



# **The Shelburne Escape Line: Secret Rescues of Allied Aviators by the French Underground, the British Royal Navy and London's MI-9**

*Reanne Hemingway-Douglass Hemingway-Douglass, Don Douglass*

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Six decades after the end of World War II, new stories about the conflict continue to emerge. One of these is the subject of this book. Written by an American, Réanne Hemingway-Douglass, and published in the UK by Pen & Sword, it has all the elements of a classic covert adventure tale. ??As the book explains, the Shelburne was one of the later escape lines that operated within Nazi-occupied Europe. It was established at the end of 1943 by two agents who worked for MI-9, the London-based military intelligence agency responsible for providing assistance to Allied servicemen stranded behind enemy lines. Working with the French Resistance, these agents arranged for groups of Allied airmen to be taken from "safe houses" in Paris to Brittany, where a Royal Navy motor gunboat picked them up from a secluded beach and delivered them back to England. Eight audacious evacuation operations were conducted between January and August, 1944, without the Shelburne Line ever being infiltrated by the Gestapo.??Aspects of the Shelburne story have been told previously in memoirs by several of the participants, including the late MP Airey Neave, who was an MI-9 operative. However, Hemingway-Douglass expands the story to include recollections of some of the local Breton people who were involved with the Line. The second half of the book comprises personal stories of airmen and other individuals who were affiliated with the Shelburne Line or were otherwise caught up in the war in France. ??A lifelong Francophile, Hemingway-Douglass took eight years to research and write the book. She describes it as a "labor of love that pays tribute to the heroism and courage of 'ordinary' people, while reinforcing the fact that war touches everybody."

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