



Gentleman Jim: The Wartime Story of a Founder of the SAS and Special Forces

Lorna Almonds-Windmill

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This remarkable story of Jim Almonds (Gentleman Jim) is set in wartime England, the western desert, Italy and France, and recounts his formative role in the birth of the SAS. Against a dramatic background of love, courage and high-risk adventure, it captures for the first time the real spirit of the young soldiers in the newly emerging Special Air Service.

Jim Almonds, a sergeant in the Guards Commandos, sailed for the Middle East as part of 'Layforce' in January 1941 with David Stirling and others destined to become SAS 'L' Detachment 'originals'. Following intensive training in the desert and action at Tobruk, Sidi Haneish, Nofelia and Benghazi, Almonds was captured and shipped to a POW camp in Italy, where he staged two escapes. After thirty-two days on the run in enemy territory, he reached US forces at the Benevento front line. Later, he parachuted into occupied France where he harried the Germans so effectively that he was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Written by Gentleman Jim's daughter and based on Almond's own diaries, various primary sources and interviews with other 'originals', the action throughout is vivid and immediate.

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