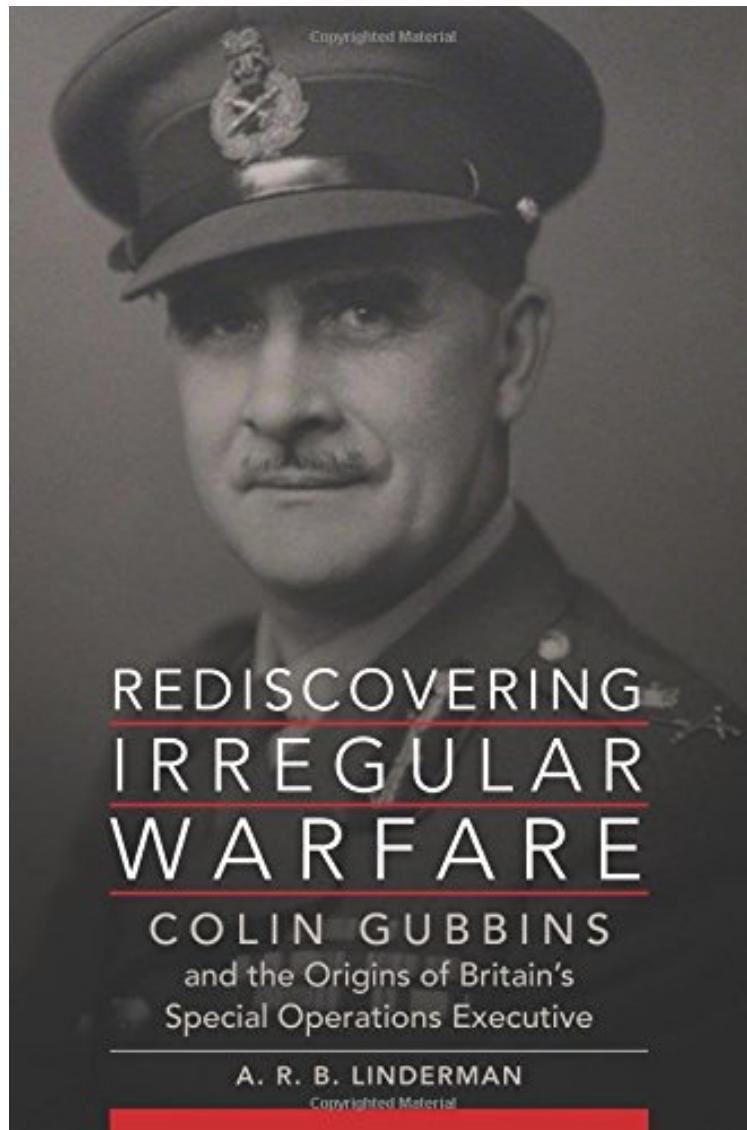


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Rediscovering Irregular Warfare: Colin Gubbins and the Origins of Britain's Special Operations Executive (Campaigns and Commanders Series)

A. R. B. Linderman

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Special Operations Executive (Campaigns and Commanders Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. as advertised would purchase again from this seller
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Man who "Invented" Special Operations
By Albert A. Nofi
A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com'
Although Colin Gubbins (1896-1976), who had a long career in the British Army, with service in the world wars, as well as northern Russia and the Irish War for Independence, played an important role in the development of special operations, he has largely been over-looked by historians. In this, Linderman's first work, that oversight is corrected. He sees Gubbins's experiences in Russia and Ireland as the source of his interest in special operations. Gubbins honed this interest during the interwar period by studying history and current conflicts in India, the Far East, Spain, and other areas, in Linderman's words "Learning from the Past" and from "Contemporary Examples." A liaison officer in Poland in 1939, Gubbins then raised the first British Commandos, and led them in the Norwegian Campaign, turned down a division command to organize "stay behind" groups in the Home Guard should the Germans occupy parts of Britain, and then joined the nascent SOE. There's much in here about the development of special operations doctrine and practice, the management of agents, special operations within the "Big Picture," and peeks at many unique individuals, from "Wild Bill" Donovan to the remarkable Constant de Wiart. This is a very useful look at the origins of the now very essential special operations forces.
For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com
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By James A. Guest
It very clearly described the foundation of modern irregular warfare and how difficult it is to defeat insurgents. Also, it clarifies the difference in Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Commando/Direct Action Operations which so often is confusing when all of these are lumped together under "Special Operations" .

Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), which conducted sabotage campaigns and supported resistance movements in Axis-occupied Europe and in Asia, is often described as Winston Churchill's brainchild. But as A. R. B. Linderman reveals in this engrossing history, the real genius behind Britain's clandestine warriors was Colin Gubbins, a British officer who forged the SOE by drawing on lessons learned in irregular conflicts around the world. Following Gubbins through operations he studied and participated in, Linderman maps the evolution of the SOE from its origins to its doctrine to its becoming a critical institution. Part biography, part intellectual and organizational history, *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare* is the first book to explore the origins of a substantial force in the Allies' victory in World War II. Although popular history holds that Britain entered World War II with no prior knowledge of or experience with underground warfare, *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare* tells us otherwise. Linderman finds ample precedent in the clearly documented work of Gubbins and his fellow clandestine organizers. He traces Gubbins's career from 1914 through World War I and such irregular conflicts as the Allied intervention in Russia, the Irish Revolution, and conflicts in British India. To these firsthand experiences, Gubbins added the insights of colleagues who had served with him and in Iraq, as well as what he learned from the Second Anglo-Boer War, the Arab Revolt led by T. E. Lawrence, the German guerrilla war in East Africa, the revolt in Palestine between the world wars, the Spanish Civil War, and the Second Sino-Japanese War. The two booklets that Gubbins wrote based on his accumulated knowledge offered the first synthesis of British unconventional warfare doctrine: practical guides that emphasized the centrality of local populations; the collection, protection, and use of intelligence; the necessity of cooperating with conventional forces; and the use of speed, surprise, and escape in ambush operations. In 1940, when Gubbins joined the newly created SOE, the experience and know-how codified in his guides formed the basis of Britain's approach to irregular warfare. The history of the SOE's doctrinal origins is Colin Gubbins's story. By telling that story, *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare* amplifies and clarifies our understanding of the Second World War—and of doctrines of unconventional warfare in the twentieth century.

"Aaron Linderman has drawn from an impressive array of primary sources to trace the institutional development of irregular warfare in the years prior to World War II and as England deployed it against the Axis Powers during the war. By linking the development of Britain's Special Operations Executive with the life and work of Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, Linderman shows the central role Gubbins played in the development of modern intelligence gathering and special operations. Insightful and valuable."—William H. Kautt, author of *Ground Truths: British Army Operations in the Irish War of Independence and Ambushes and Armour: The Irish Rebellion, 1919–1921*