

## BOOK REVIEWS

### BOOK BEAHEM?

# Female Special Forces Agents in World War II Europe

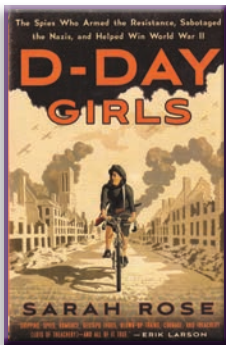
## D-Day at 75

Reviews by COL (Ret) Warner "Rocky" D. Farr

Multiple books have been released lately on the role of the women agents and team members of Allied Special Forces in World War II. Many of the books, but not all, are in conjunction with the current

75th anniversary of D-Day. The OSS and SOE committed increasing assets to France and to the Maquisards prior to D-Day, and many Operatives did not return. In the SOE alone, 470 were inserted and 117 were killed.

Rose S. *D-Day Girls. The Spies Who Armed the Resistance, Sabotaged the Nazis, and Helped Win World War II.* New York: Crown; 2019. ISBN 978-0-451-49508-2.



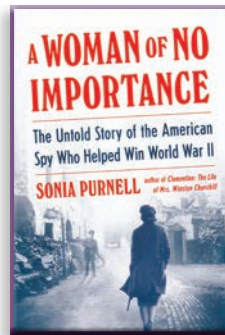
The author covers three top Special Forces (SOE) Operatives in occupied France: Andrée Borrel (ultimately killed by the Nazis in a concentration camp), Odette Sansom (who received the British Empire's highest civilian award for gallantry), and Lise de Baissac (a bicycle courier for the maquis).

Loftis L. *Code Name: Lise. The True Story of the Woman Who Became WWII's Most Highly Decorated Spy.* New York: Gallery Books; 2019. ISBN 1-5011-9865-6.



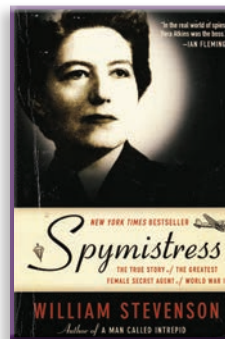
A full-length book on the exploits of Odette Sansom, of the SOE, including her imprisonment and torture in Ravensbruck concentration camp. She was the most highly decorated British agent in World War II, receiving the George Cross and the French Legion of Honour.

Purnell S. *A Woman of No Importance. The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II.* New York: Viking Press; 2019. ISBN 978-0-7352-2529-9.



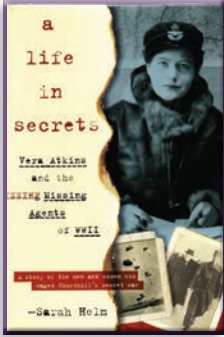
The most highly decorated American (OSS) agent was Virginia Hall, Croix de Guerre, MBE, who received an American Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism. She was the most highly decorated civilian in World War II and was one of the very few female OSS agents to have a successful postwar CIA career. Having lost a leg before the war, she parachuted into France with her wooden leg named "Cuthbert." A famous portrait of her sending code hangs in both the Langley CIA HQ and the Special Force Club in London. New CIA recruits are now trained in the Virginia Hall Expeditionary Center.

Stevenson WS. *Spymistress. The True Story of the Greatest Female Secret Agent of World War II.* New York: Arcade Publishing; 2007. ISBN 978-1-61145-231-0.



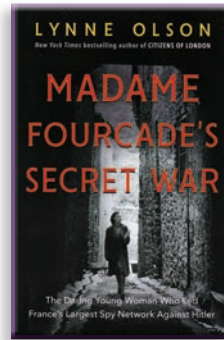
Vera Adkins handpicked, trained, and personally inserted agents into France. She was supposedly the inspiration for Ian Fleming to create the "Money Penny" character in his 007 novels. He worked down the hall from her at the SOE Baker Street headquarters.

Helm S. *A Life in Secrets. Vera Atkins and the Missing Agents of WW II.* Doubleday: New York, 2005. ISBN 978-0-385-50845-2.



This excellent biography of WAAF Squadron Officer Vera Atkins highlights her deployment to Europe at the close of World War II to search for the many missing SOE agents, many of whom either were in or killed at Nazi concentration camps.

Olson L. *Madame Fourcade's Secret War. The Daring Young Woman Who Led France's Largest Spy Network Against Hitler.* New York: Random House; 2019. ISBN 978-0-8129-9476-6.



This is an in-depth biography and record of the largest French network, the Alliance circuit, and the only one run by a woman. It provided the first intelligence reports on Peenemünde, thereby revealing the V2 rocket's existence. Fourcade's network was composed of 3,000 agents, of whom 600 were captured and 450 were executed. While a "G Chief" fighting the Nazis, she had a baby and refused to play by the rules of the racist, sexist, and ultimately murderous Vichy patriarchy. She is nearly unknown as postwar France discounted the role of women in the resistance.



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