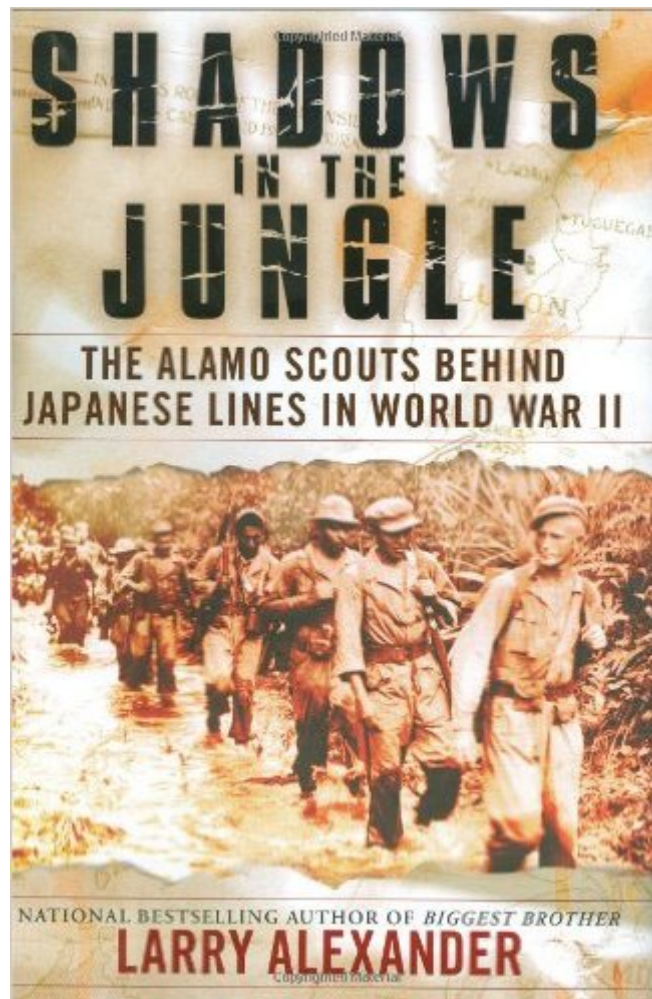


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Shadows In The Jungle: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines In World War II



Synopsis

Set on retaking the Philippines ever since his ignominious flight from the islands in 1942, General Douglas MacArthur needed a first-rate intelligence-gathering unit. Out of thousands, only 138 men were chosen: the best, toughest, and most fit men the army had to offer. Their task: silently slip onto Japanese-held islands, stalk through the thick jungles, and assess enemy locations, conditions, morale, and troop strength, all while remaining undetected. It was an impossible task, doomed to failure, but incredibly, the Alamo Scouts were a valuable success. Throughout the years 1944 and 1945, the Scouts performed a wide array of special operations, many of them classified for decades after the war. More than just a recon and intelligence outfit, the Scouts also conducted rescue missions to recover captured military and civilian prisoners from Japanese camps, organized and supplied guerrilla freedom fighters, and provided protection for General MacArthur himself. They completed at least 107 known missions against superior numbers of enemy troops, but not a single Scout was killed or captured. Writing with the narrative power usually found in a novel, Larry Alexander takes listeners in the footsteps of the men who made up the elite reconnaissance unit that served as General MacArthur's eyes and ears in the Pacific War. Drawing from personal interviews and testimonies from Scout veterans, Alexander weaves together the tales of the individual Scouts, who often spent weeks behind enemy lines to complete their missions. Now, more than sixty years after the war, the story of the Alamo Scouts has finally been told. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: NAL Caliber; 1st edition (February 3, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0451225937

ISBN-13: 978-0451225931

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.2 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (71 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

There is an exhilarating scene in John Dahl's 2005 wartime film, *The Great Raid* (Full Screen Edition) when soldiers swarm the Cabanatuan Japanese POW camp. Dressed as local farmers, the Alamo Scouts pretended to work in the cultivated fields next to the camp all the while reconnoitering its defenses. With this information, the main attack by Rangers and Filipino guerrillas set free 561 suffering men, many who had survived the Bataan Death March. Larry Alexander has chosen to build his rousing war narrative "Shadows In the Jungle" around those Alamo Scouts. Mr. Alexander's book tells us pacific war adventure stories straight from the 108 missions carried out by Gen. Kruegar's Alamo Scouts (named for the shrine in Kruegar's hometown of San Antonio, Texas). "They collected data on possible invasion beaches, tides and currents, troop numbers and locations, enemy morale, defensive positions, the availability of roads and fresh water, and other much-needed information. While their main mission was to collect intelligence and not fight the enemy, they were sometimes called upon to perform raider duties, such as destroying enemy supply depots, and rescuing civilian hostages and prisoners of war from the Japanese", states the author. Mr. Alexander is the talented author of *Biggest Brother : The Life of Major Dick Winters, The Man Who Led the Band of Brothers*.

Larry Alexander has given us an excellent introduction to the Alamo Scouts and some of their operations in the Southwest Pacific theater during WWII. The Alamo Scouts were the brainchild of Gen. Walter Kreuger of Alamo Force, later Sixth Army, who needed an elite force for reconnaissance, raiding and scouting ahead of conventional units. They were given the toughest training, even to the point that their unarmed combat instructor encouraged them to attack each other and even himself without warning as a way to quicken their reflexes! They had their choice of weapons (most chose the M1 Carbine) and equipment and got the best supplies and chow because they did the most dangerous work. They were an elite unit in every sense of the word. For the most part, the Alamo Scouts were used like the LRRPs in Vietnam wherein their forte was recon and observation far behind "enemy lines" or on the many scattered, Japanese-occupied islands in the SWP theater. The author admits that much of the documentary sources are lost forever since at the end of WWII, these men were simply demobilized and their unit disbanded. He relied heavily on interviews with former Scouts and their loved ones who opened up to him that the country may know of their service. Consequently, the book contains only a small sampling of the kind of missions these men performed and did so with a minimum loss to themselves. To be honest, I was not aware of their contribution to the Cabanatuan raid that freed hundreds of allied (mainly American) prisoners in the cruel Japanese prison camp near Cabanatuan, Philippines, who would probably

have been slaughtered by the Japanese if left in their clutches.

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