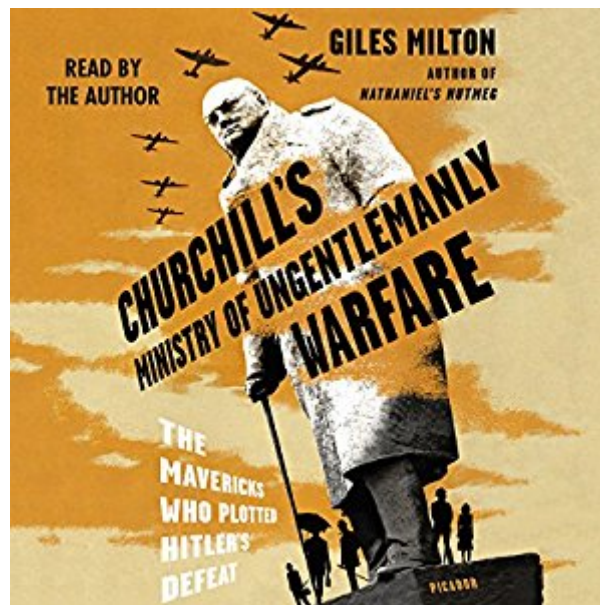




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Churchill's Ministry Of Ungentlemanly Warfare: The Mavericks Who Plotted Hitler's Defeat



Synopsis

Six gentlemen, one goal: the destruction of Hitler's war machine In the spring of 1939, a top-secret organization was founded in London: Its purpose was to plot the destruction of Hitler's war machine through spectacular acts of sabotage. The guerrilla campaign that followed was every bit as extraordinary as the six men who directed it. One of them, Cecil Clarke, was a maverick engineer who had spent the 1930s inventing futuristic caravans. Now his talents were put to more devious use: He built the dirty bomb used to assassinate Hitler's favorite, Reinhard Heydrich. Another, William Fairbairn, was a portly pensioner with an unusual passion: He was the world's leading expert in silent killing, hired to train the guerrillas being parachuted behind enemy lines. Led by dapper Scotsman Colin Gubbins, these men - along with three others - formed a secret inner circle that, aided by a group of formidable ladies, single-handedly changed the course of the Second World War: a cohort handpicked by Winston Churchill whom he called his Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare. Churchill's Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare is a gripping and vivid narrative of adventure and derring-do that is also, perhaps, the last great untold story of the Second World War.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When we think about the European theater during World War Two, a few events really stand out: the countries falling like dominoes to Hitler's blitzkrieg tactics; England suffering from and then defeating the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain; and, of course, the allied invasion of Normandy that was the beginning of the end for Germany. But in this book, Giles Milton pays close attention to the "little things" that helped win the war: sabotage,

guerilla resistance, and new weapons. The destruction of the German *Norsk Hydro* heavy water plant in Norway prevented the Nazis from producing nuclear weapons; the sabotage of Peugeot factory in Sochaux, France, made it impossible for the Germany army to replace tanks and trucks; and the complete destruction of the Normandie Docks at St. Nazaire by the exploding HMS *Campbeltown* meant that German ships had to sail up the English Channel to Germany for repairs, and Germany's largest and most dangerous battleship, the *Tirpitz*, was put out of action for the rest of the war. During the Normandy invasion, the underground guerilla resistance movement went into action to prevent the SS Panzer Division *Das Reich* from reaching Normandy, 450 miles away. First, the tank-carrying flat rail cars were sabotaged with axle grease loaded with carborundum so that the gears would freeze up. Then the French railroad lines were cut in more than 1,000 places. General *Lammerding*'s Panzer Division was forced to use the roads and the guerillas so harassed them that the three-day trip took seventeen days and the division arrived too late. "the Allied beachhead was secure." The invention of the lightweight limpet mine and the sticky bomb took out many German tanks and ships through sabotage in the occupied countries, but the most important new weapon of the war in Europe was the anti-sub *Hedgehog*, which fired an array of bomb-like homing devices that could surround the German submarines and hone in on them. Much more deadly than the old depth charges, the *Hedgehogs* deployed on U.S. and British naval ships destroyed thirty-seven enemy subs in less than a year. These are just a few examples of the "ungentlemanly warfare" techniques in Milton's excellent and exciting book. *World War Two* buffs and readers interested in military history will simply love this book that proves a few saboteurs on the ground were more valuable than a fleet of bombers. I rate the book at four and a half stars.

This is a tale of dedication and creativity of people who built weapons of clandestine war. The heroism of the agents who used them behind enemy lines makes the book riveting reading.

Wonderful history of special operations in WW II. So spectacular that it reads like fiction. Deftly demonstrates the real advantages of behind the lines operations. Also, a great display of different actors and their lucky association - recommended highly!

Very interesting book that provides insight into the need for special operations vs traditional forces, the role each plays, and the value that ungentlemenly warfare played in ww2.

Very interesting and fun to read. I especially liked the sections on Cecil Clarke, and his ability to invent needed weapons from simple objects. One complaint: although the Kindle edition has a section titled "list of illustrations", there are actually no illustrations in the Kindle edition. I assume Clarke blew them up.

I found the writing to be choppy, jumping from one topic to another. Also, I would have preferred to read more about the various operations the gentlemen undertook than to read the names of the gentlemen involved. Still, I found the story of the struggles to establish and maintain this new form of warfare for the British amazing and at times jaw dropping unbelievable. I have no doubt that I owe my present lifestyle, perhaps even my life itself, to the men and women who fought that fight on the British home front as much as to those who fought behind the enemy lines. The determination, courage, and creativity of all of them is inspiring.

The book is a good read but one gets the feeling that the author delved rather deeply into Wikipedia and other second-hand sources. Some areas are so similarly described as to make one wonder whether following a few threads through Wikipedia might not have given much the same story. Although it is richly annotated and foot-noted, what I found lacking compared to other books on the same topic is a "you were there" feel. While there are quite a number of direct quotes, the book seems stitched together from a wide range of accounts and perspectives.

I had no idea about the weaponry and sabotage missions the British Special Operations Executive undertook to help defeat Germany during WWII. Churchill was an enthusiastic sponsor of this work; ensuring that they had all the resources they needed. As luck would have it, this effort attracted a cast of characters who proved to be brilliant, creative, and very brave. It's an enlightening story that I think most will find adds to their knowledge of WWII.

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