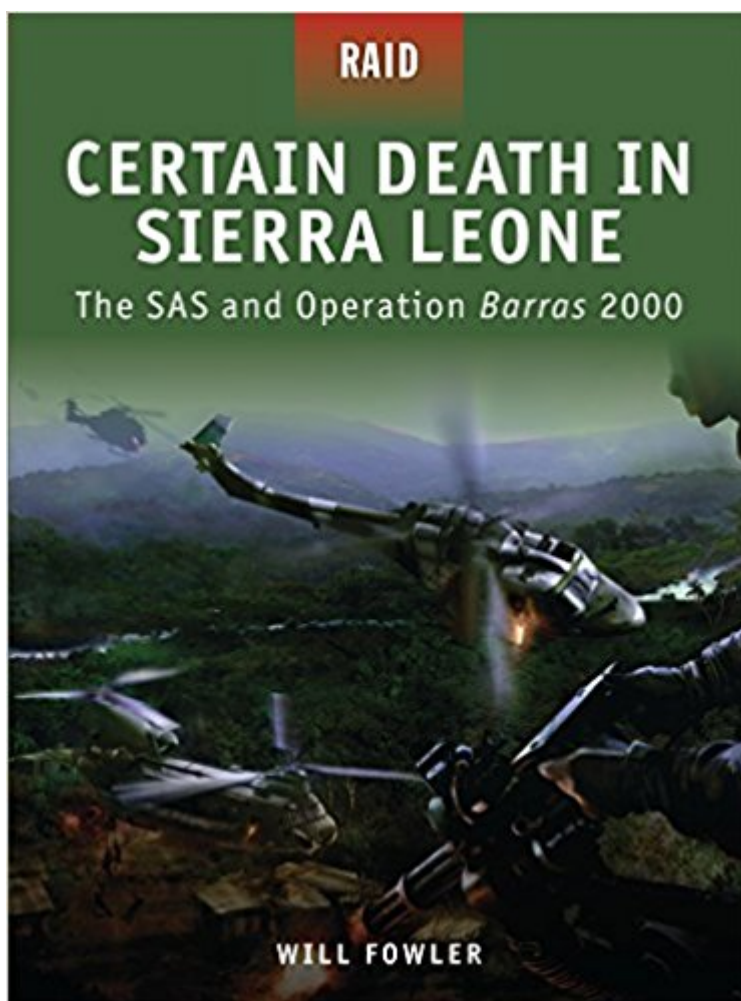


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Certain Death In Sierra Leone: The SAS And Operation Barras 2000 (Raid)



Synopsis

In September 2000, eleven British soldiers were captured by a notorious militia gang in Sierra Leone. Originally deployed to fulfill peace-keeping duties in a country ravaged by civil war, the soldiers had been kidnapped by the so-called 'West Side Boys' who had already subjected the region to a reign of terror, murder and mutilation. When negotiations stalled, the British government decided to launch Operation Barras as a joint rescue operation by D Squadron 22 SAS and A Company 1 Para. Two four-man SAS reconnaissance patrols were inserted by boat into the villages where they provided key information about the location of the hostages and the routines, if any, of the frequently stoned and extremely volatile West Side Boys. Then, just before dawn on Sunday, September 20 2004, three Chinooks supported by two army Lynx helicopters lifted the Paras and SAS into the two villages that straddled Rokel Creek. The Lynx helicopter attacked a heavy machinegun in the southern village of Magbeni as the SAS fire teams and a hostage rescue team fast roped down from the two Chinooks. The hostages were quickly located and evacuated to safety. The SAS endured a sustained firefight with the West Side Boys, killing some and capturing their leader, "Brigadier" Foday Kallay, a 24-year-old former sergeant in the Sierra Leone Army. To the south of the village, the Paras fought through the village of Magbeni driving off the remaining gang members and recovering the Royal Irish Land Rovers that had been abandoned by the kidnapped soldiers. The operation was over by late morning and the Paras completed the mission by destroying any vehicles, ammunition or equipment that had been abandoned by the gang. In the words of one SAS veteran, "This was not a clinical, black balaclava, Princess Gate-type operation: it was a very grubby, green operation with lots of potential for things to go wrong." For the first time, this daring raid is brought to life with specially commissioned artwork, detailed maps and overhead shots to recreate one of the greatest hostage-rescue success stories in recent history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is another gripping description of events and thanks to a bevy of photos, many in color, and some superb artwork that includes maps and charts, we get a real idea of what went on during this crisis. Like the other books I've read in this series, it holds your interest and is well researched. It is a book I enjoyed and one that I can easily recommend.

• Scott Van Aken, Modeling Madness

Will Fowler has worked in journalism and publishing since 1972, reporting for European, American, Asian and Arabic magazines from Europe, the USA, the Middle East, China and SE Asia. Among his more than 30 published books is the best-selling MAA 133 Battle for the Falklands: Land Forces. A TA soldier for 30 years, he was commissioned from the ranks in 4th Bn Royal Green Jackets, and volunteered for Operation 'Granby' in the Gulf, 1990-91. In 1993 he graduated from the French Army reserve staff officers course at the _cole Militaire, Paris. Will has previously written Operation Barras: The SAS Rescue Mission Sierra Leone 2000 which was serialized in the News of the World and Daily Mail newspapers. Will is married and lives in Romsey, Hampshire. The author lives in Romsey, Hampshire.

This book outlines Operation Barras, a British raid to rescue members of the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment from a gang of killers in Sierra Leone. The raid was conducted by Soldiers of the 1st Parachute Regiment and the SAS, separate from UN forces and the Sierra Leone Army. It involved an air assault to secure and remove the hostages (which included local civilians) while damaging the insurgent gang as much as possible. While well-illustrated with paintings, photographs and maps the book is a little confusing at times. It seems to assume that the reader already has significant knowledge of the operation. Still, by the time the reader has finished the book you will certainly know all the important details of this challenging and heroic action.

I think this book was nicely done, and especially satisfactory, because of all of the colour photographs. I would recommend it. A well planned and executed raid by men who had the cajones to pull it off.

An interesting, informative and detailed account of the fascinating rescue of British soldiers in Sierra Leone. It was covered at the time in the press, but great to read about it in more detail. Once again our troops at their best!

An interesting book that provides insight into the overall mission to save both civilians and soldiers alike in a very unforgiving environment.

A quick look into what makes the British Army still a military force to be reckoned with. Mr Flowers book is an excellent view of modern warfare. A quick read and great for people who are just learning about military History.

This quite honest and certainly very interesting book describes a British Army raid known as Operation "Barras", which took place on 10 September 2000 in Sierra Leone. I liked it and I am glad that I bought it, although there are some things which could be improved, if there ever is a second edition.

1. Operation "Barras"

In the year 2000 British armed forces were heavily committed in operations in Sierra Leone, a country ravaged by a horrible, deadly civil war since 1991. British intervention, code-named Operation "Palliser", began in May 2000 and its first purpose was the evacuation of British citizens and their families from the country, where another extremely violent round of combats just began. Once this objective was achieved, the mandate of British forces was expanded and they were committed on the side of the central government against the various rebel factions (some of them supported by Libya) and also the bandit gangs which became a real scourge... It was during those operations that on 25 August 2000 a small patrol of twelve soldiers (eleven British and one Sierra Leonean), commanded by Major Alan Marshall, was surrounded by surprise and forced to surrender by a particularly vicious gang of outlaws, named "West Side Boys" or West Side Junglers (and there were also some other names those men gave themselves, but they cannot be quoted here for sake of decency), commanded by a self-proclaimed "Brigadier-General" Foday Kallay. The "West Side Boys" were a large gang, counting no less than 300 heavily armed fighters (probably even more). The fighters were - quite typically for this particular civil war - a mixture of men, women, boys and girls of all ages, from grown ups to children as young as 10. Although lacking regular military training, they were very well armed, with numerous FAL and AK-47 automatic rifles, GPMG machine guns, RPG-7 rocket launchers, 81 mm mortars and also some vehicle-mounted ZPU-2 14,5 mm heavy machine guns. Frequently drunk and almost

all the time high on drugs, the "West Side Boys" were completely unpredictable and greatly feared by local population, as they were always ready to wantonly torture, rape, mutilate and murder. They also abducted children to make them into soldiers and young girls to make them into "sex fighters" or "bush wives" - which actually meant sex slaves...During negotiations Foday Kallay and his second in command, Colonel "Cambodia", agreed to release five of hostages. After that further negotiations reached an impasse and the growing aggressivity of Kallay and news about the bad treatments inflicted on the Sierra Leonean hostage Musa Bangura made British leadership decide that it was time to attack...The operation of rescue of remaining seven took place on the 10 September 2000, in form of a helicopter raid of SAS and Paratroopers against the two strongholds of the gang. All hostages were rescued and at least 22 "West Side Boys" were killed in fighting, with others running for their lives. One SAS trooper, Private Bradley Tinnion, was killed by machine gun fire, another British soldier was badly wounded and eleven more suffered lesser injuries. One Sierra Leonean civilian was also accidentally killed during the gunfight. Foday Kallay was captured alive, as he surrendered without resistance - on another hand his wife "Mammy" Kallay (a woman greatly feared by all the prisoners and slaves of "West Side Boys" for her insane cruelty) went down with a gun in her hand, fighting to the end...The fate of "West Side Boys" greatly "encouraged" other armed gangs to disarm and disband, helping thus the pacification of the country. The civil war finally ended in 2002 - greatly helped by the pressure applied by the British army...2. The book. This book describes the events quite comprehensively and offers quite a lot of interesting illustrations. The narration is quite clear and mostly interesting. There are two colour plates, which are OK, although not really great - on another hand I learned from them something I didn't know, namely that you can shoot a GPMG from the shoulder (I guess the guy who did it was REALLY strong). The weaker points, for which I must take away one star are the writing style which is not always the best thing on the market and also the lack of some information. We are not told what happened to Foday Kallay and other "West Side Boys" captured in the raid. We are not told what happened to unfortunate Major Alan Marshall's career... British soldiers were assisted during this operation by a MI-24 gunship helicopter owned by Sierra Leonean army and piloted by a mercenary - but we are offered only the most limited information about it... There is also no pictures of captured weapons and equipments - although here I can understand that for some reason there may still be classified... Finally, the description of the fighting itself is surprisingly laconic, making me think that we may not be exactly told the WHOLE truth about this event - there are some publications in internet which suggest that in fact the "West Side Boys" offered much more resistance and suffered a much, much greater number of casualties...Still, all those remarks notwithstanding, I liked this book and I am glad

that I bought and read it. And I certainly hope that we will NEVER see such a collapse of state, followed unavoidably by the disappearance of law and public order, as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Congo (Zaire) saw in the 1990s... Thanks God for the solidity of our institutions and for the service of all those who keep the "Watch on Rhine", preventing the appearance of barbarians like "West Side Boys" in our Western societies...

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