



# An Active Service: The Story of a Soldier's Life in the Grenadier Guards and SAS, 1935-1958

*Richard Dorney*

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"An Active Service" traces a young Sid Dowland from civilian life into the tough environment of the Guards Depot in the 1930's and then on to a Guards service Battalion in London and pre-war Egypt. The outbreak of war found Sid taking part in the retreat to Dunkirk and then service in North Africa before volunteering for the SAS. Captured after a disastrous raid in Sardinia, he escaped from a POW camp in Italy before making it back to England. The end of the war did not signal peace as the Guards were sent into action in Palestine and subsequently to the jungles of Malaya where Sid found that his SAS experience is in great demand. Sid later told his story to Richard Dorney, himself a Guardsman. "An Active Service" is a tale of adventure but will be of interest to anyone studying the Second World War or the early days of the SAS. Most of the historical information is previously unpublished and much of it is drawn from SAS operation reports in the National Archives and from the war diaries of the Grenadier Guards. The lively text is accompanied by many previously unseen photographs from private collections and is brought to life by a series of high quality and accurate drawings depicting the uniforms of the day. It is an enjoyable human story but is also an accurate account of military life during the war years which will be of interest to anyone researching or studying this period, particularly those with an interest in the early days of the SAS, the world's premier elite force.



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