



OUR SPECIAL FORCES: COMMANDOS AND THE SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT

History

During World War II, we needed a special fighting force to fight behind enemy lines. *Special Operations Australia*, its support organisation - *Z Special Unit* and *Independent Commando Companies* were set up to conduct strike operations and help local people fight the enemy.



Daring and dangerous



These 'special operations' were often extremely dangerous and included secret raids, intelligence gathering, guerilla warfare and recovery operations throughout the South East Asia Command and the South West Pacific Area.

It was found that using small, specially trained experts to fight the enemy was a really good idea. For example, in 1942, 250 men from the 2/2nd Independent Commando Company working behind enemy lines in Timor effectively tied down 30,000 of the enemy for 11 months.

A year later, a handful of men from Special Operations Australia secretly raided Singapore Harbour. In a single night the raiding party sank 39,000 tons of enemy shipping before escaping. Since then, Australian Special Forces have served with distinction in Borneo, South Vietnam and other places.



Special Forces today

Today, our Special Forces are made up of *Headquarters Special Operations, the Special Air Service Regiment, 1st Commando Regiment, 4th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (Commando) and 126 Commando Signals Squadron.*

In war or conflict they are involved in surveillance and intelligence gathering, they go on secret strike missions and rescue operations. They can also be involved in fighting terrorists.



Action skills

As well as special fighting skills, people in Special Forces often learn different languages and medical and electronic communication skills. They also have to learn about explosives (demolitions) and advanced weapon skills and are able to parachute, dive, use long-range vehicles and operate from submarines and fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

For more information about the Australian Defence Force check out the website at www.defence.gov.au