

One Up

A Woman in Action With the S.A.S.

Ford, Sarah. *One Up. A Woman in Action With the S.A.S.* London, UK: Harper Collins Publishers; 1997. ISBN-10: 000638837X and ISBN-13: 978-00063883711997. 288 pages.

Review by COL (Ret) Warner "Rocky" D. Farr, MD, MPH

Why would a woman attempt to join the most secretive and dangerous unit of British Special Forces? And what would keep her there? Sarah Ford dealt with the rigorous physical and psychological training, including "simulated terrorist interrogations," to become qualified to serve. She then participated in strenuous missions and many relentless pressures from a truly man's world.



The term "one up" is the British military term for someone traveling alone on a surveillance mission. This book is the fast-paced, first-person account of a young woman's exceptional experiences of Special Operations Forces action and adventure, and it is the first written by a female member of a Special Air Service (SAS) unit. Her unit was the 14 Intelligence Company.

Sarah Ford's battle from a poor London flat to the women's Royal Navy and then to her undercover role in the

SAS in Northern Ireland is a singular journey and a good read. She paints herself as tough graduate of the London mean streets who used the military to escape the despair and poverty of the bottom of British class society. Not the first time we have seen that! It is a simple coming-of-age story until it veers away from the Royal Navy and into the shadowy world of the SAS. She often risks her life in the deadly tenements of Northern Ireland. This is a story on the Irish "Troubles" from a view you have not seen before.

A parade of books about the SAS has come to press lately. It all started with *Storm Command* by Sir Peter de la Billiere, about the Gulf War; and then Andy McNab's *Bravo Two Zero*, about Iraq. The British Ministry of Defense has been busy banning authors from military bases. A great side story to this book is that Sarah Ford's collaborator, Adrian Weale, a former British Army Intelligence officer, was drummed out of the posh London "Special Forces Club" for his actions. Highly recommended.



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