

# 18 HOURS

The true story of an SAS war hero by Sandra Lee

Publisher: Harper Collins (Australia) Pty Ltd ISBN: 0732282306

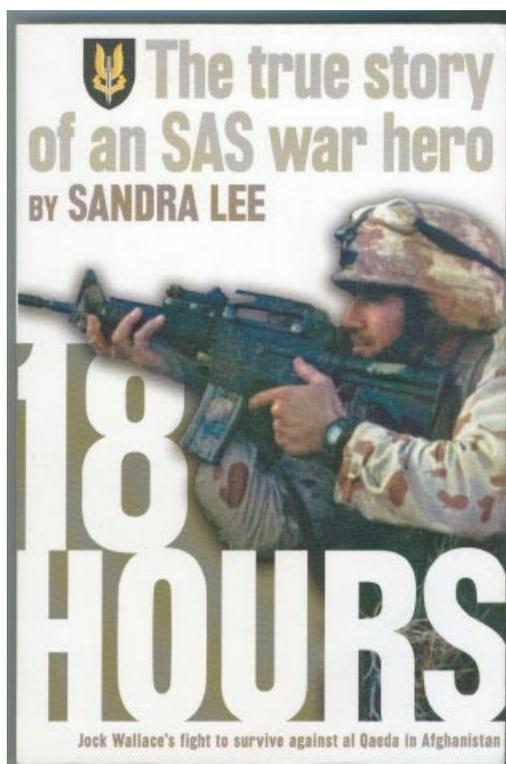
Publication Date: 31/05/2006; Recommended Price: \$32.95

Sandra Lee is an Australian journalist and author of two previous books: *Beyond Bad*, *The Life and Crimes of Katherine Knight* and *The Promise*, An Iraqi Mother's Desperate Flight to Freedom. Sandra is also the sister of an APPVA member, Gavin 'General' Lee.

'18 Hours' is the true story of Martin 'Jock' Wallace a signaller of The Royal Australian Corps of Signals (RASIGS) and a member of the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR). Jock and WO2 Clint, (SAS) were part of 'Operation Anaconda' the US-led military offensive to flush out al Qaeda and Taliban in the Shani Kot Valley, high in the Afghanistan mountains.

Sandra Lee captures the fearsome fighting experienced by the two Australians, Jock Wallace and WO2 Clint, who were part of the 80 member, US, 10th Mountain Division led operation against the vastly superior numbered enemy. For these soldiers, 'Operation Anaconda' started the moment the Chinook helicopters touched down. Jock was to be part of some of the fiercest fighting al Qaeda and the Taliban could muster it rain downed hell on these men for the next '18 hours'.

The writing style of Ms Lee made eighteen hours a fantastic read. I found the book impossible to put down. Ms Lee has captured the feel and true life account of Jock Wallace's part in Operation Anaconda, which has now become part of Australian military history. Jock Wallace, the country boy



from Tamworth was to be honoured for his actions by being awarded the nations third highest military honour, The Medal of Gallantry.

During that eighteen hours Jock risked his life in rescuing the injured. Jock was able to convey in a professional manner that Operation Anaconda was turning into a real 'shit-fight'. With Jock's accurate radio reports to his SAS Commanding Officer, Lt Col Rowan Tink that things were becoming serious, Jock was able to call in air support for the men stuck in 'Hell's Halfpipe' as the position was to later become known. After 18 hour's of fierce fighting the soldiers were able to make it out of 'Hell's Halfpike' in the Shani Kot Valley. 'Swift and Sure' the motto of The Royal Australian Corps of Signals and 'Who Dares Win' the motto of the

Australian Special Air Service, Jock was able to draw on these mottos, to ensure that he was able to make it out alive. Jock was not going to die on foreign soil, not at the hands of al Qaeda.

Jock is the first signaller since Vietnam to be awarded the Medal of Gallantry. Jock has also brought enormous pride to the Signals Corps, and in 2003 the Signal Corps named an award in honour of the training sergeant. The Jock Wallace Award for Communications.

Review by Gordon Traill  
Iraq Veteran