

Edinburgh auction of rare whisky with Second World War connections

VERY RARE SPRINGBANK BOTTLE COMMEMORATING WAR HEROES AT BONHAMS WHISKY SALE

A very rare bottle of Springbank, 1993, privately bottled in 2012 to mark the 70th anniversary of the Special Boat Service's contribution to Operation Chariot in 1942, is to be sold at Bonhams whisky sale in Edinburgh this week on 2 October 2013.

Operation Chariot was the code name of the Commando raid on St Nazaire, a German naval base on the Loire, and was an early test for the newly formed Special Boat Service (SBS).

SBS was inspired by the work of Roger 'Jumbo' Courtney a Commando officer who developed the idea while servicing at the Combined Training Centre in Inverary in 1940. Meeting resistance to his project from Naval high command, Courtney paddled out to a naval vessel anchored in the Clyde, boarded it undetected under the cover of darkness, scribbled a message on the door of the captain's cabin, and stole a deck gun cover which he then presented to a group of senior naval officers meeting in a nearby hotel. They were suitably impressed and Courtney got permission to go ahead.

Operation Chariot has been described as the greatest raid of all time and, despite the heavy casualties, was certainly among the most successful Commando raids of WWII.

Only 200 bottles of the whisky were produced. The one for sale is numbered 74 and is estimated at £1,500-2,000.

Bonhams whisky specialist in Edinburgh, Martin Green, said:-

"This story has everything – a first class whisky to mark a major contribution to the war effort of a very brave part of our armed services which can trace its origins directly back here to Scotland."