



He Who Dared and Died: The Life and Death of a SAS Original, Sergeant Chris O'Dowd, MM

Gearoid O'Dowd

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Brought up in poverty in the West of Ireland, Chris O'Dowd ran away to join the Irish Guards aged 18. In no time he tasted bitter action in Norway, but hungry for more he volunteered for the newly formed Commandos. After intensive training he sailed for Egypt, serving with Churchill's son Randolph, novelist Evelyn Waugh and, most significantly, David Stirling.

When Stirling got the go-ahead to form the SAS, his handpicked team included the young Chris O'Dowd. After his part in the early SAS behind-the-lines raids on enemy airfields, O'Dowd was promoted to Lance-Sergeant and awarded the Military Medal.

When Colonel David Stirling was captured, the SAS's future was in danger (it was always threatened by enemies within the Army) but Ulsterman Major Paddy Mayne managed to keep it alive. O'Dowd's courage and toughness typified the spirit of the SAS and he became a key member of this elite band.

The SAS spearheaded the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and then was ordered to the Italian mainland. Tragically Chris O'Dowd was killed in action along with fourteen others in October 1943.

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