the political, social, and cultural history of that remarkable process. Relying upon a wide range of untapped Arab and British archival and oral sources, it revises the modern history of Oman by revealing the centrality of popular movements in shaping events and outcomes. The ties that bound transnational anti-colonial networks are explored, and Dhufar

is revealed to be an ideal vantage point from which to demonstrate the centrality of South-South connections in modern Arab history.

**Special Operations and Strategy** James D. Kiras 2006-07-29 James D. Kiras shows how a number of different special operations, in conjunction with more conventional military actions, achieve and sustain strategic effect(s) over time. In particular, he argues that the root of effective special operations lies in understanding the relationship existing between moral and material attrition at the strategic level. He also presents a theoretical framework for understanding how special operations achieve strategic effects using a unique synthesis of strategic theory and case studies. This study shows how the key to understanding how special operations reside in the concept of strategic attrition and in the moral and material nature of strategy. It also highlights major figures such as Carl von Clausewitz, Hans Delbrück, and Mao Zedong, who understood these complexities and were experts in eroding an enemy's will to fight. These and other examples provide a superb explanation of the complexities of modern strategy and the place of special operations in a war of attrition. This book will be of great interest to all students and scholars with an interest in special forces and of strategic and military studies in general.

**SAS Combat Handbook** Barry Davies 2015-08-18 An SAS soldier explains the battle history of this prestigious military service, while teaching how you can defend yourself in both hand-to-hand and military combat. Seventy years after its inception, the Special Air Service (SAS) is recognized by many as one of the most decorated military forces in the world. Their soldiers do battle on a daily basis, taking actions that are normally swift, very hard hitting, and extremely secretive. They will go—willingly—deep behind enemy lines, taking on incredible odds and risking their lives in the hope of rescuing others. In the SAS Combat Handbook, you will be informed on all aspects of SAS operations. With never-before-seen photographs of these heroes in action and untold stories of individual acts of bravery, you will be taught the key combat methods that have made this military group exactly what they are: elite. Included are training tips that will teach you about various military tactics, such as: The art of cover and remaining hidden behind enemy lines The keys to covert insertion and extraction operations Counterterrorism skills, including building entry, ambush, and sniping Fire battles on land, in the air, or at sea And so much more From the gathering of intelligence to undercover operations, the SAS is made up of two hundred men who are rigorously selected, highly trained, and ready to face what others fear. They know what it takes to get the job done, and no matter the situation, their combat skills are the best in the business.

*Falklands War Heroes* Michael Ashcroft 2021-11-09 The Falklands War, which may prove to be the last 'colonial' war that Britain ever fights, took place in 1982. Fought 8,000 miles from home soil, it cost the lives of 255 British military personnel with many more wounded, some seriously. The war also witnessed many acts of outstanding courage by the UK Armed Forces after a strong Task Force was sent to regain the islands from the Argentine invaders. Soldiers, sailors and airmen risked, and in some cases gave, their lives for the freedom of 1,820 islanders. Lord Ashcroft, who has been fascinated by bravery since he was a young boy, has amassed several medal collections over the past four decades, including the world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses, Britain and the Commonwealth's most prestigious gallantry award. Falklands War Heroes tells the stories behind his collection of valour and service medals awarded for the Falklands War. The collection, almost certainly the largest of its kind in the world, spans all the major events of the war. This book, which contains nearly forty individual write-ups, has been written to mark the 40th anniversary of the war. It is Lord Ashcroft's attempt to champion the outstanding bravery of our Armed Forces during an undeclared war that was fought and won over ten weeks in the most challenging conditions.

**Bringing War to Book** Rachel Woodward 2018-05-04 This book explores how military memoirs come to be written and published. Looking at the journeys through which soldiers and other military personnel become writers, the authors draw on over 250 military memoirs published since 1980 about service with the British armed

forces, and on interviews with published military memoirists who talk in detail about the writing and production of their books. A range of themes are explored including: the nature of the military memoir; motivations for writing; authors' reflections on their readerships; inclusions and exclusions within the text; the memories and materials that authors draw on; the collaborations that make the production and publication of military memoirs possible; and the issues around the design of military memoirs' distinctive covers. Written by two leading commentators on the sociology of the military, *Bringing War to Book* offers a new and original argument about the representations of war and the military experience as a process of social production. The book will be of interest to students and scholars across a range of disciplines including sociology, history, and cultural studies.

**Disrupt and Deny** Rory Cormac 2018-05-10 British leaders use spies and Special Forces to interfere in the affairs of others discreetly and deniably. Since 1945, MI6 has spread misinformation designed to divide and discredit targets from the Middle East to Eastern Europe and Northern Ireland. It has instigated whispering campaigns and planted false evidence on officials working behind the Iron Curtain, tried to ferment revolution in Albania, blown up ships to prevent the passage of refugees to Israel, and secretly funnelled aid to insurgents in Afghanistan and dissidents in Poland. MI6 has launched cultural and economic warfare against Iceland and Czechoslovakia. It has tried to instigate coups in Congo, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and elsewhere. Through bribery and blackmail, Britain has rigged elections as colonies moved to independence. Britain has fought secret wars in Yemen, Indonesia, and Oman — and discreetly used Special Forces to eliminate enemies from colonial Malaya to Libya during the Arab Spring. This is covert action: a vital, though controversial, tool of statecraft and perhaps the most sensitive of all government activity. If used wisely, it can play an important role in pursuing national interests in a dangerous world. If used poorly, it can cause political scandal — or worse. In *Disrupt and Deny*, Rory Cormac tells the remarkable true story of Britain's secret scheming against its enemies, as well as its friends; of intrigue and manoeuvring within the darkest corridors of Whitehall, where officials fought to maintain control of this most sensitive and seductive work; and, above all, of Britain's attempt to use smoke and mirrors to mask decline. He reveals hitherto secret operations, the slush funds that paid for them, and the battles in Whitehall that shaped them.

**Saudi Arabia** Anders Jerichow 2020-11-25 Based on interviews with sources ranging from dissidents to diplomats, the book takes the reader behind the wall of piety and medievalism that guards Saudi sensitivities. Discussing the ruling family's self-awarded birthright to wealth and power, Anders Jerichow questions whether it is possible to ignore the rules of the world and still enjoy the protection of the international community?

Death Before Dishonour - True Stories of The Special Forces Heroes Who Fight Global Terror Nicholas Davies 2013-05-06 In the past forty years, the devastating effects of international terror have forced their way into the forefront of world affairs. To counter this new threat to civilisation - and to the safety of ordinary people - a new breed of soldier was created to fight the terrorists on their own terms. They are the world's Special Forces, and *Death Before Dishonour* tells the inside stories behind these fearsome fighting units. It captures the drama, action, pain and glory of the most striking operations ever undertaken by the world's various Special Forces and for the first time ever reveals the truth behind their bloodiest battles, and gives top secret information about the terrifying techniques and gadgetry they employ.

**Solving the People Puzzle** Emily Spencer 2010-05-24 The 21st century has brought global instability, and special operations forces are the logical force of choice for success. As a group that favours humans over hardware, it makes sense that their tool of choice is cultural intelligence. Spencer makes a convincing argument for the powerful union of the force of choice with the tool of choice.

Peacekeeping Intelligence Robert David Steele 2003

**Secret State, Silent Press** Richard Keeble 1997 Keeble seeks to problematise the Gulf war of 1991 and argues,

controversially, that there was no war at all. Central to his argument is the notion of myth, used in the sense of manufactured story and constructed illusion.

**Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman** James Worrall 2018-01-30 In the depths of the Cold War and in the wake of Britain's announcement of its intention to withdraw 'East of Suez' by the end of 1971, Britain was faced with the stark reality of a Marxist rebellion in the Dhofar province of Oman. 'State Building and Counter Insurgency in Oman' offers an exploration of the attempts by officials and politicians in Whitehall and the Gulf to reconcile attempts to protect national interests and create an effective, centralised Omani administration and security bodies, whilst maintaining the image of strategic withdrawal and the sovereign independence of Oman. This book thus provides vital information and analysis for students and researchers of Middle East History and Politics, the decline and end of empire and the policymaking processes at the heart of an imperial and military withdrawal.

**Casting Light on the Shadows** Bernd Horn 2007-02-28 Special Operations Forces (SOF) have never been an integral element of Canada's military capability. Although units have existed periodically throughout the country's history, they have always been in the shadows. However, the terrorist attack in the United States on September 11, 2001, changed that. In the aftermath of 9/11, SOF became the force of choice. *Casting Light on the Shadows* consists of a series of essays on SOF-related issues written by individuals with specialized knowledge and expertise in the field. As well as providing a solid foundation for SOF theory, historical background, and evolution, the book also highlights ongoing developments in SOF.

Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror Alastair Finlan 2009-10-16 This volume undertakes a systematic analysis of the relationship between Special Forces and contemporary strategy, explaining the resurgence of interest in Special Forces, particularly in the West, by exploring their appeal over traditional conventional force options in the current 'War on Terror'. *Special Forces, Terrorism and Strategy* comprises four overarching themes: theory and practice command and control culture and technology operations and the 'War on Terror'. By developing a credible theory about the role of Special Forces in contemporary strategy, Alastair Finlan assesses the changing character of the relationship between conventional forces and Special Forces, illustrating the prominent role of these forces in the 'War on Terror'. This book will be of great interest to students of strategic studies and military history, as well as for professional military colleges.

The Counter-insurgency Myth Andrew Mumford 2012 This book examines the complex practice of counter-insurgency warfare through the prism of British military experiences in the post-war era and endeavours to unpack their performance. During the twentieth century counter-insurgency assumed the status of one of the British military's fortes. A wealth of asymmetric warfare experience was accumulated after the Second World War as the small wars of decolonisation offered the army of a fading imperial power many opportunities to deploy against an irregular enemy. However, this quantity of experience does not translate into quality. This book argues that the British, far from being exemplars of counter-insurgency, have in fact consistently proved to be slow learners in counter-insurgency warfare. This book presents an analysis of the most significant British counter-insurgency campaigns of the past 60 years: Malaya (1948-60), Kenya (1952-60), South Arabia (1962-67), the first decade of the Northern Irish 'Troubles' (1969-79), and the recent British counter-insurgency campaign in southern Iraq (2003-09). Colonial history is used to contextualise the contemporary performance in Iraq and undermine the commonly held confidence in British counter-insurgency. Blending historical research with critical analysis, this book seeks to establish a new paradigm through which to interpret and analyse the British approach to counter-insurgency, as well as considering the mythology of inherent British competence in the realm of irregular warfare. It will be of interest to students of counter-insurgency, military history, strategic studies, security studies, and IR in general.

With the SAS and Other Animals Andrew Higgins 2011-12-01 In 1970 at the height of the Cold War, the young Sandhurst-trained Sultan Qaboos of Oman, with secret British military backing, took on communist insurgents in a fierce but little known war. Along with regular British Army and contract officers, the Special Air Service played a key role in this bitterly fought but ultimately successful campaign. The value of winning the Hearts and Minds of the local population was quickly recognised and this is where a select band of Royal Army Veterinary Corps officers came in. The local economy was a primitive one based on agriculture, and the author, freshly qualified and, by his own admission, somewhat naive, found himself solely responsible for the veterinary care of a territory the size of Hungary. Attached to A Squadron, 22 SAS, Andrew Higgins learned how to respond to the Jebali peoples love and concern for the animals that provided their livelihood goats, camels, sheep and most importantly their cattle. Then there were the Sultans horses, pedigree dogs, exotic birds and even bears and hyenas. His first-hand experiences and anecdotes of life dealing with every level of Omani society, from the Ruler and his Court to the humblest refugees and their varied livestock make for wonderfully atmospheric and amusing reading. It also provides a thoughtful insight into the value of hearts and minds campaigns in other military operations where the support of the civilian population is crucial to success. With the SAS and Other Animals is an unusual and potent mix of Special Forces action and veterinary experiences. Readers may well conclude that it really shouldn't have happened to a vet even in a desert war!

**The Military and Liberal Society** Tomas Kucera 2017-08-25 This book describes to what extent and in what ways the military policies of Western European societies are determined by liberal ideology. A wide variety of issues affected by liberal ideology, including conscription, conscientious objection, military mission, military ethics and the professional identity of soldiers are addressed in the book. The empirical analysis draws on the cases of the German Bundeswehr (from the 1950s onwards), the Swedish Armed Forces (the transformation after the end of the Cold War), and the British Armed Forces (from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards). The book's examination of these cases reveals that specific policies, institutions and practices are preferred because of their relation to liberalism. Since Samuel Huntington's seminal book *The Soldier and the State* the literature on civil-military relations and military sociology depicts the relationship between liberal ideology and military security as intrinsically antithetical. This book is conceived as a critical debate with Huntington. Contrary to the notion of antithetical societal-military relationship, this book demonstrates that a meaningful adaptation of the military to the principles possessed by its parent society can be, more often than not, desirable also from the perspective of security strategy. This book will be of considerable interest to students of civil-military relations, military sociology, Western European politics, security studies and IR.

**Rescue at the Iranian Embassy** Gregory Fremont-Barnes 2011-01-15 Describes the raid of the Iranian embassy in London by British special forces after it had been taken over by Iranian Arab separatists, including the events leading up to the raid and its long-term impact on foreign relations.

*Operation Nimrod* Russell Phillips 2015-10-05 Drawing on extensive research, *Operation Nimrod* dispels the myths and reveals the truth of those six long days, and the dramatic rescue that thrust the SAS into the public eye. On 29th April 1980, British police assured Iran that their embassy was secure. The very next day, terrorists stormed the embassy and took twenty-six hostages. With the Iranian government willing to let the hostages become martyrs, and the British government only willing to talk if the terrorists surrendered, twenty-six lives hung in the balance. What followed was six days of tension and terror. It was finally ended when the SAS launched a daring rescue mission, broadcast live on television. Millions held their breath, waiting to see the outcome of *Operation Nimrod*. Buy this book to learn the truth about one of the most dramatic rescue missions ever undertaken by the SAS.

**Supreme Courage** Peter de la Billiere 2011-02-03 Since 1854 the Victoria Cross has been the highest award for

gallantry in the British Armed Forces. It bears the simple legend 'For Valour', but behind it are thrilling and ultimately humbling tales of unimaginable bravery. **SUPREME COURAGE** tells the tales of some of those who have won the medal, bringing this badge of honour alive with breath-taking accounts of courage in action. Visiting battle-scenes across the globe, peppering his accounts with letters and first-hand accounts, Sir Peter de la Billiere uncovers not just heroism but the hearts and minds of men. With his accounts of Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders, Indians and the Gurkhas, Sir Peter de la Billiere does more than accompany the man into battle. He reveals their backgrounds, the climate of their times, what it was that drove them on, and the price of fame - the burden of expectation in civilian life that accompanied more than one recipient to a pauper's grave. Extraordinary and intensely moving, **SUPREME COURAGE** is a thrilling addition to the literature of war, and a unique and magnificent monument to heroism.

**Publications Combined: Russia's Regular And Special Forces In The Regional And Global War On Terror** Over 2,400 total pages ... Russian outrage following the September 2004 hostage disaster at North Ossetia's Beslan Middle School No.1 was reflected in many ways throughout the country. The 52-hour debacle resulted in the death of some 344 civilians, including more than 170 children, in addition to unprecedented losses of elite Russian security forces and the dispatch of most Chechen/allied hostage-takers themselves. It quickly became clear, as well, that Russian authorities had been less than candid about the number of hostages held and the extent to which they were prepared to deal with the situation. Amid grief, calls for retaliation, and demands for reform, one of the more telling reactions in terms of hardening public perspectives appeared in a national poll taken several days after the event. Some 54% of citizens polled specifically judged the Russian security forces and the police to be corrupt and thus complicit in the failure to deal adequately with terrorism, while 44% thought that no lessons for the future would be learned from the tragedy. This pessimism was the consequence not just of the Beslan terrorism, but the accumulation of years of often spectacular failures by Russian special operations forces (SOF, in the apt US military acronym). A series of Russian SOF counterterrorism mishaps, misjudgments, and failures in the 1990s and continuing to the present have made the Kremlin's special operations establishment in 2005 appear much like Russia's old Mir space station—wired together, unpredictable, and subject to sudden, startling failures. But Russia continued to maintain and expand a large, variegated special operations establishment which had borne the brunt of combat actions in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and other trouble spots, and was expected to serve as the nation's principal shield against terrorism in all its forms. Known since Soviet days for tough personnel, personal bravery, demanding training, and a certain rough or brutal competence that not infrequently violated international human rights norms, it was supposed that Russian special operations forces—steeped in their world of “threats to the state” and associated with once-dreaded military and national intelligence services—could make valuable contributions to countering terrorism. The now widely perceived link between “corrupt” special forces on the one hand, and counterterrorism failures on the other, reflected the further erosion of Russia's national security infrastructure in the eyes of both Russian citizens and international observers. There have been other, more ambiguous, but equally unsettling dimensions of Russian SOF activity as well, that have strong internal and external political aspects. These constitute the continuing assertions from Russian media, the judicial system, and other Federal agencies and officials that past and current members of the SOF establishment have organized to pursue interests other than those publicly declared by the state or allowed under law. This includes especially the alleged intent to punish by assassination those individuals and groups that they believe have betrayed Russia. The murky nature of these alleged activities has formed a backdrop to other problems in the special units.

*David Stirling* Gavin Mortimer 2022-05-26 Aristocrat, gambler, innovator and special forces legend, the life of David Stirling should need no retelling. His formation of the Special Air Service in the summer of 1941 led to a new form of warfare and Stirling is remembered as the father of special forces soldiering. But was he really a

