



Donovan's Devils: OSS Commandos Behind Enemy Lines—Europe, World War II

Albert Lulushi

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The stirring, little-known story of the forerunners to today's Special Forces.

The OSS—Office of Strategic Services—created under the command of William Donovan, has been celebrated for its cloak-and-dagger operations during World War II and as the precursor of the CIA. As the "Oh So Social," it has also been portrayed as a club for the well-connected before, during, and after the war. *Donovan's Devils* tells the story of a different OSS, that of ordinary soldiers, recruited from among first- and second-generation immigrants, who volunteered for dangerous duty behind enemy lines and risked their lives in Italy, France, the Balkans, and elsewhere in Europe. Organized into Operational Groups, they infiltrated into enemy territory by air or sea and operated for days, weeks, or months hundreds of miles from the closest Allied troops. They performed sabotage, organized native resistance, and rescued downed airmen, nurses, and prisoners of war. Their enemy showed them no mercy, and sometimes their closest friends betrayed them. They were the precursors to today's Special Forces operators.

Based on declassified OSS records, personal collections, and oral histories of participants from both sides of the conflict, *Donovan's Devils* provides the most comprehensive account to date of the Operational Group activities, including a detailed narrative of the ill-fated Ginny mission, which resulted in the one of the OSS's gravest losses of the war.

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