



Orde Wingate: A Man of Genius 1903-1944

Trevor Royle

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Winston Churchill described Wingate as a 'man of genius who might well have become a man of destiny'. Tragically, he died in an jungle aircraft crash in 1944.

Like his famous kinsman Lawrence of Arabia, Wingate was renowned for being an unorthodox soldier, inclined to reject received patterns of military thought. He was a fundamentalist Christian with a biblical certainty in himself and his mission.

He is best-remembered as the charismatic and abrasive leader of the Chindits. With the support of Wavell, he was responsible for a strategy of using independent groups deep behind enemy lines, supported only by air drops.

Wingate was responsible for leading the charge of 2,000 Ethiopians and the Sudan Defence Force into Italian-occupied Abyssinia. Remarkably, he defeated a 40,000 strong enemy that was supported by aircraft and artillery, which Wingate did not possess.

Despite his achievements, Wingate suffered from illness and depression and in Cairo attempted suicide. He was not universally liked: his romantic Zionism contrasted with the traditional British Arabist notions. He did, however, lead from the front and marched, ate and slept with his men. In this authoritative biography, Royle expertly brings to life a ruthless, complex, arrogant – but ultimately admirable – general.

Trevor Royle is an author and broadcaster specialising in the history of war and empire, with more than 30 books to his credit. His latest book is *The Road to Bosworth*, a study of the War of the Roses. He is a columnist for the *Sunday Herald* and is an Honorary Fellow at Edinburgh University's School of History. He was born in India in 1945.

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