

loll gracefully on water ...” and quotes (maybe somewhat romanticizing!) from Li T'ai-po's Song of the River (16):

When one has good wine,
A graceful boat,
And a maiden's love,
Why envy the immortal gods?

Worcester was quite modest about his contributions: in *The Junkman Smiles* he refers to “my recent contributions on sea-going junks, which have appeared in in scientific and consequently little read journals....” With this wonderful republication of his most significant and most comprehensive work on the water transport system of the Yangtze, there will be no danger of his contributions lapsing into obscurity.

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Stephen Wynn. *The Shetland 'Bus.'* *Transporting Secret Agents across the North Sea in WWII* Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword Military, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2021. viii+204 pp., illustrations, notes, appendices, index. UK £ 15.99, US \$39.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-52673-535-5.

Professional historians too often overlook work by amateurs or buffs, but to do so in the case of Stephen Wynn's *Shetland 'Bus,'* would be to miss out on a valuable resource. After the fall of Norway in 1940, Norwegian and British officials organized the Shetland Bus; a maritime infiltration/exfiltration route using fishing boats and eventually purpose-modified submarine chasers to ferry hundreds of men and tons of gear, guns, and cash to resistance fighters in Scandinavia. It is an epic of endurance, physical bravery, and nerve. Because guerrillas and saboteurs in Norway (coupled with the threat of a full-scale amphibious invasion) tied down a massive Nazi garrison force until 1945,

these efforts were some of the more strategically significant special operations of the war (62). Wynn – who has written or co-written several books on the Second World War – is to be commended for his detailed account of a captivating and understudied moment in the history of special operations; one that is still historiographically peripheral to stories of commando teams and direct-action raids against continental Europe. The core question in Wynn's study revolves around the nettlesome and prerequisite challenge of how to get raiders to the target by sea. As the book makes clear, that task was a dangerous gauntlet in and of itself.

Somewhat disappointingly, it should be noted up front, Wynn's book is not a narrative history of the Royal Norwegian Naval Special Unit – the Bus's official name (62). Rather, it is a caringly annotated dictionary of key Shetland Bus operations, personnel and ships with a short chronological history attached by way of contextual introduction. The heart of the book consists of three chapters filled with concise description and intriguing details about commandos, the raids they carried out, and the boats that got them to Norway. The exploits of Leif Larsen are particularly impressive (64, 122). By contrast, most of the chronological history in Wynn's book is devoted to ancillary questions about the Nazi invasion of Norway or the origins of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in the United Kingdom – subjects for which more substantive secondary sources already exist (38). The story of the Shetland Bus is more than enough fodder for a monograph. Much of this foregrounding material distracts from Wynn's real contribution.

Shetland is important, Wynn stresses, not only in its role as a staging ground for amphibious raids, but because of the geostrategic features and

history of the North Sea. New technologies (notably aircraft) made the islands valuable in the Second World War as a satellite for power projection (2). History plays a role as well. On an almost Braudelian timeline, the “Bus” grew out of longstanding connections between Norway and the Shetland Islands. Even today the islands are, in many respects, more Scandinavian than Scottish. Norwegians fleeing the Nazi occupation by sea took advantage of those links and in so doing, first illustrated the possibility of a Shetland route. Further excavating the “deep history” connections between Shetland and Norway, we find that the bus’s first command HQ was an erstwhile Laird’s mansion, built atop the foundations of a Viking longhouse (60).

For all its strengths, the omission of a reference section or a bibliography makes it difficult to fully evaluate Wynn’s work. It will also hamper attempts to build on his research. In its published form, Wynn’s is a reference book without sufficient references. For example, this reviewer is left wondering if Wynn consulted the oral history records at the Imperial War Museum (in which the SOE is well represented) or Alex Buchner’s recently (2020) translated account of the 1940 Battle of Narvik. If not, reviewing those sources would provide a ready-made avenue for future scholars and students to improve Wynn’s work. The lack of a map (or ideally, maps) is another limitation. A dizzying variety of coves, inlets, and fjords made this story possible. That same geography also makes it difficult to follow the ins-and-outs of the *Shetland ‘Bus’* without a reference.

That said, the book provides snapshots of a fascinating episode in the history of the North Atlantic world. Practitioners of amphibious warfare and students of history alike should take note. The writing is accessible and well-paced – though repetitive in patches.

Wynn’s formal appendices of ship and personnel information are a valuable tool as well. In all, Wynn’s readable and engaging account of his subject explores the intersections of transnational, Second World War, and special operations history. As a result, it should be of interest to a wide readership.

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