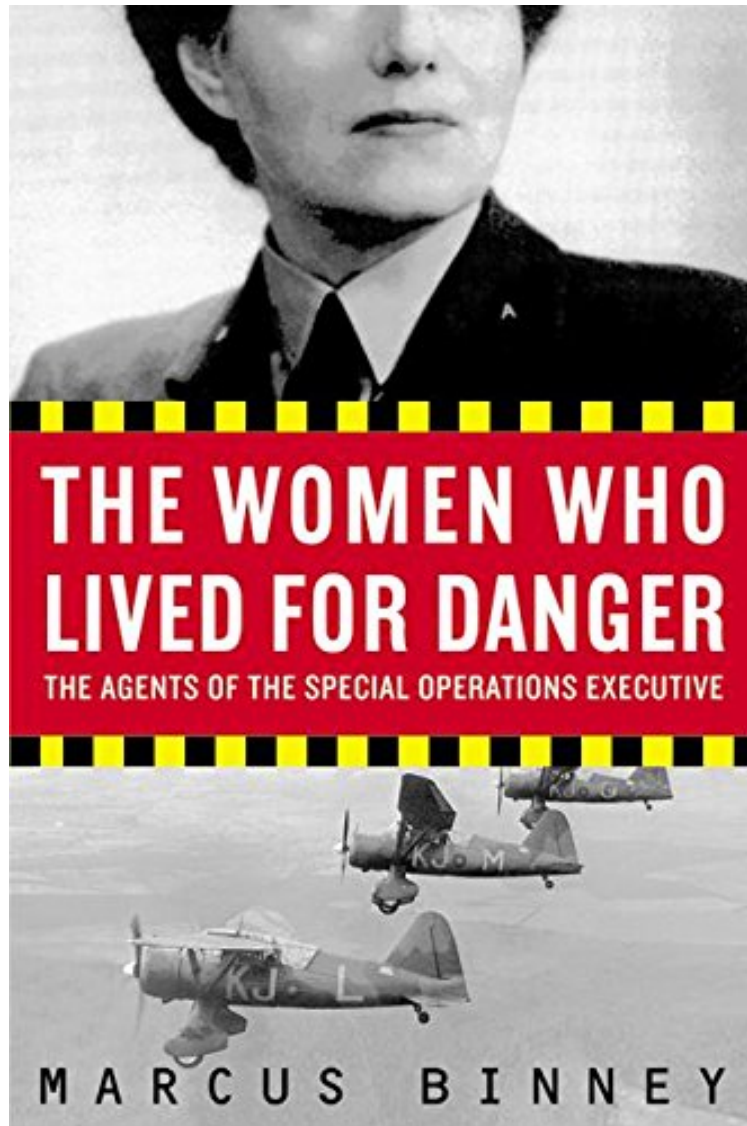


(Library ebook) The Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive

# The Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive

*Marcus Binney*

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**Marcus Binney : The Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Intense, but interesting glimpse into WWII women spies By Denise E. This is a bit more of a summary book on the subject than an in-depth study. Several of the women featured (most

notably Violette Szabo) have books about them. There are six pages of Bibliography, which is valuable itself for research, but I'm wondering if I should have read those books in lieu of this one. And, yet, even though it's a summary book, it's chock full of info to the point that I found it sometimes hard to read. The book is well written, but bogs down in places. The first few pages of the first chapter, for example, are full of names, acronyms and various programs, both German and American. I'm well enough versed in WWII to be familiar with acronyms such as the FANNY and the WAAF, and I still found myself checking google to get information on various programs. I'm not sure you can tell this story without this information, but it's definitely not a book for a passing interest in WWII. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. She was not disappointed. She says it was interesting and informational without ...By Courtenay E. Grabowski I bought this for my daughter for Easter. She devoured it! She had read "Code Name: Verity" a few weeks before and saw this in their "for further information" list, and begged for it. She was not disappointed. She says it was interesting and informational without being boring. (she is 14) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. might be a better book out there By bullydogmeh.....half way through and I a having a hard time finishing it. I am amazed as to what these women did and what they had to go through, but the stories just aren't that well written

The Special Operations Executive was formed by Winston Churchill in 1940 to "set Europe ablaze." In the SOE women were trained to handle guns and explosives, work undercover, endure interrogation by the Gestapo, and use complex codes. In *The Women Who Lived for Danger*, acclaimed historian Marcus Binney recounts the story of ten remarkable women who were dropped in occupied territories to work as secret agents. Once they were behind enemy lines, theirs was the most dangerous war of all, as they led apparently normal civilian lives while in constant danger of arrest. They organized dropping grounds for arms and explosives destined for the Resistance, helped operate escape lines for airmen who had been shot down over Europe, and provided Allied Command with vital intelligence. SOE women agents came from all walks of life: from the dazzling Polish Countess Krystyna Skarbek (alias Christine Granville) and the American Virginia Hall, who was from a rich Baltimore family, to Marguerite Knight, a secretary in Walthamstow. Petite Lisa de Baissac lived next to Gestapo headquarters in Poitiers playing the part of a quiet widow, while twenty-year-old student Paola Del Din was sent to find a way through the German front line in Florence. Hot-tempered Paddy O'Sullivan deflected a German officer from examining her suitcase by making a date with him, and Alix d'Unienville feigned madness when captured. The stories of these women agents -- some famous, some virtually unknown -- are told with the help of extensive new archive material. Their exploits form a new chapter of heroism in the history of warfare matched only by their determination, resourcefulness, and ability to stay cool in the face of extreme danger.

From Publishers Weekly In this collection of short, suspenseful biographies, Binney (*Our Vanishing Heritage; Chateaux of the Loire*, etc.) draws on published accounts, interviews and official records (including personnel files) to recount the careers of 10 women who spied for the British Special Operations Executive in German-occupied Europe. During World War II, these women operated as intelligence agents, clandestine radio operators and German saboteurs for the SOE--an organization created to wreak havoc behind German lines. Several were caught, tortured and later executed. Among them were Christina Granville, whom the press later dubbed "a modern pimpnel no man could resist," Virginia Hall, an American newspaper woman with a wooden leg who worked three years in occupied territory without being arrested, and Lela Karayanni, who organized sabotage with the help of her five children. Although much has already been written about some of the women in this history, a few of those featured are less well known, such as Paola Del Din, who carried secret messages through the German front line in Florence. And Binney's use of official sources lends an air of authenticity often absent in some earlier accounts of these women's careers. (He also provides background on the SOE's history, training and operations for readers untutored in WWII special operations and espionage particulars.) Although the treatment of these heroines is a bit cursory and occasionally romanticized (e.g. "the girls who served as secret agents in Churchill's Special Operations Executive were young, beautiful, and brave"), Binney succeeds in presenting a lively, accurate introduction to 10 courageous women and their unusual exploits. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. True-life espionage adventures far beyond any fictional James Bond movie. (Times Colonist (Victoria, BC)) About the Author Marcus Binney is an accomplished historian and writer who is the author of *Our Vanishing Heritage*, *Townhouses*, and *Airports*. Binney attended Cambridge, and has lectured extensively to historical societies in New York, Boston, Rhode Island, and Virginia on architectural preservation and history. He has also fronted a thirty-nine-part series -- *Mansions: The Great Houses of Europe* -- broadcast in the U.S. between 1993 and 1997. Binney's interest in the lives of the agents of the SOE is a personal one. His father, Lt. Col. Francis Simms, MC, walked seven hundred miles through the Apennines after twice escaping from POW camps. His mother, Sonia, did secret work with code breakers during the war and in 1955 remarried Sir George Binney, DSO, also a war hero, who had carried out one of the most successful blockade-running operations of World War II in 1941 -- bringing back five unarmed merchant ships from Sweden through the minefields.