

ALAN MALCHER is a former soldier with a wide experience of counter-terrorist and clandestine operations, giving him valuable insights into the experience of SOE agents. He has been fascinated by the SOE since childhood and this book is the result of decades of thorough research.

Jacket design: Dominic Allen

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The SOE was formed in 1940 when Britain's back was to the wall. Churchill ordered agents to be sent over the Channel to 'set Europe ablaze' by organizing local resistance, sabotaging factories and railways, and generally making life difficult for the German occupiers. This helped to maintain Allied morale while lowering that of the Germans and diverting their resources away from the battle front. By 1944 the Allies were ready to storm back into France and eject the Nazis for good and this was to prove the SOEs finest hour, helping to pave the way for the successful invasion by causing confusion behind German front lines, interrupting crucial communications and resupply and preventing or delaying the arrival of vital German reserves that might have turned the battle in the Germans' favour.

Alan Malcher draws on decades of research, including much first-hand testimony from SOE operatives, to narrate these significant events. He argues that the contribution of SOE and the Resistance units they supported to the success of the Allied invasion has been underestimated and corrects several inaccuracies and misconceptions. Furthermore, his own extensive experience of special operations and clandestine warfare allows him insights into the stresses and demands made of SOE agents, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice for final victory.

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