



Military Despatches

Vol 64 October 2022

They ruled the sky

The aircraft with the most aerial victories

Ahead of its time

The Fallschirmjäger FG42 assault rifle

'Mad Jack'

John Churchill, World War II legend



EgyptAir Flight 648

The Egyptian Special Forces raid that went wrong

For the military enthusiast



Click on any video below to view

Military Despatches

Paratrooper Wings Quiz

Paratrooper Wings Quiz

Most military paratroopers are awarded their jump wings after they have qualified.

In this quiz we show you 15 different wings and you tell us where they are from.

Military Despatches

Military Firearms Quiz

Military Firearms Quiz

This quiz is all about military firearms. We show you 15 firearms, you tell us what they are.

Military Despatches

Army Speak 101

The SADF had their own language. A mixture of English, Afrikaans, slang and techno-speak that few outside the military could hope to understand.

Most armies around the world also had their own slang terms. In this video we look at some of them.

Military Despatches

Army Speak 101

Military slang from the SADF and around the world

Military Despatches

New videos each week

We will be uploading new videos to our YouTube channel each week.

So remember to bookmark the channel and keep an eye out for new content.

Military Despatches

Elite Military Units Quiz

Elite Military Units Quiz

Most military forces have an elite unit or regiment or a special forces component.

In this quiz we show you 15 and you tell us who they are and where they are from.

Military Despatches

Who said that?

Famous military quotes quiz

Who said that?

Throughout history military leaders and politicians have had some interesting things to say about war.

We give you 15 quotes, you tell us who made them.



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Please remember to subscribe to our channel.

Feel free to leave a comment, and share this video.



Editor's Sitrep

Blink once or twice and it's going to be Christmas. This is yet another year that seems to have flown by.

So far, 2022 has been an interesting year, which is not always a good thing. There is a Chinese curse that says, "May you live in interesting times." And let's face it - 2022 has been interesting.

By the time you read this there will be a king on the throne of England. King Charles III becomes the first king of England in 70 years. I read somewhere that only one in ten people currently alive was born before Elizabeth II became queen.

In February this year we predicted that Russia could invade the Ukraine. A few days after the February edition of Military Despatches came out, Russia did indeed invade Ukraine.

Many people, and I was one of them, thought that it would be over very quickly. After all, the Russian war machine was just too big and strong for Ukraine to hold out for long. We were all wrong.

Seven months later it looks as if the Russians are the ones on the back foot. They have suffered unacceptable losses in both men

and equipment and are currently losing territory that they had taken at the start of the invasion.

On 21 September a troop mobilization in Russia was announced by President Vladimir Putin during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with the signing of the corresponding decree No. 647. The decision was made shortly after the successful Ukrainian counter-offensive in Kharkiv Oblast and a day after the announcement of referendums on the accession of the DPR, LPR, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts.

The worrying factor is that Putin could turn to his nuclear arsenal if backed into a corner. Interesting times indeed.

Back here in the good old RSA increasing prices and load shedding is hitting the country hard. And as much as everyone talks about solutions to the problem, it doesn't look very promising. Interesting times for sure.

Until next month, stay safe and stay healthy.

Matt

Hipe! media

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INCOMING

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Have your say. Want to leave a compliment or a criticism? Request that we do an article about a particular subject, or point out an error that we may have made. Ask a military related question. Then this is the section to do it. Send an e-mail to matt@hipe.co.za and we will try our best to publish it. Please mark your e-mail with 'Incoming' in the subject line.

Editor's Note

A number of letters that were sent to us were forwarded by Lt Colonel Robbie Roberts (Ret).

Robbie is the President of the South African Signals Association.

Every month Robbie forwards Military Despatches to a lot of people. They in turn, respond to him.

So a huge thank you to Robbie, a true officer and a gentleman.

Matt

Hi Matt

Another excellent read. I especially, as you can imagine, enjoyed the stories about chaplains.

Many blessings
Tony

Thanks Padre Tony, glad you enjoyed it. In the December issue I will be doing an article specifically about military chaplains.

Matt

Hi Matt

Thanks so much for all of the hard work that you put into your excellent Military Despatches magazine. I cannot imagine the

amount of time and effort goes into this work of art and I really look forward to receiving it when Robbie Roberts passes it on to us.

I was roped in to serve on the Manco of the Signals Association by Robbie about two years ago when I stumbled onto their webpage.

I know that I will be so sorry if you had to stop putting this excellent publication together. I do pass it on to folks who also served.

Those of us who did National service and who served are a dying breed.

Had I been around, I would love to have won the Dad's Army series and the 1971 movie. Have you still got the set? I would be happy to buy it from you

Any way hang in there and keep up the great work

All the best
Maurice

Thanks Maurice, I appreciate that. Unfortunately I have already given the box set of 'Dad's Army' to a friend of mine.

What I can do, however, is put the complete collection, including the movie, on a memory stick and get it to Robbie. You can then arrange to pick it up



from him. And there is no cost involved.

Matt

Good Day Robbie

Just to let you know I enjoy the Military Despatches very much and also like military history. I acknowledge all the work Matt is doing and like to thank him for it.

Kind Regards
F.M. de Beer

Thank you sir. I am glad that you enjoy reading the magazine.

Matt

Dear Matt,

I am one of the many readers of your excellent and most interesting publication Military Despatches. I am also one of those who never ever bothered to tell you! My apologies.

We read things, usually find them interesting, often inspiring and we then move on to something else and just forget about the author/editor. That's bad. Unfortunately, I think most people operate in that same way.

Might it help if you established a "Letters/Correspond-

ence Page"? That would at least alert readers to the fact that there is a mechanism for airing views, opinions or whatever about something they've just read.

I read a number of different journals and magazine in any given month and those that have such pages - often called Feedback - always have letters from readers. Perhaps you could try that?

But most of all don't stop producing Military Despatches!

Best regards,
Brian Austin
UK

Thank you Dr. Austin. I take it as a huge compliment coming from a noted scholar and author such as yourself.

As you can see, I have taken your advice and have now started a monthly 'Letters to the Editor page'.

Matt

Dear Robbie,
Thank you and a special

thanks to Matt Tennyson. This definitely one of the finest publications within the Mil Vet environment.

Kind regards,
Maj Gen (Ret) Lawrence R. Smith
Chairman of the CMVO

Thank you sir. Your comments are much appreciated.

Matt

Hi Matt

Can you tell me what is the difference between the AK-47 and the AKM, or are they the same weapon?

Mark Kelly

Hi Mark

The AKM (Avtomat Kaláshnikova modernizirovan-nyj) is a modernized version of the AK-47 (Avtomat Kaláshniko-va) developed in the 1950's.

It was meant as a product improved version of the famous Kalashnikov design while being far more cost effective to

produce at the same time.

The AKM is a gas operated assault rifle using a short stroke gas piston and rotating bolt.

The main difference between AK-47 and AKM is the use of stamped sheet metal for the receiver.

This makes the AKM both lighter and less costly to produce than the machined receiver of the AK-47.

An easy method to spot the difference between the two is to look at the tip of the barrel. The AKM (b) has a muzzle break, while the AK-47 (a) does not.

I trust that his answers your question.

Matt



AK-47



AKM

The Sunday Breakfast Zone



Catch Military Despatches editor Matt Tennyson every Sunday morning from 09h00 to 12h00 on the 'Sunday Breakfast Zone' on Zone Radio. Bringing you the best music of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

On Sunday morning at 09h30 you can catch the Retro Top 20 and listen to the Top 20 hit singles on the South African charts for a particular week or even a particular year.

[Click here to listen live](#)

10 double medal recipients

This month we look at the highest award for valour for three different countries - South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States. These medals are the Honoris Crux (South Africa), the Victoria Cross (United Kingdom), and the Medal of Honour (United States). More specifically, we're looking at those that won these medals not once, but twice.

Nearly every military in the world has awards for valour. Often it takes an exceptional feat of bravery to be awarded one of these decorations.

For example, the Greek Medal for Gallantry, which was established in 1974, has never been conferred.

The highest award for valour in the old South Africa Defence Force (SADF) was the Honoris Crux.

There were four different classes of Honoris Crux - the Honoris Crux (awarded to 201 recipients), the Honoris Crux Silver (awarded 27 times), the Honoris Crux Gold (awarded six times), and the Honoris Crux Diamond (never awarded).

The United Kingdom's Victoria Cross is their highest award for Valour. First awarded on 26 June 1857 it has been conferred 1,357 times. Only three people have been awarded the Victoria Cross twice.

The Medal of Honour is the United States highest award for valour. There are three different types of Medal of Honour - US Army, US Navy (including the US Marine Corp and US Coast Guard), US Air Force (including the US Space Force).

The Medal of Honour has

been awarded on 3,525 occasions. Nineteen service members have been awarded the Medal of Honour twice.

Five "double recipients" were awarded both the Army's and Navy's Medal of Honour for the same action, with all five of these occurrences taking place during World War I.

In this article we look at ten people that have won their countries highest award for valour on two occasions. They are in alphabetical order.



Noel Chavasse (UK)

Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, VC & Bar, MC was a British medical doctor, Olympic athlete, and British Army officer from the Chavasse family.

He was born on 9 Novem-

ber 1884 in Oxford, Britain. In 1907, Noel graduated with First-class honours from Trinity College, Oxford.

In early 1913, after discussions with some of his fellow doctors, Chavasse applied for and was accepted by the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC); he was commissioned as a lieutenant on 2 June.

During the First World War, Chavasse was a captain with the Royal Army Medical Corps, British Army attached to the 1/10th (Scottish) Battalion of the King's (Liverpool Regiment), part of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division.

Chavasse was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Hooge, Belgium in June 1915, although the award was not gazetted until 14 January 1916. He was promoted captain on 1 April 1915; on 30 November 1915 that year he was Mentioned in Despatches.

The Battle of Guillemont saw acts of heroism by Chavasse, the only man to be awarded the Victoria Cross twice during the First World War.

In 1916, he was hit by shell splinters while rescuing men in no-man's land. It is said he got as close as 25 yards to the German line, where he found three men and continued throughout

the night under a constant rain of sniper bullets and bombing.

He performed similar heroics in the early stages of the offensive at Passchendaele in August 1917 to gain a second VC and become the most highly decorated British officer of the First World War. Although operated upon, he was to die of his wounds two days later in 1917. He was 32.



Louis Cukela (USA)

Louis Cukela was born on 1 May 1888 in the Dalmatian city of Split, today's Croatia.

He was educated in the grade schools of Split, then attended the Merchant Academy and later, the Royal Gymnasium, both for two year courses.

In 1913, Cukela emigrated to the United States and he and his brother settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota; his father and three sisters remained in Austria-Hungary.

On September 21, 1914, he enlisted in the United States Army. He was serving as a corporal in Company H, 13th In-

fantry Regiment when he was honourably discharged on 12 June 1916.

Seven months later, on 31 January 1917, with World War I raging in Europe and prior to the United States entry into the war, Cukela enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He became a member of the 66th Company, 1st Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment.

He was deployed to France in 1918 and fought in all the engagements in which the 5th Marines participated, from Belleau Wood to the Meuse River Crossing.

He was awarded the Medal of Honour by both the Army and the Navy for the same action on the morning of 18 July 1918, near Villiers-Cotterets, France, during the Battle of Soissons.

The 66th Company, 5th Marines, in which Cukela was then a gunnery sergeant, was advancing through the Forest de Retz when it was held up by an enemy strong point.

Despite the warnings of his men, the gunnery sergeant crawled out from the flank and advanced alone towards the German lines.

Getting beyond the strong point despite heavy fire, Cukela captured one gun by bayoneting its crew. Picking up their hand grenades, he then demolished the remaining portion of the strong point from the shelter of a nearby gun pit. He took four prisoners and captured two undamaged machine guns.

He was also awarded the Silver Star, as well as decorations

from France, Italy, and Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

He retired from the US Marine Corps on 30 June 1940 with the rank of major. He died on 19 March 1956 at the age of 67.



Thomas Custer (USA)

Thomas Ward Custer was born on 15 March 1845 in New Rumley, Ohio.

He enlisted in the Union Army, in September 1861, at age 16, and served in the early campaigns of the Civil War as a private in the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

He became the first person to be awarded the Medal of Honour twice. Both actions that earned Custer the Medal of Honour involved capturing Confederate regimental flags (2nd North Carolina Cavalry flag at Namozine Church on April 3, 1865, and again at Sailor's Creek on April 6, 1865).

Custer earned his first Medal of Honour for actions during the Battle of Namozine Church on 3 April 1865. Among Union

forces charging Confederate barricades, Custer had his horse leap a barricade while coming under fire.

The Confederates fell back in confusion before him, while he saw a colour bearer. Racing forward he seized the flag of the Second North Carolina cavalry from the bearer and commanded those around him to surrender.

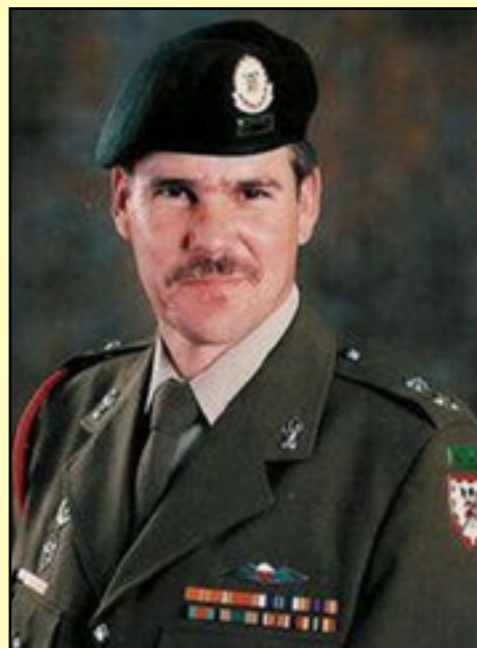
He took three officers and eleven enlisted men as prisoner, took them back behind the federal column, and requisitioned another horse, as his had been shot during the charge.

During the Battle of Sailor's Creek on 6 April 1865, Custer was riding alongside Colonel Charles E. Capehart when the command to charge was given.

He raced his horse toward the enemy barricades through a line of rifle fire, then leapt the barricade to be surrounded by the enemy. He discharged his pistol to both sides, scattering the enemy.

He noticed Confederates attempting to make a new battleline and saw the colour bearer they were rallying to and Custer charged the bearer, capturing the flag.

He died on 25 June 1876 at the Battle of Little Bighorn when he was 31. His younger brother, Boston Custer, and his elder brother, George Armstrong Custer, died in the same battle. The battle would also come to be known as 'Custer's Last Stand'.



André Diedericks (SA)

André (Diedies) Diedericks, HCS, HC, SM, MMM, was born in Pretoria on 7 December 1955.

He reported for compulsory National Military Service on 7 January 1974 and within a few weeks he volunteered for Special Forces selection, a course that he would successfully complete.

In 1975 during Ops Savannah and as a member of 1 Reconnaissance Commando, Diedies was awarded the Honoris Crux.

As a Recce Operator he pioneered and developed the concept of "small team reconnaissance" within the South African Special Forces.

In 1985, with the rank of major at 5 Reconnaissance Regiment, he was awarded the Honoris Crux Silver.

In 1992, with the rank of commandant, he became the Commanding Officer of 21 South African Infantry Battalion in Lenz.

In 1994, with the rank of colonel, he became the Commanding Officer of 452 Parachute Battal-

ion, the new designation given to 1 Reconnaissance Regiment in Durban.

Suffering from terminal cancer, Diedies passed away on 7 May 2005. He was 49 years old.



John J. Kelly (USA)

John Joseph Kelly was born on 24 June 1898 in Chicago, Illinois.

He enlisted as a private in the United States Marine Corps on 15 May 1917, in Port Royal, South Carolina. On 5 September 1917, he joined the 7th Company, 6th Regiment, at Quantico, Virginia, and on 12 September 1917, he was transferred to the 78th Company.

On 19 January 1918, his regiment embarked from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on the USS Henderson and arrived at St. Nazaire, France on 5 February 1918.

For his actions at the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, France, on 13 October 1918, he was awarded both the Army and Navy Medal of Honour.

His Army citation read, "Pri-

vate Kelly ran through our own barrage 100 yards in advance of the front line and attacked an enemy machine gun nest, killing the gunner with a grenade, shooting another member of the crew with his pistol, and returning through the barrage with eight prisoners."

His citation for the Navy Medal of Honour read along similar lines.

He ended World War I with two Medals of Honour, the Silver Star, Purple Heart, as well as medals from France and Italy.

He died in Chicago on 20 November 1957 at the age of 59.



Matej Kocak (USA)

Matej Kocak was born in Egbell, Kingdom of Hungary (today Gbely, Slovakia), on 3 December 1882. He emigrated to the United States in 1906, and on 16 October 1907, enlisted in the Marine Corps in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and began his 11-year Marine Corps career at Marine Barracks, League Island, Pennsylvania.

He was discharged on 16 Oc-

tober 1911 at the expiration of his first enlistment but re-enlisted in New York City on 26 December 1911, and was assigned to the Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, New York, for duty.

During his second enlistment, he served with the U.S. Army at Vera Cruz, Mexico, from 30 April to 23 November 1914. His enlistment ended on 25 December 1915, at Marine Barracks, New York, but he again re-enlisted and transferred to Marine Barracks, Naval Station, New Orleans, Louisiana.

On 23 January 1918, he joined the 66th Company, 5th Regiment, and on 1 June 1918, was promoted to sergeant.

He then took part in the attack against the enemy in Bois De Belleau Bouresches sector northwest of Chateau Thierry, France.

On 18 July 1918, he participated in the attack at Villers Cotteret Wood south of Soissons, France, and it was on this day he performed the act of heroism for which he was posthumously awarded both the Army and Navy Medal of Honour.

On 4 October 1918 he took part in the Allied drive against the enemy in the Argonne Forest between the Moselle and Forest of Argonne in the vicinity of Blanchmont in Champagne, France. He was killed in action on the same day.

He died at the age of 35, 42 days before the end of World War I. Since the end of World War I two Medals of Honour may no longer be given for a single incident.



Arthur Martin-Leake (UK)

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Martin-Leake, VC & Bar, VD, FRCS was a British physician, officer in the Royal Army Medical Corps and a double recipient of the Victoria Cross (VC). He was born on 4 April 1874 in Standon, Hertfordshire, England.

He was educated at Westminster School before studying medicine at University College Hospital, qualifying in 1893. He was employed at Hemel Hempstead District Hospital before enlisting in the 42nd (Hertfordshire) Company, Imperial Yeomanry in 1899 to serve in the Boer War.

After his year of service as a trooper in the Imperial Yeomanry was completed, Martin-Leake stayed on in South Africa as a civil surgeon. He then joined the South African Constabulary until he was forced to return home due to his wounds.

He was 27 years old and a surgeon captain in the South African Constabulary attached to the 5th Field Ambulance during the

Second Boer War on 8 February 1902, at Vlakfontein, when he was awarded his first VC.

During the action at Vlakfontein, on the 8th February, 1902, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake went up to a wounded man, and attended to him under a heavy fire from about 40 Boers at 100 yards range.

He then went to the assistance of a wounded Officer, and, whilst trying to place him in a comfortable position, was shot three times, but would not give in till he rolled over thoroughly exhausted.

All the eight men at this point were wounded, and while they were lying on the Veldt, Surgeon-Captain Martin-Leake refused water till every one else had been served.

On the outbreak of the First World War, Martin-Leake returned to service as a lieutenant with the 5th Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps, on the Western Front.

He was awarded his second VC, aged 40, during the period 29 October to 8 November 1914 near Zonnebeke, Belgium, whilst serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps, British Army.

His award citation reads: *Lieutenant Arthur Martin Leake, Royal Army Medical Corps, who was awarded the Victoria Cross on 13th May, 1902, is granted a Clasp for conspicuous bravery in the present campaign: - For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty throughout the campaign, especially during the period 29th*

October to 8th November, 1914, near Zonnebeke, in rescuing, whilst exposed to constant fire, a large number of the wounded who were lying close to the enemy's trenches.

He was promoted captain in March 1915, major in November the same year, and in April 1917 took command of 46th Field Ambulance at the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He died on 22 June 1953, aged 79.



John H. Pruitt (USA)

John Henry Pruitt was born on 4 October 1896, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He entered the United States Marine Corps from Phoenix, Arizona, in May 1917.

As a corporal in the Marine Corps, Pruitt attacked and captured two enemy machine guns, and later captured forty of the enemy.

The U.S. Army and later the U.S. Navy awarded him the Medal of Honour for his bravery on 3 October 1918, at the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, France.

The next day, his 22nd birthday, he was killed by shell-fire.

His Army citation reads: *Pruitt single-handedly attacked two machine guns, capturing them and killing two of the enemy. He then captured 40 prisoners in a dugout nearby. This gallant Marine was killed soon afterward by shellfire while he was sniping at the enemy.*

His Navy citation reads: *For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy at Blanc Mont Ridge, France, 3 October 1918. Corporal Pruitt single-handedly attacked two machine-guns, capturing them and killing two of the enemy. He then captured 40 prisoners in a dug-out nearby. This gallant soldier was killed soon afterward by shell-fire while he was sniping the enemy.*



Charles Upham (UK)

Charles Hazlitt Upham, VC & Bar was a New Zealand soldier who was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) twice during

World War II.

In September 1939, Upham enlisted in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF) at the age of 30, and was posted to the 20th Canterbury-Otago Battalion, part of the New Zealand 2nd Division.

Although he already had five years experience in the New Zealand Army Territorial Force, in which he held the rank of sergeant, he signed on as a private.

He was soon promoted to temporary lance corporal, but initially declined a place in an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). In December, he was promoted to sergeant and a week later sailed for Egypt. In July 1940, he was finally persuaded to join an OCTU.

In March 1941, Upham's battalion left for Greece and then withdrew to Crete, and it was here that he was wounded in the action, from 22 to 30 May 1941, that gained him his first VC. When informed of the award, his first response was "It's meant for the men."

Upham was evacuated to Egypt, now promoted to captain. He received a Bar to his VC for his actions in July 1942, before and during the First Battle of El Alamein.

He was wounded in Italy and taken prisoner of war. After numerous escape attempts he was sent to the infamous Colditz Castle where he remained until the end of the war.

Both the previous recipients of the VC and bar, Noel Chavasse and Arthur Martin-Leake, had been doctors. so Upham re-

mains the only fighting soldier to have been decorated with the VC and Bar.

He died on 22 November 1994, aged 86, surrounded by his wife and daughters.



Arthur Walker (SA)

Major Arthur Walker HCG and Bar, SM was a South African Air Force helicopter pilot who was twice awarded the Honoris Crux Gold decoration during the South African Border War.

He was born on 10 February 1953 in Johannesburg. His grandfather, Arthur Walker I, founded Walkerville, Gauteng and his father, Arthur Walker II, was a Springbok golfer.

He obtained his pilot's wings in 1977 and flew for 7 Squadron, Rhodesian Air Force, before re-joining the South African Air Force in 1980.

The Honoris Crux Gold was only awarded six times, and two of these were awarded to Arthur Walker.

While flying Alouette III helicopters based at AFB Ondang-

wa in 1981 he was awarded the Honoris Crux Gold for risking his life during a night operation in Angola, by turning on the lights of his helicopter to draw enemy fire away from another helicopter.

In December 1981 he was cited for landing in enemy territory to search for and rescue the crew of a helicopter that had been shot down. He was awarded a bar to his Honoris Crux Gold.

There was discontent amongst air force officers at Walker being awarded the Bar to the Honoris Crux Gold instead of the Honoris Crux Diamond.

The Honoris Crux Diamond had never been awarded and there was rumoured opposition in defence headquarters to awarding this, the highest South African bravery award, to an English speaking officer.

He was later awarded the Southern Cross Medal for his work in developing Koevoet, a paramilitary-trained police counter insurgency unit in South West Africa.

After serving in the South African Air Force, Walker joined Executive Outcomes and flew Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters in Angola and Sierra Leone in support of Executive Outcomes operations.

Walker died of cancer on 28 March 2016 at the age of 63.

And there we have it - 10 men that were awarded their country's highest medal for bravery not once, but twice.

EgyptAir Flight 648

In the first of a new series we take a look at classic Special Forces operations. First up we look at Egypt's Task Force 777 and their disastrous operation against a hijacked aircraft.

- **Date:** 23–24 November 1985
- **Location:** Luqa Airport, Luqa, Malta
- **Unit involved:** Task Force 777 (Egypt)

Task Force 777, also known as Unit 777, is an Egyptian military counter-terrorism and special operations unit.

It was created in 1978 by the government of Anwar Sadat in response to concerns of increased terrorist activity following the expulsion of Soviet military advisors from the country by Sadat and his efforts to achieve peace with Israel.

Creation of 777

In 1978, Egyptian Army Special Forces were dispatched to Larnaca International Airport, Larnaca, Cyprus in response to the hijacking of a Cyprus Air passenger aircraft by operatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The operation was organized hastily, and Egyptian authorities failed to notify Cyprus of the arrival of the unit.

As the Egyptian commandos approached the plane on the tarmac, they were mistaken by the Cyprus security forces as terrorist reinforcements.

Cypriot security forces opened fire on the approaching Egyptian SF members, who were without

nearby cover and conspicuous in desert camouflage clothing. The fire-fight cost the lives of 15 members of the 79 members of the Egyptian commando force sent, however there were no reported Cypriot fatalities.

The aftermath of the failed night-time incident and the need of a professional counter-terrorism unit in Egypt resulted in the creation of Unit 777.

Hijacking of EgyptAir 648

On 23 November 1985, Flight 648 took off at 8 pm on its Athens-to-Cairo route. Ten minutes after take off, three Palestinian members of Abu Nidal hijacked the aircraft, the same group also responsible for the hijacking of Pan Am Flight 73 a year later.

The terrorists, declaring themselves the Egypt's Revolution over the intercom, were heavily armed with guns and grenades.

The terrorist's leader, Salem Chakore, proceeded to check all passports while Omar Rezaq went to the cockpit to change the aircraft's course.

At the same time, Chakore had the European, Australian, Israeli and American passengers sit in the front of the aircraft while the rest, including the Greeks and

Egyptians were sent to the back. Chakore saw an Australian passenger, Tony Lyons (aged 46), holding a camera. Believing Lyons had taken a picture of him, Chakore took the camera and ripped the film out before slamming the camera into the wall.

Chakore came up to an Egyptian Security Service agent, Methad Mustafa Kamal, who reached into his coat, as if to pull out his passport.

Instead, he withdrew a handgun and opened fire, killing Chakore and engaged in a shoot-out with the other hijacker, Bou Said Nar Al-din



Task Force 777 logo

Mohammed (Nar Al-Din Bou Said), 19 shots were fired until Kamal was wounded by Rezaq, along with flight attendants.

In the exchange of fire the fuselage was punctured, causing a rapid depressurisation. The aircraft was forced to descend to 4,300 metres to allow the crew and passengers to breathe, with the oxygen masks deploying.

Libya was the original destination of the hijackers, but due to a lack of fuel, damage from the shoot-out and negative publicity, Malta was chosen as a more suitable option.

While approaching Malta the aircraft was running dangerously low on fuel, experiencing serious pressurisation problems and carrying wounded passengers.

However, Maltese authorities did not give permission for the aircraft to land; the Maltese government had previously refused permission to other hijacked aircraft, including on 23 September 1982 when an Alitalia aircraft was hijacked on its way to Italy.

The Egypt Air 648 hijackers

insisted, and forced the pilots, Hani Galal and Imad Mounib, to land at Luqa Airport.

As a last-ditch attempt to stop the landing, the runway lights were switched off, but the pilot managed to land the damaged aircraft safely.

Standoff

At first, Maltese authorities were optimistic they could solve the crisis. Malta had good relations with the Arab world, and 12 years earlier had successfully resolved a potentially more serious situation when a KLM Boeing 747 landed there under similar circumstances (KLM Flight 861).

The Maltese Prime Minister, Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, rushed to the airport's control tower and assumed responsibility for the negotiations.

The remaining two hijackers allowed medics and engineers to examine the injured and the damage to the plane, respectively.

The medics confirmed that the lead hijacker, Salem Chakore, was dead while the sky marshal that killed him, Kamal, was still alive.

In a rage, Omar Rezaq, who assumed command of the hijacking, shot Kamal again as he was lead off the plane. Somehow, Kamal survived.

The doctor told Rezaq the sky marshal was dead and was able to get him off the plane.

Aided by an interpreter, Bonnici refused to refuel the aircraft, or to withdraw Maltese armed forces which had surrounded the plane, until all passengers were released.

16 Filipino and 16 Egyptian

passengers and two injured flight attendants were allowed off the plane. The hijackers then started shooting hostages, starting with Tamar Artzi, an Israeli woman, whom they shot in the head and back. Artzi survived her wounds.

Assuming command of the hijacking, Rezaq threatened to kill a passenger every 15 minutes until his demands were met.

His next victim was Nitzan Mendelson, another Israeli woman, who died a week later after being declared brain dead. Mendelson realized what was to happen so she resisted. Rezaq grabbed her by the hair and lead her out onto the staircase before shooting her.

While tossing Mendelson's body down the stairs, he noticed Artzi move. He shot her through the back from the top of the stairs. Again, Artzi survived her wounds. He then targeted three Americans, having their hands tied behind them.

After the shooting of Mendelson, Maltese soldiers surrounded the plane. Spotting them from the cockpit window, Rezaq demanded that they withdraw the soldiers.

Negotiators told him he had no choice but to surrender. Rezaq was informed that if the plane left Malta, American jets based in Italy would intercept and shoot down the plane. This enraged Rezaq.

Over the intercom, Rezaq had a flight attendant call forward Patrick Scott Baker (aged 28), an American fisherman-biologist on vacation.

Rezaq stepped back when Baker locked eyes with him as

he came forward. Tony Lyons, an Australian passenger who could see the stairs platform from his window seat later stated that he saw that Rezaq had to raise his gun in order to shoot Baker, who was about 6'5" tall.

The bullet grazed Baker's skull after he moved it at the last second but played dead. Rezaq pushed his body down the steps. Baker waited a few minutes before making a run for it, hands still tied behind his back.

Fifteen minutes later, Rezaq called for Scarlett Marie Rogenkamp (aged 38), a U.S. Air Force civilian employee. Making her kneel on the staircase, Rezaq shot her in the back of the head, killing her instantly. Her body was later taken to a hospital, where she was identified by Baker.

Jackie Nink Pflug (aged 30) wasn't shot until the next morning. Of the five passengers shot, Artzi, Baker and Pflug survived; Mendelson died in a Maltese hospital a week after the hijacking after being declared brain dead.

For five hours, Pflug drifted in and out of consciousness until an airport grounds crew retrieved her body on its way to the morgue. They discovered she was still alive and rushed her to the nearby hospital.

France, the UK and the United States all offered to send anti-hijack forces. Bonnici was under heavy pressure from both the hijackers and from the United States and Egypt, whose ambassadors were at the airport.

The non-aligned Maltese government feared that the Americans or the Israelis would arrive and take control of the area,

as the U.S. Naval Air Station Sigonella was only 20 minutes away.

A U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules with an aeromedical evacuation team from Rhein-Main Air Base (2nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron) near Frankfurt, Germany, and rapid-deploying surgical teams from Wiesbaden Air Force Medical Centre were on standby at the U.S. Navy Hospital at Naples.

When the U.S. told Maltese authorities that Egypt had a special forces counter-terrorism team trained by the U.S. Delta Force ready to move in, they were granted permission to come.

The Egyptian Unit 777 under the command of Major-General Kamal Attia was flown in, led by four American officers.

Negotiations were prolonged as much as possible, and it was agreed that the plane should be attacked on the morning of 25 November when food was to be taken into the aircraft. Soldiers dressed as caterers would jam the door open and attack.

Raid

Without warning, Egyptian commandos launched the raid about an hour and a half before it had been originally planned.

They blasted open the passenger doors and luggage compartment doors with explosives. 52 passengers – including pregnant women and children – suffocated from the fumes that enveloped the aircraft when the soldiers placed a bomb underneath the fuselage to break into the hold.

Another five were shot by

them. According to Dr Abe-la Medici, two kilos of highly-explosive Semtex were used, which provided more power than was necessary to allow the commandos safe entry into the plane.

Mifsud Bonnici stated that these explosions caused the internal plastic of the plane to catch fire, causing widespread suffocation.

However, the Times of Malta, quoting sources at the airport, reported that when the hijackers realized they were under attack, they lobbed hand grenades into the passenger area, killing people and igniting the fire aboard.

The storming of the aircraft killed 54 of the remaining 87 passengers, as well as two crew members and one hijacker. Only one hijacker - Omar Rezaq, who had survived - remained undetected by the Maltese government.

Rezaq came out of the cockpit only to be shot in the chest by a commando, throwing a grenade as he went down.

Captain Galal subsequently tried to attack Rezaq with the cockpit fireaxe, but Rezaq managed to escape from the aircraft. (The New York Times reported at one point, however, that the hijackers' leader shot Captain Galal, grazing his forehead, and Captain Galal hit the hijacker with an ax, then Egyptian soldiers shot the hijacker.)

None of the Egyptian commandos were killed but one had a leg blown off.

Rezaq removed his hood and ammunition and pretended to be an injured passenger.

Egyptian commandos tracked Rezaq to St Luke's General

Hospital and, holding the doctors and medical staff at gunpoint, entered the casualty ward looking for him.

He was arrested when some of the passengers in the hospital recognized him.

Rezaq faced trial in Malta, but with no anti-terrorism legislation, he was tried on other charges.

There was widespread fear that terrorists would hijack a Maltese plane or carry out a terrorist attack in Malta as an act of retribution.

Rezaq received a 25-year sentence. For reasons unclear, Maltese authorities released him some seven years later, in February 1993, and allowed him to board a plane to Ghana.

His release caused a diplomatic incident between Malta and the U.S. because Maltese law strictly prohibits trying a person twice, in any jurisdiction, on charges connected to the same series of events (similar to but having wider limitations compared to classic double jeopardy).

Rezaq's itinerary was to carry him from there to Nigeria, and then to Ethiopia, and finally to Sudan.

Ghanaian officials detained Rezaq for several months, but eventually allowed him to proceed to Nigeria.

When Rezaq's plane landed in Nigeria, Nigerian authorities denied him entry into the country and handed him to FBI agents departing for the United States.

He was brought before a U.S. court and, on 8 October 1996, sentenced to life imprisonment with a no-parole recommendation.

Aftermath and criticism

In his 1989 book *Massacre in Malta*, John A. Mizzi wrote:

"Malta was faced with a problem it was ill-equipped to meet. The authorities took a firm stand in denying fuel to the hijackers but made no sensible provisions, through political bias and lack of experience, to meet the circumstances that arose from this decision. No proper team was set up at the outset to evaluate or deal progressively with the crisis, although only a few days previously an incident management course had been organized by a team of U.S. experts in Malta at the request of the government."

Mizzi added:

"The Egyptian commandos were given too free a hand and they acted out of their mission with little regard for the safety of the passengers. They were determined to get the hijackers at all costs and the Maltese government's initial refusal for U.S. anti-terrorist resources (a team led by a major-general with listening devices and other equipment) offered by the State Department through the U.S. Embassy in Malta – a decision reversed too late – contributed in no small measure to the mismanagement of the entire operation."

Mizzi also mentioned how Maltese soldiers positioned in the vicinity of the aircraft were equipped with rifles but were not issued ammunition.

An Italian secret service report on the incident showed how the fire inside the aircraft was caused by the Egyptian commandos who placed explosives in the aircraft cargo hold, the

most vulnerable part of the aircraft, as it held the oxygen tanks which blew up.

During the hijacking, only the Socialist Party media and state-controlled television were given information on the incident. Such was the censorship of the media, that the Maltese people first heard of the disaster through RAI TV, when its correspondent Enrico Mentana spoke live on the air via a direct phone call: "*Parlo da Malta. Qui c'è stato un massacro ...*" ("I'm speaking from Malta. Here there's just been a massacre ...")

Shortly before this broadcast, a news bulletin on the Maltese national television had erroneously stated that all passengers had been released and were safe.

Decisions taken by the Maltese government drew criticism from overseas. The United States protested to Malta about U.S. personnel sent to resolve the issue having been confined to Air Squadron HQ and the U.S. Embassy in Floriana.

The United States had seen the situation as so 'hot' that it had ordered naval ships, including an aircraft carrier, to move toward Malta for contingency purposes.

Since then Task Force 777 has improved the quality of their training and they now actively train with a number of Western special operations groups, including the United States Army's Delta Force, United States Navy's SEAL Team Six, and the French GIGN.

Guerillas and Terrorists

Guerrilla warfare has existed for centuries, but it was the Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong who, during the Chinese civil war, gave it its modern form.

Guerrilla war, inspired by leaders such as Mao and, later, Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro, gained enormous influence in the post-war period, when nationalists in Asia and Africa were fighting for independence from European colonial rule - notably the Algerian nationalists against the French in Algiers.

However, the emergence of the Cold War complicated matters, because it tended to polarize all such conflicts into a broader struggle of East versus West.

Conflict in Vietnam

This polarization was epitomized by events during the war in Vietnam, which saw the development of a new model of guerrilla warfare.

Adopting Mao's strategy as an initial template, a Vietnamese Nationalist-Communist coalition rose up against the French administration in 1945.

Using classic guerrilla hit-and-run tactics, their lightly armed, highly mobile forces wore down the French army, and then, in 1954, defeated it in a pitched battle at Dien Bien Phu.

The subsequent peace settlement was followed by elections, which the US sabotaged for fear that North Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh would win.

This, in turn, was the trigger for hostilities between the

Communist north and the US-backed south.

At first, it seemed inevitable that the better equipped US would crush the insurgency with superior weapons and air power.

The Vietnamese Communists received extensive military assistance from China and the Soviet Union; although this consisted mainly of World War II-era rifles and machine-guns to begin with, the Vietnamese were also tenacious and focused on their objectives, while the Americans lacked a coherent counterinsurgency strategy.

Years of bitter guerrilla warfare failed to secure victory for the US; disillusioned and exhausted, it withdrew its forces in 1972 - a prelude to a North Vietnamese takeover of the country.

With the demise of colonial empires by the mid-1970s, guerrilla conflicts became more diverse.

The US sponsored its own insurgent campaigns - the Contras, against the left-wing Nicaraguan government, and the Mujahideen, against the Soviet Union's Red Army in Afghanistan.

Toward the end of the 20th century, low-intensity, guerrilla style warfare had also become endemic in parts of Africa - notably in the failed states of the Congo basin and the Horn of Africa.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, also known as the Central African Federation or CAF, was a colonial federation that consisted of three southern African territories: the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia and the British protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It existed between 1953 and 1963.

Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were given independence and became Zambia and Malawi respectively.

Southern Rhodesia, however was not given independence. On 11 November 1965 they declared UDI, or a Universal Declaration of Independence from Britain. The only other country to declare UDI from Britain was America.

Not long after Rhodesia declared UDI the country found itself in a guerrilla war with ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army), the armed wing of ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and ZIPRA (Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army), the armed wing of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union).

ZANLA operated out of neighbouring Mozambique and were supplied and supported by the Peoples Republic of China.

ZIPRA operated out of neighbouring Zambia and were supplied by the Soviet Union.



TERROR TACTICS: Terrorism has been on the increase since the 1970s. It is cost effective, can put a severe financial strain on a country or organisation, and is often difficult to counter.

The two Portuguese colonies in Southern Africa - Mozambique and Angola - were also faced with guerrilla war. In Mozambique they were fighting against FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* - Liberation Front of Mozambique).

In Angola the situation was even more chaotic. Here the Portuguese were fighting against not one, but three guerrilla movements.

These were the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* - People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), FNLA (*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* - National Front for the Liberation of Angola), and UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* - National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

When the Portuguese withdrew from Angola, the three guerrilla movements began a civil war, each wanting to become the new government of

Angola.

The MPLA became the new rulers of Angola and the FNLA ceased to exist. UNITA, however, controlled most of the south in Angola and they continued to wage guerrilla warfare against the new government.

South Africa had problems of its own. South West Africa was a country on the northern border of South Africa.

After World War I it had become a League of Nations mandate and placed under South African administration. Many regarded the country as South Africa's fifth province.

There was, however, opposition to this and in 1960 SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) was formed. In 1962 PLAN (Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia), the armed wing of SWAPO, began a guerrilla war against South Africa.

The South African Police (SAP) were responsible for the protection of the border. In January 1972 the first South Af-

rican Defence Force (SADF) troops were sent to the border.

In February of that year a state of emergency was imposed on Ovamboland in South West Africa. On 1 April 1973 control over the northern border finally passed from the SAP to the SADF.

In late 1975, at the request of the American CIA, the SADF became involved in the Angolan Civil War. They sent in troops in support of the FNLA. The mission was known as Ops Savannah.

After the Angolan Civil War the SADF began giving covert support to UNITA. At the same time the Soviet Union and Cuba were supporting the MPLA. Cuba ended up sending thousands of troops to Angola.

The MPLA also allowed PLAN to set up bases and launch operations from Angola. The SADF carried out a number of cross-border raids into the country.

Eventually South Africa began to offer open support to UNITA and became involved in several clashes against the Angolan Army and the Cubans.

Terrorism

As warring bands fought for local supremacy. Guerrilla wars were predominantly rural in origin and character, while terrorism was mainly an urban phenomenon.

Typical terrorist tactics such as assassination, extortion, kidnapping, and bombings were used by guerrilla groups - but from the 1960s onward, terrorism began to develop a character of its own.

If guerrilla insurgencies were

violent attempts to gain control of a state, terrorism was an extreme form of protest, often an attempt to publicize a cause, or destabilize a society.

Terrorism took many forms, reflecting the differing backgrounds and grievances of its participants.

It included middle-class angst against the capitalist state, given violent form by the German

Red Army Faction, the spate of plane hijackings in support of the Palestinian cause in the 1970s, and assassinations in Spain by the Basque separatist movement, ETA.

However, for the West, the most worrying trend was the emergence of radical Islamist terrorists in the 1990s.

Characterized by resentment toward the US and its allies, their attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the US, in 2001, ushered in a new era in which the threat of large-scale terrorist attacks on civilian populations is never far from the public consciousness.

Cost effective

History has shown us that it is difficult for a conventional force to win a guerilla war.

If it is difficult for a conventional force to win a guerilla war, it is even more difficult to fight a war against terrorism.

The first thing we need to do is look at a definition of terrorism. It can be described as follows:

The calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intim-

idation or coercion or instilling fear.

It is interesting to note that this definition emphasises the word 'civilians'. While guerilla forces will more often than not focus on military or security force targets, terrorist prefer to focus on 'soft' targets.

That is not to say that guerillas will never attack soft targets. In many guerilla wars and campaigns, the local civilian population has been regarded as fair game.

One need look no further than Mao's mobilization of the rural peasants as an example. He needed the local population to provide support to his guerillas.

This support meant that a local village would offer food and shelter, a place to store weapons and equipment, and even to transport equipment - usually on foot. The local population could also provide intelligence as to security force movement in the area.

If a local village was not compliant then they would be punished as an example to others. The leaders of the village were murdered, livestock was slaughtered, and buildings or huts were set on fire.

When the next village was asked for support, they would think twice about refusing. This tactic was used throughout Africa and in many third-world countries.

Yet terrorist have no desire to take on security forces. They prefer to target civilians. In many instances they will focus on economic targets.

Using terrorism as a means of obtaining a goal is far more cost effective that using guerilla tac-

Key Figure



MAO ZEDONG

1893–1976

The son of a farmer, Mao went to university in Beijing, where he studied the works of Marx, and co-founded the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921.

In contrast to the conventional Communist reliance on urban workers, Mao mobilized the rural peasants, who became the bedrock of his military revolution. After defeating the Nationalists in 1949, Mao dominated Chinese political life until his death in 1976.

tics. After all, a guerilla army needs to be armed and receive some sort of training. This is often not the case with terrorists.

Take the 11 September 2001 attacks in America. A total of 19 men, armed only with box cutter knives, managed to hijack four civilian aircraft. Two of these aircraft were crashed into the World Trade Centre buildings, and one was crashed into the Pentagon.

Nearly 3,000 people died in these attacks and they caused billions of Dollars worth of damage. It also had the effect of causing severe damage to American morale. People start-

ed to question as to how safe they were in their own country.

It is extremely difficult to defend against a terrorist attack. The terrorists have the advantage of being able to select the time, target, and place they want to launch a terrorist attack.

Unless the security forces have accurate, reliable intelligence, they have no real idea of when the next attack will take place, when it will take place, nor what form the attack will take.

Without this intelligence it means that the security forces need to be on constant alert. It often means that considerable manpower needs to be utilised to maintain a security presence.

This obviously costs money. Troops have to be armed, trained, accommodated, fed, and provided with logistical support. This can often be a severe drain on a country's budget. And the terrorists need not do a thing.

It is difficult for the security forces to retaliate after a terrorist attack. Many terrorist groups do not have a fixed base nor central location of operations.

Sometimes terrorist will operate from a country that gives them unofficial support. When challenged, these countries will deny giving any support.

Take the events after 9/11 for example. On 20 September 2001, US President George W. Bush delivered an ultimatum to the Taliban government of Afghanistan, to turn over Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda leaders operating in the country or face attack.

When the Taliban regime failed to comply with Bush's

demand the US, along with UK and coalition allies) invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban.

The War in Afghanistan would drag on for 20 years, 11 months, two weeks and four days. It would cost the lives of 2,448 US military personnel, with 20,752 suffering wounds. It cost billions of Dollars and when the US pulled out of the country they left behind thousands of tons of military weapons, vehicles and equipment.

And the end result - al-Qaeda is still going and the Taliban are once again back in control in Afghanistan.

Attacks against civilian targets provide terrorists with many benefits. First of all, these attacks have a significant effect on the morale of the population.

They start to feel unsafe and unsure. Where will the next attack be? Could I become a victim of such an attack?

Often they will start to put pressure on their own government. Why are you allowing this to happen? What are you doing to stop these attacks? Eventually they may even turn on their own government. All of this plays directly into the terrorist's hands.

Terrorist attacks can also have a knock-on effect on the economy. Tourists, for example, may not wish to visit a country if they feel it is not safe to do so. The effect on the tourism industry could be severe, causing a loss to both companies and individuals.

Naturally any terrorist attack will be accompanied by plenty of media coverage. This not only inadvertently promotes the cause of the terrorist, it can also

spread fear and resentment.

Even things such a strikes and protest action can be used by terrorists. Many groups or communities will arrange a protest for valid reasons. And in any free and democratic country people should have the right to peaceful protest.

Yet these protests often turn violent. It takes only a few instigators in a crowd to stir things up and a peaceful protest can turn violent. Police or security forces have to react to the situation, which often causes the situation to become even more violent. People are killed, property is destroyed or damaged and it all leads to more protests.

The media is usually at hand to provide coverage and this can often cause the general population to become polarised.

Some may become angry at the way the police or security forces handled a situation. They may claim that they did not use minimum force and all they manage to do was inflame the situation. This can make them resentful towards the police and security forces.

Others may take the view that the protesters got what they were asking for. So they lose any sympathy for the protesters and their cause. Either way, it's a win-win result for any terrorist group that used the protest for their own goals or even arranged the protest.

Terrorism has become a global threat and it shows no signs of slowing down.

More and more groups and organisations are using terrorism as a means of obtaining their objectives - no matter what those objectives are.

Why Israel created the Galil

The Galil was Israeli Defence Force's prime weapon for 28 years. So why did they create the weapon in the first place, and why did they stop using it?

The Israeli 5,56 mm Galil was their main combat rifle between 1972 and 2000. So why is it known as one of the world's most beloved AK variants ever made?

The Galil tried to combine the

heavier was because its receiver was forge milled instead of being stamped. It also has a closer machining tolerance which means that the margin of error on the parts is lower at their factory. So that adds to the cost as well.

On the plus side it also makes

best aspects of western ammo and eastern firearms philosophy into one very good looking package.

But they haven't used it for more than two decades. So why did the IDF (Israeli Defence Force) decide to go through the trouble of creating their own weapon if they don't even use it anymore.

The Galil has a fascinating rise and fall story that tells use as much about the military history of Israel as it does about the development of small arms in general.

The IDF basically married and AK-47 to an M-16 - and the offspring was the Galil.

It was a combination of two decent weapons from the East and from the West. But it did have some downsides, such as the fact that the Galil is almost a kilogram heavier than the AK-47, but there's a good reason for that.

The real reason the Galil was

the Galil way more accurate than the Soviet AK-47. The reason they used this more expensive forged mill production method was because they saw the original AK-47s were being made using a sheet metal stamping technology that made the weapon lighter but created serious issues with parts breaking.

One of the distinguishing features that you'll notice right away on the weapon is its long curved magazine that it's often seen with. This stemmed from the IDF's dislike for their old FN FAL rifle which could only carry 20 rounds.

And you'll see a lot of design choices in the Galil are a direct consequence of the bad taste left in their mouth after the FN FAL.

Most soldiers enjoy the benefit of having more ammo, but can we agree that the IDF's 50 round mags were a little bit too long. Where exactly do you

draw the line? Soldiers even reported having trouble hitting their targets with these things.

This was one of the first military weapons adopted to fire the accurate small NATO 5,56 from the reliable AK-47 style action.

The Galil has an impressive

muzzle velocity of 950 metres per second and an extended maximum range of 500 metres.

You have to remember that at the time of its development, being in the late 1960s the Galil rifle was a very novel idea.

If you think about it two years after it went into service the Soviet Army made a version of the AK-47 that fired a small round that was very similar to the Galil. It also had a foldable stock just like the Galil. Coincidence maybe, but I think that the Israelis were inspired by the Soviet AK-47 who were then inspired by the Israeli Galil. Isn't the cir-

cle of firearms life fascinating.

So how does the Galil work? When fired the high pressure gases from the explosion of the gunpowder are evacuated into the gas cylinder which drives the piston rod rearward, ejecting the spent cartridge.

As the bolt carrier flies backwards this in turn compresses the return spring and that return energy contained inside the

to jamming. With the sandy conditions of the desert the FN FAL would often jam. The Israeli troops would even try to use the enemies captured AK-47s instead.

Israeli soldiers gave the feared AK a majestic nickname "The tiger of the desert". Israel knew it would be hard for them to acquire the AK straight from the Soviet Union at the time since they were just starting to get buddy-buddy with NATO who would surely not look kindly on Israel if they were trading with their sworn

They also liked the idea of the lighter 5,56mm ammo because they felt it was a more accurate cartridge and allowed for additional rounds in the magazine when compared to the 7,62mm.

Galil even borrowed some design features from the FN FAL like the shape of its carrying handle. The distinct rectangular shaped wooden fore-grip was a uniquely design aesthetic. It was Balashnikov putting his signature on the rifle.

When making the prototype for the weapon he studied captured AK-47s and borrowed it



enemy.

So they turned to their internal state-run weapons production company, IMI (Israel Military Industries), to create a solution.

Yisreal Balashnikov headed up the design team working on what would become the Galil. He was born in 1923 in the Soviet Union of all places. At a very early age he moved to Israel where he served with the British Army during World War II and his job couldn't have been more relevant. He would steal weapons from the enemy in order to give it to the Allies to use.

After the war he helped develop the Uzi submachine gun at IMI. The whole point of his Galil gun was that it needed to work in the desert without fail, unlike the finicky FN FAL. It was supposed to solve all of their problems.

spring sends the assembly back forward which then strips a new round from the magazine.

This all happens in a fraction of a second and the whole process creates what is called recoil.

Why did the Israel's create the Galil?

In 1955 Israel adopted the FN FAL rifle which was all the rage with NATO at the time. In the Six Day War of 1967 the FN FAL turned out to be a huge disappointment for Israel.

So you have to remember the brand new IDF wasn't very well trained or equipped to correctly maintain the FN FAL.

The weapon had to be kept clean, otherwise it was prone

reliable long-stroke rotating bolt design. He didn't like the way the AKs were stamp manufactured though, so when he heard about the Finnish Army's improved Valmet 62 he wanted to know how they made that.

Israel secured the rights to make the first Galil prototypes using the Finnish Valmet machinery and blueprints. So at this point in its early development in the 1970s the prototype Galil was still named after the firearm engineer's original name - the Balashnikov rifle.

The name did not go over well with the focus groups because of its coincidence of sounding too much like Kalashnikov. Of course the AK-47 (Avtomat Kalashnikova) had been named after its designer - Mikhail Kal-

ashnikov.

The IDF really didn't want their new primary weapon to sound like it was being supplied from the Soviet Union. Which is understandable and it just so happened that Israel Balashnikov wanted to change his name to something that reflected his new life in Israel. So he changed his name to the location of his new hometown. His new name was Yisrael Galili.

One of the unique aspects of the Galil and the easiest way to tell it apart from an AK just at a glance is its charging handle.

It's angled up and extends about the receiver which makes it intuitive to operate with your left hand while keeping your right hand on the pistol grip.

The bottle opener located near the magazine port was apparently added because soldiers were frequently damaging their Uzi magazines by using them to open bottles.

Manufacturing the Galil was delayed by the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. When it finally reached the soldier's hands just in time for 1975.

That's when the USA's war in Vietnam was coming to a close. The US Military at the time was looking to get rid of tons of surplus M16s, so they started selling them to Israel at a very cheap cost.

So cheap that it was much more cost effective for the IDF to buy M16s instead of mass producing the relatively expensive Galil.

By the year 2000 the IDF had completely phased out the Galil in favour of the M16 and then they moved on to their own Tav- or TAR-21 bullpup assault rifle.

Just when you thought the Galil was dead, IWI (Israel Weapon Industries) resurrected it and this upgraded version tried to fix all the complaints that were levelled against the original.

The weapon is lighter at 3.6 kilograms. This is thanks to its receiver now being made out of a mix of lightweight polymer and steel. It's got an increased rate of fire at 880 rounds per minute.

The new Galil ACE loses some of its visually distinguishing features in favour of practicality. So now it has a simple left side charging handle and they added a picatinny rail system.

The Galil ACE has already been adopted by the People's Army of Vietnam as their primary weapon. The Galil and the Uzi put the Israeli weapons industry on the map and proved that Israel had some talented weapons designers.

It did have some original problems that have since been addressed with its recent upgraded ACE version. Which seems to show that the Galil will continue to have a promising future in the military.

The SADF connection

Up until 1980 the South African Defence Force (SADF) had used a locally licensed variant of the FN FAL as its prime assault rifle. It was named the R1.

In 1979 it was decided to switch from the 7.62x51mm round to the NATO 5.56x45mm round that had become more commonly used.

Lyttelton Engineering Works, now Denel Land Systems, pro-

duced a licensed variant of the Galil with several modifications.

Both the stock and magazine are now made of a high-strength polymer and the stock was lengthened, adapting the weapon for the average South African soldier. It was named the R4 rifle.

Other detailed differences include the R4's lack of a carry handle and a number of improvements made to its internal operating mechanism.

The South African Navy, South African Air Force and South African Police Service adopted a short carbine version of the 5.56mm Galil SAR, which was license-manufactured as the R5.

The R5, when compared to the larger R4, has a barrel that is 130 millimetres shorter, together with a shorter gas system and hand guard. It also lacks a bi-pod, and the flash hider does not support rifle grenades.

In the 1990s, an even more compact personal defence weapon variant of the R5 was developed for armoured vehicle crews, designated the R6, which has a further reduced barrel and a shortened gas cylinder and piston assembly.

These weapons are still in use with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) which was established in 1994.

Denel Land Systems (DLS) also introduced a line of semi-automatic variants of the R4, R5 and R6 called the LM4, LM5 and LM6 respectively, built for civilian and law enforcement users.

Springbok



The SA Legion is a national organisation, part of a world-wide family that addresses the needs of ex-service personnel and their dependents by way of housing, pensions, employment and general welfare. It is apolitical, non-sectarian, non-racial, non-sexist and non-partisan.

The Springbok is the official journal of the South African Legion. Read the December 2021 issue of Springbok by clicking on the cover to the left.



Click on the photograph below to take a virtual tour of Warrior's Gate and find out more about the MOTH Order.

Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour
Take a virtual tour of Warrior's Gate, or find out more about the MOTH Order. Click on a thumbnail to view the video.

Virtual Tour

Photo gallery

History

Ceremonial

Message from the Vice-Chairman

Message from the custodian

Hey! You can't use that.

The main objective in any war is to emerge victorious. Throughout history it has always been a case of "do whatever it takes to win". Yet eventually there were some weapons that caused even the military to have second thoughts.

In war there is only one rule – win. Actually that's not true, well at least not true anymore.

In the aftermath of World War II 196 nations ratified, in whole or with some reservations, two additional treaties to the Geneva Conventions detailing the basic rights of war-time prisoners, establishing protections for the wounded and sick, and protecting civilians caught in a war zone.

The conventions also laid down the frame work for the international banning of certain weapons of war.

War is dirty business and in the aftermath of World War I the nations of the world moved to limit the scope of its destructive impact.

Horrified by the mass casualties inflicted by chemical gas attacks, in 1925 at the initiative of the United States, France and Poland the League of Nations drafted the protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare. In essence, international law forbade the use of chemical or biological weapons in war.

Since then other weapons have been added to that list, all with the intent purpose of limiting human suffering or damage to the earth itself. Here are the ten weapons that even the military has banned.

Mustard Gas

Mustard agent was first used effectively in World War I by the German army against British and Canadian soldiers near Ypres, Belgium, in 1917 and later also against the French Second Army.

The Allies did not use mustard agent until November 1917 at Cambrai, France, after the armies had captured a stockpile of German mustard shells.

Mustard agent was dispersed as an aerosol in a mixture with other chemicals, giving it a yellow-brown colour and a distinctive odour. Mustard agent has also been dispersed in such munitions as aerial bombs, land mines, mortar rounds, artillery shells, and rockets.

Exposure to mustard agent was lethal in about 1% of cases. Its effectiveness was as an incapac-

itating agent. Even if a soldier was wearing a gas mask he would not be protected against absorbing it through his skin.

It would cause the skin to blister and these blisters would more often than not become septic.

Mustard agent is a persistent weapon that remains on the ground for days and weeks, and it continues to cause ill effects. If mustard agent contaminates a soldier's clothing and equipment, then the other soldiers that he comes into contact with are also poisoned. Towards the end of World War I, mustard agent was used in high concentrations as an area-denial weapon that forced troops to abandon heavily contaminated areas.

Since World War I, mustard agent has been used in several wars or other conflicts,



usually against people who cannot retaliate in kind.

The Italians used it in Abyssinia from 1935 to 1940. Iraq used it against Iran during the 1983-1988 war. Iraq also used it against Kurds in the town of Halabja during the Halabja chemical attack.

According to Syrian State media, it was used by ISIS against the Syrian Army during the battle in Deir ez-Zor in 2016.

It is also interesting to note that after WWII, stockpiled mustard agent was dumped by the British in the sea near Port Elizabeth, South Africa, resulting in burn cases among trawler crews.

Chlorine Gas

Chlorine gas, also known as bertholite, was first used as a weapon in World War I by Germany on April 22, 1915 in the Second Battle of Ypres.

French soldiers reported seeing yellow-green clouds drifting slowly towards the Allied trenches. As described by the soldiers, it had the distinctive smell of a mixture of pepper and pineapple.

It also tasted metallic and stung the back of the throat and chest. Chlorine reacts with water in the mucosa of the lungs to form hydrochloric acid, destructive to living tissue and potentially lethal.

Human respiratory systems can be protected from chlorine gas by gas masks with activated charcoal or other filters, which makes chlorine gas much less lethal than other chemical weapons.

After its first use, both sides in the conflict used chlorine as a chemical weapon, but it was soon replaced by the more deadly phosgene gas.

Phosgene Gas

It's estimated that as many as 85% of the 91,000 deaths attributed to gas in World War I were a result of phosgene or the similar agent diphosgene.

A colourless gas, in low concentrations its odour resembles freshly cut hay or grass. Its immediate effects are coughing, and irritation to the eyes and



of the body's control over respiratory and other muscles.

Some nerve agents are readily vaporized or aerosolized, and the primary portal of entry into the body is the respiratory system. Nerve agents can also be absorbed through the skin, requiring that those likely to be subjected to such agents wear a full body suit in addition to a respirator.

Nerve agents are generally colourless to amber-coloured, tasteless liquids that may evaporate to a gas. Agents sarin and VX are odourless; tabun has a slightly fruity odour and soman has a slight camphor odour.

In 1940 the German Army Weapons Office ordered the mass production of sarin for wartime use. A number of pilot plants were built and a high-production facility was under construction (but was not finished) by the end of World War II. Estimates for total sarin production by Nazi Germany range from 500 kg to 10 tons.

During that time, German intelligence believed that the Allies also knew of these compounds, assuming that because these compounds were not discussed in the Allies' scientific journals information about them was being suppressed.

Though sarin, tabun and soman were incorporated into artillery shells, the German government ultimately decided not to use nerve agents against Allied targets. The Allies did not learn of these agents until shells filled with them were captured

respiratory tract. Subsequently, it can cause the build-up of fluid in the lungs, leading to death. It was first used by the German at Ypres in December 1915.

Nerve Gas

Poisoning by a nerve agent leads to constriction of pupils, profuse salivation, convulsions, and involuntary urination and defecation, with the first symptoms appearing in seconds after exposure. Death by asphyxiation or cardiac arrest may follow in minutes due to the loss

towards the end of the war.

Since World War II, Iraq's use of mustard gas against Iranian troops and Kurds (Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988) has been the only large-scale use of any chemical weapons. On the scale of the single Kurdish village of Halabja within its own territory, Iraqi forces did expose the populace to some kind of chemical weapons, possibly mustard gas and most likely nerve agents.

Plastic land mines

Explosive land mines were used in 1277 by the Chinese during the Song dynasty against an assault of the Mongols, who were besieging a city in southern China.

Militaries are no longer allowed to set up land mines that can't be detected by x-ray. Under Protocol I of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, there is a requirement that all weapons must use metallic fragments that can be seen via x-ray.

In addition, mines placed outside of fenced and cordoned areas are required to use self-destruct mechanisms set to go off after a certain period of time.

There is also an ongoing campaign to ban the use of land mines internationally through the Ottawa Treaty; however, it has not yet passed. China, Russia, and the United States have yet to sign it.

Land mines continue to kill or injure at least 4,300 people every year, even decades after the conflicts for which they were placed had ended. Talk about the weapons that keeps on giving.

Biological weapons

Biological warfare (BW), also known as germ warfare, is the use of biological toxins or infectious agents such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi with the intent to kill or incapacitate humans, animals or plants as an act of war.

Biological weapons may be employed in various ways to gain a strategic or tactical advantage over the enemy, either by threats or by actual deployments. Like some chemical weapons, biological weapons may also be useful as area denial weapons. These agents may be lethal or non-lethal, and may be targeted against a single individual, a group of people, or even an entire population.

The use of biological weapons is prohibited under customary international humanitarian law, as well as a variety of international treaties. The use of biological agents in armed conflict is a war crime.

Rudimentary forms of biological warfare have been practiced since antiquity. During the 6th century BC, the Assyrians poisoned enemy wells with a fungus that would render the enemy delirious. In 1346, the bodies of Mongol warriors of the Golden Horde who had died of plague were thrown over the walls of the besieged Crimean city of Kaffa.

Flamethrower

A flamethrower is a mechanical incendiary device designed to project a long, controllable stream of fire. They were first used by the Greeks in the 1st century AD. In modern times, they were used during World

War I, and more widely in World War II and during the Vietnam War. They were ideal for attacking troops in bunkers or fortified tunnels.

Flamethrowers have not been in the U.S. arsenal since 1978, when the Department of Defence unilaterally stopped using them: the last American infantry flamethrower was the Vietnam-era M9-7. They have been deemed of questionable effectiveness in modern combat.

Despite some assertions, they are not generally banned, but as incendiary weapons they are subject to the usage prohibitions described under Protocol III of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Napalm

Napalm was originally developed in 1942 in a secret laboratory at Harvard University, by a team led by chemist Louis Fieser under the United States Chemical Warfare Service.

Of immediate first interest was its viability as an incendiary device to be used in fire bombing campaigns during World War II, but its ability to be coherently projected into a solid stream that would carry for distance (instead of the fireball of pure gasoline) resulted in widespread adoption in infantry/combat engineer flamethrowers as well.

It has been widely used in both the air and ground role, with the largest used to date being via air-dropped bombs in WW2 (most notably in the gruesomely effective incendiary attacks on Japanese cities in 1945), and later close air support roles in Korea and Vietnam.

Napalm also has fuelled most of the flamethrowers (tank, ship and infantry-based) used since World War I, giving them much greater range, and was used in this role as a common (and feared) weapon of urban combat by both the Axis and Allies in World War II.

A variant of napalm was produced in Rhodesia for a type of ordnance known as Frantan between 1968 and 1978 and was deployed extensively by the Rhodesian Air Force during that country's bush war.

International law does not specifically prohibit the use of napalm or other incendiaries against military targets, but use against civilian populations was banned by the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 1980. Protocol III of the CCW restricts the use of all incendiary weapons, but a number of countries have not acceded to all of the protocols of the CCW.

Poisoned bullets

Early bullets weren't very accurate or powerful. So militaries all around the world would

spike them with poison or faecal matter.

A poisoned bullet could deliver toxic compounds deep into the body and could result in serious infection that could take effect long after a battle had taken place.

Modern bullets are already devastatingly powerful and adding poison to them would be superfluous.

In a firefight, a wounded enemy is often still capable of firing back. So wounding them with a poisoned bullet so that they can die later is not a good idea.

This is one of the reasons why poisoned bullets have been banned for many years.

Dirty bombs

A dirty bomb or radiological dispersal device (RDD) is a speculative radiological weapon that combines radioactive material with conventional explosives. The purpose of the

weapon is to contaminate the area around the dispersal agent/conventional explosion with radioactive material, serving primarily as an area denial device against civilians.

It is, however, not to be confused with a nuclear explosion, such as a fission bomb, which by releasing nuclear energy produces blast effects far in excess of what is achiev-

able by the use of conventional explosives.

Since a dirty bomb is unlikely to cause many deaths by radiation exposure, many do not consider this to be a weapon of mass destruction.

Its purpose would presumably be to create psychological, not physical, harm through ignorance, mass panic, and terror. For this reason dirty bombs are sometimes called "weapons of mass disruption".

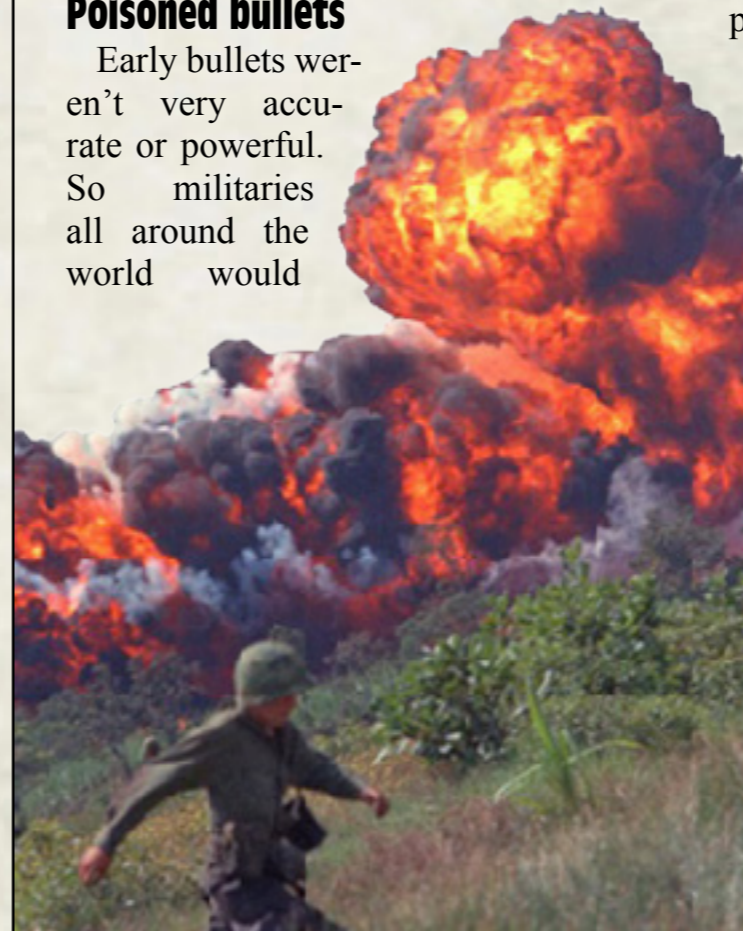
Additionally, containment and decontamination of thousands of victims, as well as decontamination of the affected area might require considerable time and expense, rendering areas partly unusable and causing economic damage.

When dealing with the implications of a dirty bomb attack, there are two main areas to be addressed: (i) the civilian impact, not only dealing with immediate casualties and long term health issues, but also the psychological effect and then (ii) the economic impact. With no prior event of a dirty bomb detonation, it is considered difficult to predict the impact. Several analyses have predicted that RDDs will neither sicken nor kill many people.

Footnote

While it is well and good to ban certain weapons, this does not mean that they are not currently being used, or will be used in the future.

Terrorist organisations are not protected by the Geneva Convention. Therefore they believe that they do not have to follow any of the protocols or rules.



Conscription

Yes, no or maybe?

It's one thing to volunteer as a soldier. But what about those that are conscripted and have no choice in the matter. We take a closer look at compulsory military service.



Just about every country in the world has an army of some sort. Even the Vatican (and yes, the Vatican is an actual country) has its own army. With just 110 men the Swiss Guard, the Vatican's army, is the smallest in the world.

Most countries around the world will have a permanent defence force that will normally have an army and often a navy and air force as well. The people who serve in these armed forces usually do so as a full-time career.

The vast majority of countries with a permanent armed force will also have a sizeable reserve force. The people that serve in the reserve force are volunteers and serve for a certain period of time each year.

Yet not everyone that serves in the military or fights in a war is there because they want to be. As far back as history can recall people have been forced to take up arms against their will. To this day rebel and guerilla armies will abduct people and force them to join their ranks. It's a case of "either you fight for us, or you are against us and we will kill you." Not much of a choice, is it.

Even the British Royal Navy came up with a unique method to recruit sailors. Working and living conditions for the average sailor in the Royal Navy in the 18th century were harsh by modern standards and generally much worse than conditions on British merchant ships; their pay was around half that paid by merchantmen and was lower than that paid to a farm labourer.

To recruit sailors to serve on Royal



YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW: A new intake of national servicemen report for their initial call up.

Navy warships, they came up with a system known as 'impressment'. Groups of Royal Navy recruiters, known as 'press gangs', would usually wait outside a pub at night. If some drunk walked out he would be hit over the head with a baton and knocked unconscious.

He would later wake up to find himself aboard a Royal Navy ship and be informed that he was now a serving member of the Royal Navy. And he had no choice in the matter. If he tried to leave or run away he would be tracked down, charged with desertion, and could be sentenced to death.

Many countries in the past used a system of conscription or compulsory military service. This in effect meant that the governments of those countries past legislation that made military service a law.

To this day there are numerous countries where conscription is still enforced. In Africa countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan all have compulsory military service.

In Israel, for example, men and women over the age of 18 are liable for conscription. The men do three years and the women two.

South Africa is no stranger to conscription. From 1968 to 1993 South Africa had a system of compulsory military service that was known as 'national service'.

During this period the policy of apartheid was still the law of the country and the army, navy and air force fell under the command of the South African Defence Force (SADF).

National service began in 1968 when it was decided that

all white South African males would be required to do a period of compulsory military service. Note carefully the use of the word compulsory. It was not a request, it was an instruction and it was backed up by an act of parliament - Defence Act (this would later include the Defence Act Amendment, 1982).

Every white male who was a South Africa citizen or had permanent residence was required to register with the South African Defence Force in the year that he turned 16. Once you had completed your schooling or decided to leave school, the South African Defence Force required your services.

At first national service was for a period of nine months and then 12 months. Then, in 1978, it was increased to 24 months. Once this initial period of service was over they were then placed into the citizen force where they would have to serve between 30 and 90 days a year for the next 12 years.

You could, of course, refuse to do national service. It did mean that you would be arrested, charged, and sent to prison for three years. And you would not serve your time in a civilian prison. You would serve it in a military prison known as 'detention barracks'.

While there were indeed some who did opt to spend time in prison rather than serve in a military that they believed was fighting to maintain the policy of apartheid, the vast majority went ahead and reported for their national service.

There were two intakes or call ups per year. The larger

of the two was in January and another in July. You would receive a letter with your call up papers, or instructions to report for national service.

National servicemen could be called up to serve in either the army, navy or air force. Later a fourth arm, the South African Medical Services (SAMS) was formed and they would also receive an allocation of the call up.

While national servicemen did get to serve in the navy, air force and medical services it was the army that claimed most of them. The Infantry Corps was by far the largest corps in the army. The majority of national servicemen were absorbed by the Infantry Corps where they received intensive training in the use of military weapons, fieldcraft and counter-insurgency operations.

Eight infantry battalions were situated throughout South Africa at Bloemfontein, Walvis Bay, Potchefstroom, Middelburg, Ladysmith, Grahamstown, Uptington and Phalaborwa. The infantry also had their own school at Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape.

You had absolutely no choice in where you were called up. You could be called up to do your training at a unit that was hundreds, sometimes thousands of kilometres from where you lived.

Once you arrived for your national service the first nine weeks were taken up by basic training. This began the process of taking what were essentially school boys and turning them into soldiers. For many of the youngsters it came as a harsh



A BURDEN TO BEAR: National servicemen on a route march during basic training.

realisation that their lives were about to be changed.

“The army didn’t care who you were or where you came from,” says Kyle who was 18 when he did his basic training with the infantry. “It didn’t make any difference if you had a university degree or a standard six education. They didn’t care if you came from a wealthy family or from the slums. As far as they were concerned you were the lowest form of life. It was their mission during basic to break everyone down to the same level and then build them up again.”

Many that did national service say that the military were very good at the breaking down part, but not always as good at building them up again.

There was a very strict rank structure in the military that was made up of officers, warrant officers (sergeant majors), non-commissioned officers (NCO) and other ranks.

National servicemen would begin with the lowest possible rank. If, for instance, they were in the infantry they would hold

the rank of ‘rifleman’.

A national serviceman could go on to become an NCO but could only go as high as the rank of corporal. If they successfully completed an officers course they could be promoted to the rank of 2nd lieutenant. If, however, they had a university degree they could become a lieutenant.

An infantry battalion, for instance, was divided up into a number of companies. Each company would have a company commander (usually a captain) and a company sergeant major.

Companies were further divided into platoons which were in turn divided into squads. As a national serviceman you would find yourself in a squad with a corporal in charge of you.

During basic training it was the corporals (usually national servicemen themselves) that carried out the majority of the training. And it was frightening just how much power a corporal wielded.

It is an old adage that power corrupts and absolute power



DOUBLE TIME: A large portion of basic training was spent on the parade ground. Here the conscripts were taught how to drill and react to commands. This group is being shown moving at ‘double time’.

corrupts absolutely. This was unfortunately the case with many of the corporals that were involved in training conscripts. Some of them were particularly brutal in their methods and it is a sad fact that more than one recruit died during basic training as a direct result of physical abuse from the instructors.

While the instructors were not officially permitted to physically or mentally abuse the troops, those in authority often looked the other way. This was particularly the case during the ‘70s and early ‘80s.

“Our corporal was a little weed of a guy,” says Craig who did national service in 1975. “I could have given him one slap and knocked his head off. But we were all terrified of him. If he said ‘jump’ you didn’t ask why, you didn’t argue, you just asked how high.”

And he does have a point. As a national serviceman you

were part of the huge military machine and if you didn’t go along with the flow the machine would eat you up and spit you out in pieces.

The military even had its own laws and regulations laid out in the Military Discipline Code (MDC). If you violated one of these regulations you could be formally charged and put on trial.

Minor offences would be handled with a process known as a ‘Summary Trial’. They could try you and, if found guilty, could sentence you up to 120 days in detention barracks. And something you have to realise is that time spent in detention did not count. If you spent 90 days in detention then you had to do an extra 90 days of your national service.

For serious offences you could be given a court martial. A court martial had the power to sentence you to death.

Taking the above into account, it’s little wonder that most national servicemen did what they were told and tried to avoid trouble as much as possible.

During basic training the day would normally begin at 6.00 am with PT. Then, after breakfast and inspection the rest of the morning would be spent on the parade ground learning to march. Afternoons would be spent doing fieldcraft, first-aid training, map reading, and other military skills. Naturally the national servicemen would also spend time at the shooting range.

Most evenings were spent preparing for the next morning’s dreaded inspection. Your corporal would normally inspect your bungalow every morning from Monday to Thursday. Friday mornings, however, was the big inspection. This would be carried out by your company commander, company sergeant major, and your corporal.

After six weeks of basic training, national servicemen were supposed to be given leave from Friday evening to Sunday evening, known as a pass, every second weekend. This was not always the case and sometimes a national serviceman could go for months without ever getting the opportunity to go home.

The Friday morning inspections were very strict and, if your squad was supposed to get a pass that afternoon, it could be cancelled if you failed to pass the inspection. If one person failed they could cancel the pass for everyone in the squad.

And an inspection involved more than just sweeping the

floor and making your bed. The floors had to be polished so that they shone. Beds had to be made up in a special way so that the edges had creases. All clothes had to be washed and perfectly ironed. Boots and shoes had to be polished. Every bit of equipment had to be cleaned. It was common for national servicemen to work right through the night to prepare for a Friday morning inspection.

“I remember one Friday morning inspection,” says Craig. “We were supposed to be on pass that weekend. Our company commander came around for inspection and he noticed a fly sitting on one of the window panes. He turned to our corporal and asked him why we were keeping pets in the bungalow. And so our pass was cancelled.”

After basic training national servicemen would go on to do individual and advanced training. After this they were posted out to various units where they carried out a multitude of functions.

Many, however, would be sent to the then South West Africa - to what became known as the ‘Border War’. Some of them would go on to see combat and, sadly, some of them would die.

It is estimated that more than 2,000 South African troops were killed during the Border War, with more than 700 of them being killed in action. And this does not take into account the many more that died in training accidents or road accidents during their national service.

National service was done away with in 1993, a year before South Africa’s first democratic



MORNING INSPECTION: Most national servicemen hated morning inspection with a passion.

elections. From 1968 to 1993 over 600,000 white South African males did national service.

There has been no conscription in South Africa for the past 24 years. The old SADF is a thing of the past and now the SANDF (South African National Defence Force) is responsible for the military security of the country. It is a military force that is made up of permanent staff and reserve force volunteers.

Yet some people would like to see conscription introduced once again. But this time it would not be only for whites, but for everyone that leaves school. They suggest that everyone who leaves school should spend at least six months in the military.

They say it would help with unemployment, give the youth discipline and that they could be well utilised during their period of conscription. Engineers could build roads and provide water for rural areas, infantry

could be used to patrol game reserves and stop rhino poaching. They could also assist the police with crime prevention.

They also reason that by giving the youth training and skills during their conscription period, it would make them far more employable once they had completed their service. All of this sounds very positive. But you have to look at the negative aspects as well.

First of all, how keen would the youth be to do some form of national service. What would you do with those that refused? Throw them into prisons that are already overcrowded?

Then you have to consider the financial implications. It’s not cheap to run a defence force. All of the conscripts would have to be fed, housed, clothed and provided with medical treatment if necessary. Naturally you would also have to pay them something. Where would this money come from?

The current defence budget



ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER PATROL: South African troops, most of them conscripts, carry out a patrol in Owamboland in the then South West Africa. Patrols would usually last for eight days at a time.

would have to be drastically increased. Money would have to be diverted from other departments to pay for it.

Something else that needs to be taken into consideration is

where would you train them. Many of the old military bases and units were closed down. So where exactly would the conscripts be housed and where would they be given training.

Personally I don’t believe we will ever see conscription in South Africa again. It would be an interesting experiment to see how the youth of today would handle something like that.

Can you imagine them spending nine weeks of basic training with no cellphones, no Facebook, no Twitter, no e-mails, no text messages, and no Internet.

As a last thought I asked Craig, who I had interviewed for this article, if he would like to see his own son doing national service.

“I don’t really know,” Craig said. “Maybe if it was for six months. And as long as if he didn’t have to go and fight in a war. I think it would probably do him some good. It would at least teach him and bit of respect and discipline and maybe how to make his own damn bed.”



Service Rendered

The story of conscription in South Africa. Between 1968 and 1992 white South African males were conscripted into the South African Defence Force for compulsory national service.

After completing basic training they were then trained in specific fields before being posted out to serve in units around South Africa.

Many would be sent as support or combat troops to what was then known as South West Africa to fight in what has now become known as the ‘Border War’.

This e-book tells the story of what it was like to be a national serviceman. It takes readers through basic and individual training, postings to various units, and to the border war.

With 300 pages and more than 200 photographs, this e-book is a must for anyone that served.

If you would like a copy of *Service Rendered* send an e-mail to editor@hipe.co.za and use *Service Rendered* in the subject line and we will e-mail you a copy.

The best things in life are free

One of the most important things for a conscript in the South African Defence Force was his weekend pass. Getting home though was often a problem.

For a national serviceman in the South African Defence Force (SADF) nothing was more important than a weekend pass. Often, however, it was a mission to get home.

Most national servicemen did not have their own cars and even if they did they were not allowed to keep them on the base. For many of them the only way to get home was to hitch hike.

Before the introduction of the 'Ride Safe' campaign hitching in uniform was against standing orders. Still, most national servicemen did it.

The other options were to either catch a plane or a train, but both of these were expensive. Especially on a national serviceman's salary. Some, however, did come up with a plan.

Ryan Murphy did his basic training at the Army Gymnasium in 1976 and he explains how he avoided standing in the cold with his thumb extended, hoping for someone to stop and give him a lift.

I did basics in the July intake of 76. I was at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg and at the time I lived in Durban North.

One of my friends at school had been a guy by the name of Clive and we did basics together. On our first weekend pass Clive and I decided to hitch down to Durban. What an ab-

solute nightmare.

When we left the camp we walked about five kilometres up the N3 so that there was less of a chance of the Military Police finding us hitching. It was freezing cold that night and there was very little traffic on the road.

We stood on the side of the road until about ten o'clock that night and we didn't get a lift. Eventually we walked back to camp, went to our bungalow and went to sleep. The following morning we decided to abandon our attempt at going home and we spent most of the weekend wandering around Heidelberg. If you've ever been to Heidelberg you will know that this is about as much fun as watching paint dry. The most exciting thing in Heidelberg at that time was going to watch the traffic lights change colour. I don't know if much has changed since then.

Two weeks later we received another weekend pass and this time I was determined to get home. Clive and I left the camp and walked into town to a steakhouse, the only one in Heidelberg, called the Golden Egg. We had a plate of chips and a cold drink and then walked down to Heidelberg railway station. This was a distance of about four kilometres.

The Trans-Natal Express is a train that used to run every day between Johannesburg and Durban. In those days it would

arrive at Heidelberg station at about 8.00 pm and would then arrive in Durban at about 9.00 am the following morning. This was a perfect method of transport because it was reliable, warm, and comfortable.

The only drawback was the fact that a 2nd Class return ticket would set you back R45.00. In 1976 that was still a fair whack of money, especially if you received a national serviceman's salary. There was no way that Clive and I could afford that type of money. I had a plan up my sleeve though. When the train arrived in Heidelberg the ticket inspector, or conductor, would jump off onto the platform and then count how many people were boarding the train at Heidelberg. This was not that difficult because it was usually only a handful of passengers. The conductor would then know how many tickets he had to check.

Clive and I waited across the railway line on the far side of the platform. When the train arrived we ran up and climbed on from the opposite side to the platform. By doing this we had avoided being seen by the conductor, so he would not be looking for us to check on our tickets.

Which was probably just as well because we didn't have a ticket. Once on the train we would find an empty compartment and stash our bags under



FREE RIDE: Catching a train home for the weekend was expensive for your average national serviceman. Unless you stowed away for a free ride that is.

the seats.

The trick was then to ensure that the conductor did not spot you for the next 13 hours. To achieve this we had to be very tricky.

It was no good sitting in the compartment without a care in the world because the conductor would usually do a few patrols up and down the train. He had a list that showed exactly who was supposed to be on the train and it also showed what compartments they were supposed to be in. If he saw two army guys sitting in a compartment that he knew was supposed to be empty he would have immediately asked for our tickets. Likewise if he came upon a compartment that was supposed to be empty and the door was locked from the inside he would put two and two together very quickly.

Above the door in each compartment was a luggage space that extended out over the corridor of the train.

You could store a fair amount of baggage in that space or, as in our case, it was perfect to hide two young troops.

As I said, we would shove our bags under the seats and then climb into the luggage rack, jump into our sleeping bags, and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. If the conductor walked past and looked into the compartment, it would appear to be empty because there was no way that he would spot us in the luggage rack unless he walked into the compartment, turned around, and checked the luggage space.

It may not have been the most comfortable trip but at least we knew that we were heading home and it wasn't costing us anything. The next morning there were usually plenty of people climbing off in Durban, so it was unlikely that the conductor would even notice you.

On the Sunday night we would reverse the procedure. Because most of the peo-

ple catching the Trans-Natal would board at Durban Station, we would arrive as normal and climb onto the train. We would find an empty compartment and entrench ourselves in the luggage rack.

The train would arrive at Heidelberg at 7.00 am the following morning and we would climb off the train on the side opposite the platform.

Clive and I would then have to jog back to camp to ensure that we made it in time.

Although we were supposed to check in by midnight on the Sunday, we had received special permission to arrive late because we told our company commander that we travelled by train.

I must tell you this bit though. One Friday night we were heading down to Durban and we climbed on the train at Heidelberg and found ourselves an empty compartment.

We would normally find a 1st Class compartment because there was more chance of finding one empty that in 2nd Class.

So anyway we find an empty compartment, stow our bags, and climb into the luggage rack to settle down for the night.

When the train arrived at Newcastle in the early hours of the morning, Clive and I were fast asleep. Some guy boarded the train and came into the compartment. What we didn't realise was that this poor sap, who was on his way to Durban, had paid extra to hire the entire compartment for himself.

So he walks in and tries to put his bags under the seats but they don't seem to fit. He looks



TRAVEL IN STYLE: According to Murphy it was always best to hide in a 1st class compartment. Normally because there was more of a chance of finding one empty.

under the seats and sees that there are already bags there.

Then he tries to put his stuff into the luggage rack on of course he sees these two pairs of bleary eyes looking down at him. To say that he was upset would be putting in mildly.

He stormed off to find the conductor and Clive and I knew we were in trouble. We jumped down from the luggage rack, grabbed our bags, and headed out of the compartment.

I told Clive that we should split up because the conductor would be looking for two of us.

I spent the rest of the night ducking and diving the conductor. At one stage I hid in a toilet and used my back and feet to brace myself between the walls up near the roof. The conductor actually opened the door and looked into the toilet. If he had looked up I would have been bust.

Clive headed down towards 2nd Class and he saw a compartment door that was slightly opened. He had quietly opened the door and on entering he had seen that there were four guys

asleep in the compartment. He had slid under the seat and finally fallen asleep.

The next morning he had rolled out from under the seat, shocking the hell out of these four guys who were now wide-awake. Luckily for him they had seen the funny side of it and they hid him in the compartment until the train arrived in Durban.

When we did arrive in Durban I jumped off the train and headed for the exit as quickly as possible. There were some other army guys on the train and I saw that the conductor had cornered them and was demanding to see their tickets. I met up with Clive outside the station and we headed home.

Sneaking a ride on the train was kind of fun and it still brings back pleasant memories. I sometimes wonder how easy it would be to get away with stuff like that now.

Then again, I'm not sure that I'd like to travel on any train these days. From what I hear the trains are filthy dirty as well as being unsafe.

Ride Safe Campaign



For any soldier in any army, getting home on leave is special. For those conscripts that served in the old SADF it was just as special.

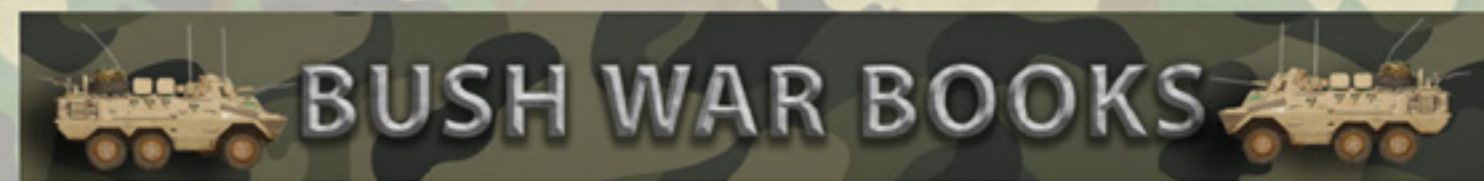
Towards the end of their basic training, troops were given leave over a weekend. It was known as a pass.

If they were not on the border or on duty, troops would normally receive a pass weekend every second week. However these could, and often were, cancelled for a variety of reasons.

The main problem facing troops was how to get home. For many the only option was to hitch hike or thumb a lift. This, however, was against SADF Standing Orders and troops found hitching could be charged.

Eventually the SADF came up with the Ride Safe Campaign. Troops on pass were issued with a Day-Glo orange sash and there were designated pick up points for those wishing to give a troop a lift.

Matt Hurter, a local musician, even did a song to promote the campaign.



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“War does not determine who is right - only who is left”

Oh what a lovely war

Some people hated their national service. Yet a far great percentage of those that did national service actually enjoyed the experience. Then there were those few that loved their time in the military.

For many years in South Africa, national service was a fact of life. If you were male, white, a South African citizenship or permanent residence then the South African Defence Force (SADF) required a good chunk of your youth.

Once you had completed your schooling you would receive your call-up papers or "instructions to report for national service."

And it wasn't a request - it was an instruction. You basically had two choices - report for national service, or go to prison. And by prison we're talking about a military prison or detention barracks.

The vast majority of those that were called up reported for their service. A few opted to refuse and spend time in prison.

The majority of those called up would serve their time in the Army. Some, however, would be sent to the Navy or Air Force. From 1979 onward they could also be sent to the South African Medical Services (SAMS).

No matter where you went, the routine was pretty much the same. You would all have to do basic training and this was followed by qualifying courses, depending which arm of the SADF you were in.

It was what happened afterwards that was important. This was referred to as your mustering. Those in the infantry

would almost certainly spend a fair amount of time in the operational area, also known as 'the border'.

The same went to those that served in the Armour Corp or Artillery Corp. Thousands of national servicemen in non-combat roles would also be sent to the border. Here they would fill roles such as storemen, signallers, medics, chefs, military policemen, and many other functions. Others would fill similar roles at bases within South Africa.

Not everybody was happy with where they were sent to, while others were unhappy with their mustering.

Most of them just got on with what they had to do, and many of them ended up enjoying the experience.

There were a lucky few that were not only happy about where they were sent, they were also thrilled at what they had to do.

Surf's up dude

Mark was 18 when he was called up for national service. Initially he was not happy with where he was sent to. This, however, soon changed.

"I grew up in Durban and started surfing when I was about seven. I spent every minute of my spare time at the beach and started surfing competitively when I was still at high school.

"So I can't say I was over-

joyed when I received my call-up papers for 1 SAI in Bloemfontein. I wasn't chuffed because I realised I would probably be sent to the border after basics and not get a chance to surf for two years. I couldn't have been more wrong.

"After basics a major from Natal Command visited our unit and he wanted to speak to anyone that was a surfer. I had been surfing since I was about six and at high school was a member of our school team. I had also won a few competitions at junior age group.

"There was a whole lot of guys that said they could surf and the major interviewed each of us. When he interviewed me he told me that my name was on his list.

"Four of us were picked and we were transferred down to Natal Command. It was a total jol because I could go home every night because I got a sleep-out pass. But that's not the best thing.

"The major was a qualified international surfing judge and he put together a Defence Force team. Let me tell you we had some bloody good surfers in our team. Quite a few of them went on to surf professionally when they finished national service.

"After morning parade we were allowed to go across the road from Natal Command and practice our surfing. I must have



SURF'S UP: Mark spent most of his national service surfing for the SADF team.

spent about 80% of my national service surfing. We also took part in surfing competitions all around the country.

"Look, I know some guys probably hated national service and had a hard time, but I loved it.

"When I finished the army I went to university. I started dating a girl in my class and she was a member of the End Conscription Campaign. They were an organisation that wanted national service ended, I think they may have been banned. I do know the military hated them with a passion.

"Anyway she was dead against national service and was always trying to get me to go to meetings with her. She used to get very pissed off with me when I told her that I had actually loved my national service and would have done it again if I could."

Time on two wheels

Tyrone was 18 when he began his national service. He was another person that landed

an excellent posting because of a sport he had taken part in before he was called up for national service. Even though it was not a main-stream sport.

"I wasn't all that keen on the prospect of doing national service. I felt slightly better when I received my call-up and saw that I would be going to the Signals Corps at the Army Gymnasium.

"Not that the Signals Corps meant anything to me, it's just that the Army Gym was in Heidelberg and I lived in Johannesburg, only 45 km away. So at least getting home on weekend pass would be easy.

"After basics I was told that I would be doing a dispatch riders course. Basically they were the guys that rode around on motorcycles delivering messages.

"I was stoked because I had been riding bikes since an early age. My dad rode speedway bikes when he was younger and he bought me my first bike when I was eight. By the time I was ten I was doing motocross, racing an 80 cc bike. By the time

I was 16 I was riding a Yamaha YZ-250. So doing something in the army that involved bikes was just up my street.

"When I started the course I found that I knew just about every single guy on the course. All of them were people that I had raced against nearly every weekend before being called up. Then I realised that none of us had been randomly called up to the Army Gym.

"The Army Gym had an exhibition motorcycle squad that used to perform at military bases and civvie shows all over the country. We had a whole routine that we used to do and I must admit that the team was really good.

"I remember that year that we put on our demonstration four times daily at the Rand Easter Show in Jo'Burg. The SADF used to have a big exhibit at the show every year. Those were the days went it was still held at Milpark and it was a total party."

Balls and all

Johan was called up when he was 18, after just finishing high school. He was part of the January intake and back then national service was still one year.

"I was looking forward to going to the army. I was hoping that I would be sent to the infantry, because I really wanted to go to the border.

"I was a bit upset when I was called up to Personnel Services Corp. Although it did have one advantage. I lived in Pretoria, so I would be close to home.

"It was only later that I realised why I had been called up to do my training in Pretoria.

"When I was at school, rugby

was my sport. In standard nine and ten I had played first team rugby. I was then selected to play for the Northern Transvaal school team at Craven Week. Then I made the South African Schools team.

“After basic training I was sent on a short course and then posted to the sports office at Northern Transvaal Command. I was informed that I was there for one reason and one reason only - to play rugby.

“I played for the SA Defence Team that season and we had a really strong team. Besides myself, there were six other people that had played for SA Schools that year.

“Five people from our team would go on to play provincial rugby and one of them became a Springbok. I played club rugby for a number of years before retiring.

“So I must confess that for most of my national service I was either playing rugby or training. I never attended any parades, never stood inspection, never stood guard duty, and I got to sleep at home every night.”

Journalism 101

Scott was 19 when he did his national service. After finishing school he did not go straight into the military and instead did a one year diploma in journalism.

“I wanted to do a degree in journalism at Rhodes University, but I didn’t get in. So I did a one year diploma.

“From 1970 to 1994 the SADF brought out an official monthly magazine called Paratus,

“After basic training I was posted to Paratus and worked as one of their journalists. I was an

absolute blast.

“I travelled all around the country covering stories about the military. I also went to the border four times.

“I still fondly remember some of the stories I did. I did an article about the Recce selection course, as well as the Parabat jump course.

“I got to travel in helicopters and also went out on a patrol with one of our Daphne Class submarines.

“I covered some really interesting stories and met so many people. So I can honestly say that I enjoyed my national service.”

Business Mogul

Sean grew up in the Republic of Ireland. His family moved to South Africa and he did his last four years of schooling in Durban. When he finished school at the age of 18 he was now a South African citizen and was called up for national service.

“When I did my national service in 1976 it was still for one year. You could, however, extend your national service to 18 months or even two years.

“Now anyone who wanted to stay in the army for two years was obviously out of his mind, yet there were benefits to this.

“After you had finished your initial one year of national service you would be posted to a Citizen Force unit and would then have to do camps for the next 12 years.

“If, however, you volunteered for an extra six months and did 18 months national service, then the number of camps that you did were reduced. If you volunteered to do an extra year, the two-year option, then you would

not have to do any camps at all.

“I made up my mind that once I had finished national service there was no ways that I wanted to go back for camps every year. So I had no hesitation in volunteering to do an extra year.

“All my mates thought that I was mad and said that I should become a PF. I just laughed at them.

“One of the other major benefits of doing two years is that you were allowed more privileges. For instance I could get an evening pass practically every night. This meant that I could go into town if I wanted to.

“Unless I was on duty, I would get a pass every weekend. So in the long run I thought that it was a good deal.

“After I completed basic training I went on the Junior Leader’s course and ended up with the rank of corporal. I then did an instructor’s course and spent the remainder of my two years lecturing in radio procedure. It was not very stressful work and I had a lot of fun doing it.

“Although I was now drawing a corporal’s salary, this was still next to nothing and I decided that I needed some method to supplement my monthly tip that received from the army. I thought about it and eventually came up with a solution.

“One of the things that every national serviceman hated with a passion was washing and ironing clothes. I took a trip into Heidelberg and went to the local OK Bazaars.

“They had a furniture and appliance section and I found out how much deposit I would have to put down on a washing ma-

chine and a tumble drier.

“On my following weekend pass I convinced my parents to lend me enough money to pay the deposit on these items, as well as the deposit on a thing called an ‘Elna Press’.

“This was an item about the size of a small coffee table. It was basically a very fancy iron and most of the dry cleaners and clothing manufacturers used them. You could iron a shirt and pants in a few seconds with this clever device.

“The following week I put down a deposit on the washing machine, tumble drier, and Elna Press. Because I was under 21 years of age my parents had to stand surety for my HP account. I now had 12 months to pay them all off.

“At the time I was staying in the NCO’s single quarters at the Army Gym in a building called Danie Theron. It was an eight-storey block and there was a small washing room on each floor. Not that the washing room contained much mind you. It was little more than a table and a large washbasin.

“I installed my washing machine and tumble drier in the washing room and managed to get the key to the door from the old sergeant who was in charge of the building. If anyone else wanted to use the washing room they could always get the key from me.

“I then drew up some flyers and put them up all over the camp. These basically told everyone that if they wanted washing and ironing done they could contact me and it gave a price list. It was a gamble but I thought it just might work.

“Never in my wildest dreams did I expect the response that I got. A new intake of national servicemen had just started basic training and they went mad.

“Within two months I had repaid my parents as well as paid off OK Bazaars. From then on I made a healthy profit each month until I completed my national service.

“When I left, I sold the washing machine, tumble drier, and Elna Press to a PF corporal who lived in the single quarters. He paid me almost three times the amount that the appliances had cost me to buy in the first place. After all, he wasn’t just buying some appliances, he was buying a lucrative business from me.

“While my washing and ironing business made me a small fortune, I was always on the lookout for other ways of making a bit of extra cash.

“One of the things that I realised was that troops would always be hungry. I could hear opportunity knocking very loudly with that one.

“I bought myself a sandwich toaster and in the evenings I would go around to all the troop’s bungalows and ask if anyone wanted to buy a toasted sandwich.

“They had a choice of toasted cheese, toasted cheese and tomato, or toasted bacon and cheese. In the end I had to buy four sandwich toasters just to keep up with the demand.

“The best thing about this little sideline was the fact that, apart from the toasters, it cost me nothing.

“I had a deal with the corporal who ran the kitchens at Danie Theron building. He

would supply me with bread, butter, cheese, tomatoes, and bacon. And it didn’t cost me a cent. I gave him ten percent of the profits and he was more than happy. I suppose that the army would have been a bit upset if they found out what I was doing but they never did, so we were all happy.

“I also came up with a final money-making scheme. I bought a VW Kombi. It could carry ten people.

“One of the permanent force corporals was also from Durban and so was his girlfriend. Being PF it meant that he was allowed out every weekend. I told him that he could use the Kombi every weekend to drive down to Durban and it wouldn’t cost him a cent. There was a condition attached to this little arrangement though. He would be taking nine passengers with him.

“I put out the word that if any of the troops that lived in Durban and had a weekend pass wanted transport, it was available. At a cost mind you.

“It was fully booked every weekend. And it was a lot cheaper than taking a train or flight.

“The money that I made from these trips paid for the petrol as well as my monthly instalments on the Kombi. And it still left me with a tidy profit every month.

“Not only did I enjoy my national service, it also turned out to be very profitable. I guess that you can say that it was during my national service that I first realised the potential for becoming an entrepreneur.”

John 'Mad Jack' Churchill

Armed with bagpipes, a longbow, and a claymore sword John 'Mad Jack' Churchill became a legend during World War II.

Picture the scene. It's a morning parade on a rainy day in the mid-1930s. A young officer marches onto the parade and snaps to attention in front of his platoon with full military precision.

Unlike the rest of his platoon, however, this particular officer was carrying an umbrella which he had opened above his head.

Red in the face and dripping wet with rain the parade commander immediately stormed over and demanded to know what in the hell the officer was thinking, carrying an umbrella to parade. Without missing a beat the young officer responded, "Because it's raining sir."

John Malcolm Thorpe Fleming Churchill, or as he would later be known "Mad Jack", was immediately reprimanded for his insubordination. But such reprimands were nothing new to the very bored officer.

Amidst the brief interlude of peace between World War I and World War II Churchill found his military service rather dull.

A rare breed of man, born to lead others on the battlefield, Churchill itched for excitement and chaos. When life failed to provide it, he sorted it out himself.

At a time when roads were virtually non-existent in India he rode his motorcycle over 2,400 kilometres of the South East Asian countryside. He would often cross rivers and canyons by pushing his bike

along the railroad tracks.

To ease his peacetime boredom Churchill also taught himself how to play the bagpipes which, at the time, was not a particularly popular pastime for proper British men. Not one to do anything by half-measures Churchill not only learnt to play the bagpipes he took second place in the 1938 military piping competition at the Aldershot Tattoo. Not a bad accomplishment when you consider he was the only Englishman among the 70 or so competitors.

With the bagpipes mastered Churchill took up a keen interest in archery. He became so good at it that in 1939 he represented Great Britain at the World Archery Championships in Oslo.

Churchill may have been a daredevil and an adrenaline junkie but that didn't mean that he disliked comfort - quite the opposite. Not only would Churchill earn a reprimand for bringing an umbrella onto a military parade, he was also chastised for using a hot water bottle to keep warm at night, something that was against standing orders. To bypass this minor military technicality Churchill used a length of rubber tubing which he filled with hot water. Standing orders forbade the use of a hot water bottle, but said nothing about rubber tubes.

While most military men measure their toughness by their ability to suffer hardship,

Churchill saw no need for such displays of masochism. Or, as many sources state, perhaps he was bored out of his mind by peace and entertained himself by annoying his senior leadership. Whatever the truth, if anyone thought Churchill was a soft man because he preferred to stay dry in the rain and sleep in warm comfort they would be sorely mistaken. As the world would discover with the outbreak of World War II.

When Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. With Churchill's long stretch of peacetime boredom was about to come to an end.

"I was back in my red coat. The country having got into a jam in my absence." Churchill commented at the time.

He had left the army in 1936 and worked as a newspaper editor in Nairobi, Kenya and as a model. He also used his bagpipe and archery skills to play minor roles in films such as *The Thief of Baghdad* and *A Yank at Oxford*.

He resumed his commission in the army and was assigned to the Manchester Regiment, which was sent to France with the British Expeditionary Force.

He was frustrated because although Britain and France were now at war with Germany, both sides took up positions along the French Maginot Line and basically did nothing. Troops



LOOKING FOR ANOTHER WAR: John "Mad Jack" Churchill was a man born to lead others on the battlefield, often sporting bagpipes, a longbow and his trusty claymore sword.

held their line and did nothing for weeks upon weeks.

Britain and France were not prepared for war and lacked the means to go on the offensive. The period became known as The Phoney War. Whatever the case, Churchill found himself a victim of the Allies lack of planning. It was a situation that did not suit him at all.

When the Soviets invaded Finland Churchill joined a detachment of British volunteers sent to aid Finn forces. While he may not have been fighting the Germans, at that stage Churchill was prepared to fight anyone. Before the detachment could reach Finland it was cancelled because the Germans had finally launched an offensive in France. At last the proper war was on. The Finns would have

to fend for themselves.

Re-joining his unit, Churchill was immediately displeased at the British inability to hold its ground against the overwhelming German blitzkrieg. Churchill and his unit were given orders to retreat, making for Dunkirk where rescue awaited the overwhelmed British and French forces. If that rescue failed the war could come to a very sudden and unpleasant end for the Allies.

More than a little annoyed at having to retreat Churchill decided to creatively reinterpret his order and rather than just fall back he engaged in a series of aggressive guerrilla raids and counter-attacks against the advancing Germans.

Leading a small team of hand-picked men Churchill

would rush into battle holding aloft a basket-hilted Scottish broadsword. Like some ancient Highland warrior Churchill waded into enemy fire and on more than one occasion spat a German soldier on his claymore. At other times Churchill would discard his rifle in favour of his longbow, sinking arrows into the chests of Germans up to 90 metres away.

Rumour has it that during one battle a German officer asked for a list of casualties and injuries, only to be told that several of the casualties had been shot with arrows. The confused and irate officer warned his junior officer not to joke around with him, only to be shown the bodies with arrows still protruding from their chests. Professional soldiers always expect the unexpected in battle. But nobody expected a mad Englishman shooting arrows in the greatest industrial war in human history.

During a lull in the fighting, Mad Jack Churchill as he was now known, was spotted by a fellow officer riding his signature motorcycle with his longbow on his back and a German officer's cap on the headlamp. As Mad Jack dismounted the officer noticed a streak of blood across the back of his neck and asked about the fresh injury.

Asking for a stiff drink in return, Churchill responded that he and his men had run into a German machine gun and his men had screamed at him to run. But he had been simply too tired to run. Churchill thought that it would be easier to destroy the machine gun nest, even after having been shot through the neck.

Once successfully evacuated across the Channel back to England, Churchill got wind of a new military organisation being formed. It was called the ‘Commandos’ and while the request for volunteers was secretive, it promised aggressive military service. Churchill volunteered in a flash.

The forerunner of Britain’s modern special forces, commando service included weeks of training in demolitions, firearms, infiltration and other topics which Churchill absolutely adored. During commando training Churchill also met a woman whom he would immediately marry. They would remain happily married for 55 years.

On 27 December 1941 Churchill had his chance to re-join the war as the newly-formed commandos assaulted the German garrison at Vågsøy, Norway. It was called Operation Archery and Churchill was second in command of No. 3 Commando. Their mission was to destroy the German artillery positions in preparation for a full-scale raid.

As the ramps fell on the first landing craft, Churchill leapt forward from his position playing *March of the Cameron Men* on his bagpipes, before throwing a grenade and charging into battle with his claymore above his head and, as one soldier put it, uttering warlike cries.

Half an hour later Churchill sent back a brief signal to headquarters reading, ‘Maaloy battery and island captured. Casualties slight. Demolitions in progress.’

Churchill would go on to win



HITTING THE BEACH: John ‘Mad Jack’ Churchill can be seen on the right, wielding his claymore broad sword.

several military honours as well as more than a few battle scars. But his greatest feats of valour would not come until the autumn of 1943 during the Allied landings at Salerno, Italy.

Leading No. 2 Commando, Churchill was ordered to capture a German observation post outside the town of Molina, controlling a pass leading down to the Salerno beachhead.

With the help of a corporal, he infiltrated the town and captured the post, taking 42 prisoners including a mortar squad. Churchill led the men and prisoners back down the pass, with the wounded being carried on carts pushed by German prisoners. He commented that it was ‘an image from the Napoleonic Wars.’ He received the Distinguished Service Order for leading this action at Salerno.

Churchill later walked back to the town to retrieve his sword, which he had lost in hand-to-hand combat with the German

regiment. On his way there, he encountered a disoriented American patrol mistakenly walking towards enemy lines. When the NCO in command of the patrol refused to turn around, Churchill told them that he was going his own way and that he wouldn’t come back for a ‘bloody third time’.

A few months later Churchill himself would be taken prisoner. Surrounded on all sides and with just six men and himself alive, armed only with revolvers and a single American carbine, Churchill fought on until the ammunition ran out. A mortar killed three of his remaining men and wounded another. With nothing left to fight with Churchill pulled out his bagpipes and began playing *Will Ye No Come Back Again* until a German grenade knocked him unconscious.

Churchill was sent to a German POW camp but quickly became bored of not killing

Germans. He made an escape but was recaptured. He was sent to an even more well-guarded POW camp.

In late April 1945, Churchill and about 140 other prominent concentration camp inmates were transferred to Tyrol, guarded by SS troops. A delegation of prisoners told senior German army officers they feared they would be executed.

A German army unit commanded by Captain Wichard von Alvensleben moved in to protect the prisoners. Outnumbered, the SS guards moved out, leaving the prisoners behind. The prisoners were released and, after the departure of the Germans, Churchill walked 150 kilometres to Verona, Italy, where he met an American armoured unit.

When he returned to his unit he was appalled to hear that the war was almost over.

‘There are still nips aren’t there,’ he said, and volunteered to serve in the Far East and fight the Japanese. Just after Churchill arrived the Americans dropped the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki and the Japanese surrendered shortly afterwards.

A heartbroken Churchill would go on to say to a friend ‘If it wasn’t for those damn Yanks, we could have kept the war going another 10 years!’

After the Second World War ended, Churchill qualified as a parachutist and transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders. He was soon posted to Mandatory Palestine as executive officer of the 1st Battalion, the Highland Light Infantry.

In the spring of 1948, just be-

fore the end of the British mandate in the region, he became involved in another conflict.

Along with twelve of his soldiers, he attempted to assist the Hadassah medical convoy that came under attack by Arab forces. He had just come from a parade and was still in full dress uniform.

Churchill was one of the first men on the scene and banged on a bus, offering to evacuate members of the convoy in an APC, in contradiction to the British military orders to keep out of the fight. His offer was refused in the belief that the Jewish Haganah would come to their aid in an organised rescue.

When no relief arrived, Churchill and his twelve men provided cover fire against the Arab forces. Two of the convoy trucks were caught on fire, and 77 of the 79 people inside of them were killed. The event is known today as the Hadassah medical convoy massacre.

Of the experience he said: ‘About one hundred and fifty insurgents, armed with weapons varying from blunder-buses and old flintlocks to modern Sten and Bren guns, took cover behind a cactus patch in the grounds of the American Colony ... I went out and faced them.’ ‘About 250 rifle-men were on the edge of our property shooting at the convoy.... I begged them to desist from using the grounds of the American Colony for such a dastardly purpose.’

After the massacre, he co-ordinated the evacuation of 700 Jewish doctors, students and patients from the Hadassah hospital on the Hebrew Univer-

sity campus on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, where the convoy had been headed.

In his honour, the street leading to the hospital was named Churchill Boulevard.

In later years, Churchill served as an instructor at the land-air warfare school in Australia, where he became a passionate devotee of surfing.

Back in Britain, he was the first man to ride the River Severn’s five-foot tidal bore and designed his own board.

During this time back in Britain, he worked at a desk job in the army.

He retired from the army in 1959, with two awards of the Distinguished Service Order. In retirement, his eccentricity continued. He startled train conductors and passengers by throwing his briefcase out of the train window each day on the ride home. He later explained that he was tossing his case into his own back garden so he would not have to carry it from the station. He also enjoyed sailing coal-fired ships on the Thames and playing with radio-controlled model warships.

Churchill died on 8 March 1996 at 89 years old, in the county of Surrey.

Honours and Awards

- Distinguished Service Order with bar.
- Military Cross with bar.
- 1939–45 Star.
- Italy Star.
- Burma Star.
- War Medal 1939–1945

Ahead of its time

Development specifically for the use of the Fallschirmjäger in 1942, the FG 42 was considered one of the most advanced weapon designs of World War II and would go on to influence post-war small arms development.

Prior to and at the start of World War II the Germans established a number of parachute and airborne formations.

The parachute arm was officially inaugurated on 29 January 1936 with an Order of the Day calling for recruits for parachute training at the Stendal Parachute Training School located 96 km west of Berlin.

The school was activated in January 1936 and was open to active and reserve Luftwaffe personnel. NCOs, officers and other ranks of the Luftwaffe were required to successfully complete six jumps in order to receive the Luftwaffe Parachutist's Badge, which was instituted on 5 November 1936.

Although the Fallschirmjäger were not used in an airborne capacity during the Invasion of Poland in 1939, they were sent to occupy several airfields between the Vistula and Bug rivers.

The first opposed airborne attacks took place during the Norwegian Campaign. During the initial invasion Fallschirmjäger captured the defended air base of Sola, near Stavanger. It was also during the Norwegian Campaign when they suffered their first defeat. A company was dropped on the village and railroad junction of Dombas on 14 April 1940 and was destroyed by the Norwegian Army in a five-day battle.

On 10 May 1940 the

Fallschirmjäger proved their worth when they captured Eben Emael in Belgium. Eben Emael was considered to be one of the most powerful fortification in the world.

The performance of the Fallschirmjäger in the Netherlands was mixed as far as efficiency was concerned.

During the invasion of the Netherlands over 2,000 troops of the 7th Air Division were deployed, while approximately 12,000 troops of the 22nd Airlanding Division also participated.

It was the next large-scale airborne operation that would become the defining moment for the Fallschirmjäger during World War II.

Operation Mercury

During the invasion of Crete in May 1941, the German airborne forces would perform their last strategic parachute and glider operation of the war.

The Germans used 22,000 airborne troops but in only nine days suffered 3,250 killed or missing and another 3,400 wounded.

After Crete Adolf Hitler would no longer sanction large scale airborne operations and the Fallschirmjäger were used as ground troops.

Yet what was the reason for the German Fallschirmjäger to suffer slightly more than 30% casualties at Crete?

The answer to why they had taken such high casualties was fairly simple - the German parachute harness.

The Fallschirmjäger was armed with the same assortment of small arms as the Heer (Army). These were the 9×19 mm Parabellum submachine guns, and 7.92×57 mm Mauser chambered rifles.

The problem was that the German parachute harness attached to the body with a single strap. This meant that the paratrooper had to land on his hands and knees in a forward roll. This did not allow for heavier equipment such as rifles and machine guns to be safely carried during jumps.

Most Fallschirmjäger would jump armed with a Walther P-38 9 mm pistol and a few M24 *Stielhandgranate* (known as the potato masher).

Their rifles, submachine guns and crew-served weapons were stored separately in containers that were dropped from the wing of the exit aircraft.

At Crete, long-range rifle and machine gun fire from dug-in Commonwealth defenders inflicted heavy casualties on the outgunned German paratroopers in the early stages of battle as they attempted to retrieve their support weapons from containers scattered all over the battlefield.

Enter the FG 42

The experiences at Crete demonstrated the need for a rifle that could be carried on the person of the paratrooper.

In 1941, the *Luftwaffe* requested a selective-fire hand-held weapon for the paratroopers. The *Reichsluftfahrtministerium* (Reich Air Ministry) wanted to develop a universal shoulder-fired automatic rifle that could replace the bolt-action rifle, submachine gun, and light machine gun in the air assault role. The proposed weapon would also simplify logistics and provide greater firepower to the individual paratrooper.

The Reich Air Ministry went directly to German industry with its plans - the so-called LC-6 specification issued 14 December 1941 mentioned amongst others that the weapon should not exceed 1,000 mm in length, should not be significantly heavier than the Karabiner 98k bolt action standard service rifle, should be able to fire single shots from a closed bolt, provide fully automatic fire from an open bolt, feed from detachable 10 or 20 round magazines and be able to fire rifle grenades.

Despite the introduction of the 7.92×33mm Kurz intermediate cartridge promoted by the Heer (developed for the promising MP 43 assault rifle), the *Luftwaffe* favoured the long-range potential of the 7.92×57mm Mauser full-power rifle cartridge and this chambering was one of the main design prerequisites.

Six manufacturers were solicited for prototype designs: Gustloff-Werke, Mauser, Johannes Großfuß Metall- und Lackierwarenfabrik, C.G. Hänel,

Rheinmetall-Borsig and Heinrich Krieghoff Waffenfabrik.

A design credited to Rheinmetall-Borsig's Louis Stange of Sömmerda who had previously worked on the MG 34 proved satisfactory and underwent military trials conducted by the GL/C E-6 test station at Tarnowitz in mid-1942.

This early prototype, known under the factory designation Gerät 450 ("device 450") or Ausführung "A" ("type A"), was intended to be a pure sheet metal design, using pressed steel in the construction of the receiver, buttstock and corrugated hand-guard. The proposed system of operation was modelled on that used in World War I Lewis light machine gun, with a gas-operated turning bolt action geared to a spiral (clock-type) receiver coil

spring. The type "A" was never produced beyond model form, but the basic design layout was retained for further development.

With the basic characteristics of the LC-6 accepted, a series of modifications followed. The revised Ausführung "B" replaced the sheet metal hand-guard with a resin-impregnated fibre type that provided protection against heat and a better grip when wet.

Tests of the weapon exposed several shortcomings, addressed by Stange in April 1942 with the



LC-6/II prototype. Several other improvements were made before being authorized for large-scale production. The original Rheinmetall design used chrome-nickel steel heavily in many essential components, a strategic alloy in short supply. When the Luftwaffe was finally given permission to produce 3,000 rifles for combat trials, the material specifications were changed to accommodate the use of manganese steel as a substitute.

The weapon system underwent continuous development. Its expedited development, remedial changes to the original design and ever-changing Luftwaffe requirements resulted in a myriad of variants. Post-war literature typically identifies three versions, however the Germans did not give them separate designations; the Modell I, Modell II and Modell III were never officially referenced and period documents simply refer to the weapon as the 'Fallschirmjärgewehr 42' or "FG 42", and the reference was always made to the latest production model.

Operational use

The weapon saw first operational use during *Unternehmen Eiche* (Operation Oak) the Gran Sasso raid in September 1943 when German paratroopers and Waffen-SS commandos rescued Italian dictator Benito Mussolini from his captors - 200 well-equipped Carabinieri guards. However, during the whole airborne operation (which was personally ordered by Hitler) not a single shot was fired.

After approximately 2,000 FG 42s had been produced by Krieghoff, supplies of the man-



Fallschirmjärgewehr 42

- **Designer:** Louis Stange
- **Designed:** 1941–1942
- **Manufacturer:** Rheinmetall (limited); Heinrich Krieghoff Waffenfabrik; L. O. Dietrich (limited)
- **Produced:** 1943–1945
- **No. built:** about 7,000
- **Weight:** 4.2 kg Type I & II; 4.95 kg Type III
- **Length:** 945 mm Type I & II; 975 mm Type III
- **Barrel length:** 500 mm
- **Cartridge:** 7.92×57 mm Mauser
- **Action:** Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- **Rate of fire:** 900 rounds/min Type I; 750 rounds/min Type III; 250 rounds/min practical
- **Muzzle velocity:** 740 m/s (SmK bullet)
- **Effective firing range:** 600 m
- **Feed system:** 10 or 20-round detachable box magazine
- **Sights:** Iron sights (all models); flip-up front post and folding rear diopter sight; ZFG42 or ZF4 telescopic sight

ganese steel from which the receivers were forged were diverted to other needs; this meant a redesign was required to use stamped sheet metal in its place.

Field reports that the lightweight rifle wasn't sturdy enough to handle full-power rifle ammunition in cyclic mode made Krieghoff engineers design the Type G. Improvements were: relocating the bi-pod from the front of the hand-guard to the muzzle to reduce shot dispersion; changing the pistol grip angle to near vertical; enlarging the hand-guard and changing the stock from stamped steel to wood to minimize overheating, adding weight to the bolt and

lengthen its travel to reduce the cyclic rate of fire.

Also a four position gas regulator was fitted, the bolt and recoil spring were changed to wound wire, a case deflector was fitted and the muzzle brake and the bayonet mount was changed. These changes, particularly the pistol grip change and the bi-pod relocation, are clearly visible on late-model FG 42s.

Production models also had a simple flip-out spike bayonet under the barrel hidden by the bipod. In the later version the bayonet was shortened from around 250 mm to around 150 mm. There were never enough FG 42s to arm most Fallschirm-



Because of the rather athletic forward landing roll necessitated by their parachute harness, the German paratrooper could carry little more than a pistol and some grenades on his person.

Therefore, many weapons containers, called *Waffenhalter*, had to be carried and dropped. A single 40 man plus a platoon of Fallschirmjaeger needed no less than fourteen containers just for weapons and a basic ammunition supply.

The containers were carried either under the Wings or in a bomb-bay.

Each container could hold over 90 kg of equipment and the maximum loaded weight was 118 kg. It was 1.5 metres long and about 40 cm square. The container had a crash pad at one end and the parachute was connected at the other end.

Some containers were equipped with a pair of small wheels and a tow bar that could be clipped to the container after the drop. This

allowed the container to be towed from the drop zone. The number one priority of the troops upon landing was to find their containers.

Containers would often be scattered over a wide area, making it difficult for the paratroopers to retrieve their weapons.

Coloured bands or other markings were used to aid retrieval by the correct units and to indicate which items the container carried.

The standard MP 38 and MP 40 submachine-guns and bolt action Mausers were used by most paratroopers. The German paratroopers were equipped with what was undoubtedly the best light machine-guns of World War II - the MG 34 and the later MG 42.

One of the more successful modifications of standard equipment was a shortened (KURZ or "K") version of the 81 MM mortar. This saved considerable weight and range was not severely penalized.

jäger as originally intended.

The FG 42 was intended to fill a niche in Nazi Germany's arsenal and was produced only in small numbers. It was somewhat well received by paratroopers when tested, but it did have its drawbacks.

The FG 42 had a 20 round, or sometimes 10 round, magazine that was mounted on the left side of the rifle.

Though a side-mounted magazine was common in submachine guns of the time, the larger magazine with heavier ammunition of a full-powered rifle tended to unbalance the weapon. In addition controllable bursts were difficult. This made full-automatic fire only marginally useful.

The FG 42 used a fairly sophisticated muzzle device that did help with recoil and muzzle flash, but made blast and noise much greater than on other similar weapons.

It is not easy to determine the significance of the FG 42 in terms of weapons history. With a slightly longer barrel and belt-feeding the weapon would have been an excellent light machine gun. Its designer Louis Stange knew that, he also built a prototype with belt feed.

Some features, such as the details of the gas-operated bolt selection process, were studied by US Army engineers after the war. These, along with some aspects of the MG 42 general-purpose machine gun, are commonly reported to have been incorporated in the similarly troubled M60 general-purpose machine gun. The last known derivatives of the FG 42 were the Swiss Sturmgewehr 52 and M60 machine gun.

Fighter aircraft with the most kills

Since World War I the aircraft has played a vital role in nearly every war since then. Yet which aircraft achieved the most kills in aerial combat? This month they go Head-to-Head.

On December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright made four brief flights at Kitty Hawk with their first powered aircraft.

A mere eight years later, in 1911, powered aircraft were first used in war by the Italians against the Turks near Tripoli, but it was not until the Great War of 1914–18 that their use became widespread.

Since then the aircraft has played a major role in almost every war. Yet which aircraft claimed the most kills in aerial combat?

It is interesting to note that a fairly modern aircraft such

as the F-16 Fighting Falcon, which has been involved in a number of conflicts, has less than 100 kills.

Compare this to the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 which was credited with 20,000 kills.

You have to take into account the actual number of aircraft involved during World War II. The Soviets alone lost more than 21,000 aircraft during the war.

Something else of interest is the fact that the top 121 aces of World War II were all pilots of the German Luftwaffe. A total of 108 Luftwaffe pilots scored more than 100 kills, 52 of them

had over 200 kills and two of them, Erich Hartmann and Gerhard Barkhorn, had over 300 kills.

‘Bubi’ Hartmann was the top ace of all time with a total of 352 kills. So it’s hardly surprising that World War II aircraft achieved such high kill rates.

In this article we take a brief look at aircraft that claimed 50 kills or more.

These are aircraft ranging from World War I to the present day. We have used photographs of models produced by Revell, Tamiya, Airfix, and Italeri.



F-16 Fighting Falcon

Multi-role/Air Superiority

Manufacturer: General Dynamics

Origin: United States

First flight: 2 February 1974



76 Kills

- Israeli Air Force F-16s were credited with 44 air-to-air kills during the 1982 Lebanon War.
- The Pakistan Air Force F-16s shot down at least eight intruders during the Soviet-Afghan War.

F-15 Eagle

Air Superiority Fighter

Manufacturer: McDonnell Douglas

Origin: United States

First flight: 27 July 1972



104 Kills

- The F-15 Eagle has an unmatched air-to-air kill ratio of 104 to 0.
- In the 1982 Lebanon War, Israeli F-16s shot down 41 Syrian aircraft. (23 MiG-21s and 17 MiG-23s).



Lavochkin La-5

Fighter

Manufacturer: Lavochkin

Origin: Soviet Union

First flight: March 1942



128 Kills

- Able to challenge the German Bf 109G-2 and the Fw 190A-4 on more or less equal terms.
- 5th Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment claimed 127 enemy aircraft shot down while losing 52 La-5s.



Bell P-39 Airacobra Fighter

Manufacturer: Bell Aircraft
Origin: United States
First flight: 6 April 1938



149 Kills

- The P-39 was used by the Soviet Air Force and enabled Soviet pilots to collect the highest number of kills.
- Alexander Pokryshkin scored 47 of his 59 victories in P-39s, making him the highest scoring P-39 fighter pilot.



Hawker Tempest Fighter

Manufacturer: Hawker Aircraft Limited
Origin: United Kingdom
First flight: 2 September 1942



239 Kills

- In air-to-air combat, the Tempest units achieved an estimated air combat success ratio of 8:1.
- The highest-scoring Tempest ace, David C. Fairbanks of the RCAF, destroyed 11 or 12 German aircraft.



F-14 Tomcat Multi-role/Air Superiority

Manufacturer: Grumman
Origin: United States
First flight: 21 December 1980



160 Kills

- Iran claimed there F-14s shot down at least 160 Iraqi aircraft during the 1980s Iran-Iraq War.
- All-time top scoring F-14 ace, Major Jalil Zandi, is credited with shooting down 11 Iraqi aircraft.



MiG-21 Fighter/Interceptor

Manufacturer: Russian Aircraft Corporation
Origin: Soviet Union
First flight: 15 June 1955



240 Kills

- Nguyễn Văn Cốc of the VPAF, who scored nine kills in MiG-21s, is regarded as the most successful MiG-21 pilot.
- 12 other VPAF pilots were credited with five or more aerial victories while flying the MiG-21.



SPAD S.XIII

Fighter

Manufacturer: SPAD
Origin: France
First flight: 4 April 1917



252 Kills

- French biplane fighter aircraft of World War I. One of the most capable and most produced fighters.
- French ace, Rene Fonck (75 victories), Georges Guynemer (54 victories) and Charles Nungesser (45 victories) all flew the SPAD S.XIII.



F-4 Phantom II

Interceptor/Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: McDonnell Douglas
Origin: United States
First flight: 27 May 1958



306 Kills

- During the Vietnam War USN F-4s claimed 40 air-to-air victories at a loss of seven Phantoms.
- One USN pilot and one RIO became aces by achieving five aerial kills against the VPAF.



Yakovlev Yak-3

Fighter

Manufacturer: Plant No.292 (Saratov)
Origin: Soviet Union
First flight: 28 February 1943



- One of the smallest and lightest combat fighters fielded by any combatant during the war.
- World War II French ace Marcel Albert considered it a superior aircraft to the P-51D Mustang and Supermarine Spitfire.



Brewster F2A Buffalo

Fighter

Manufacturer: Brewster Aeronautical Corporation
Origin: United States
First flight: 2 December 1937



477 Kills

- The Buffalo won a competition against the Grumman F4F Wildcat in 1939 to become the U.S. Navy's first monoplane fighter aircraft.
- The Finnish Air Force produced 36 Buffalo aces.



Messerschmitt Me 262

Fighter/Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: Messerschmitt

Origin: German Luftwaffe

First flight: 18 July 1942



735 Kills

- The fighter version was nicknamed Schwalbe (Swallow) and the fighter-bomber version Sturmvogel (Storm Bird).
- It was the world's first operational jet-powered fighter aircraft.



North American F-86 Sabre

Fighter

Manufacturer: North American Aviation

Origin: United States

First flight: 1 October 1947



900 Kills

- The United States' first swept-wing fighter that could counter the swept-wing Soviet MiG-15 in high-speed dogfights in the skies of the Korean War.
- By the end of the Korean War, F-86 Sabres shot down 792 MiGs for a loss of only 78 Sabres. A kill ratio of 10:1.



Ilyushin Il-2 Shturmovik

Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: Ilyushin

Origin: Soviet Union

First flight: 2 October 1939



760 Kills

- The Il-2 was never given an official name and 'shturmovik' is the generic Russian word meaning ground attack aircraft.
- To Il-2 pilots, the aircraft was simply the diminutive "Ilyusha".



MiG-15

Fighter

Manufacturer: Mikoyan-Gurevich

Origin: Soviet Union

First flight: 30 December 1947



1,097 Kills

- The MiG-15 was one of the first successful jet fighters to incorporate swept wings to achieve high transonic speeds.
- The MiG-15 is believed to have been one of the most produced jet aircraft with more than 13,000 manufactured.



Fiat G.50 Freccia

Fighter

Manufacturer: Fiat

Origin: Italy

First flight: 26 February 1937



1,100 Kills

- Used extensively on various fronts by Italy, including in Northern Europe, North Africa, the Balkans, and the Italian mainland.
- Finnish ace Oiva Tuominen scored 15 of his 33 victories while flying the G.50.



Sopwith Camel

Fighter

Manufacturer: Sopwith Aviation Company

Origin: United Kingdom

First flight: 22 December 1916



- The Camel was powered by a single rotary engine and was armed with twin synchronized Vickers machine guns.
- Agility in combat made the Camel one of the best-remembered Allied aircraft of World War I.



Hawker Hurricane

Fighter

Manufacturer: Hawker Aircraft

Origin: United Kingdom

First flight: 6 November 1935



1,200 Kills

- The Hurricane inflicted 60 percent of the losses sustained by the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain.
- It fought in all the major theatres of the World War II.



Grumman F4F Wildcat

Carrier-based Fighter

Manufacturer: Grumman

Origin: United States

First flight: 2 September 1937



1,327 Kills

- With a top speed of 512 km/h, the Wildcat was outperformed by the faster (533 km/h), more manoeuvrable, and longer-ranged Mitsubishi A6M Zero.
- By the end of World War II it had achieved an overall kill-to-loss ratio of 6.9:1.



Mitsubishi A6M "Zero"

Carrier-based Fighter

Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

Origin: Japan

First flight: 1 April 1939



1,500 Kills

- The Zero is considered to have been the most capable carrier-based fighter in the world when it was introduced early in World War II
- The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service (IJNAS) also frequently used it as a land-based fighter.



Vought F4U Corsair

Carrier-based Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: Chance Vought

Origin: United States

First flight: 29 May 1940



2,155 Kills

- It became one of the most capable carrier-based fighter-bombers of World War II.
- The Corsair served almost exclusively as a fighter-bomber throughout the Korean War and during the French colonial wars in Indochina and Algeria.



Curtiss P-40 Warhawk

Fighter

Manufacturer: Curtiss-Wright

Origin: United States

First flight: 14 October 1938



1,944 Kills

- The Warhawk was used by most Allied powers during World War II, and remained in front-line service until the end of the war.
- The P-40's lack of a two-speed supercharger made it inferior to Luftwaffe fighters such as the Messerschmitt Bf 109 or the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 in high-altitude combat.



Republic P-47 Thunderbolt

Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: Republic Aviation

Origin: United States

First flight: 6 May 1941



3,752 Kills

- When fully loaded, the P-47 weighed up to eight tons, making it one of the heaviest fighters of the war.
- The P-47 was noted for its firepower, as well as its ability to resist battle damage and remain airworthy.



Lockheed P-38 Lightning

Fighter/Fighter-Bomber

Manufacturer: Lockheed Corporation
Origin: United States
First flight: 27 January 1939



3,785 Kills

- The P-38 was utilized in various aerial combat roles including as a highly effective fighter-bomber, a night fighter, and as a long-range escort fighter when equipped with drop tanks.
- Unusual for a fighter of this time, the exhaust was muffled by the turbo-superchargers, making the P-38's operation relatively quiet.



Grumman F6F Hellcat

Carrier-based Fighter

Manufacturer: Grumman
Origin: United States
First flight: 26 June 1942



5,229 Kills

- The Hellcat was a well-designed carrier fighter, which was able to outperform the A6M Zero and help secure air superiority over the Pacific theatre.
- The F6F series was designed to take damage and get the pilot safely back to base.



Supermarine Spitfire

Fighter/Interceptor

Manufacturer: Supermarine
Origin: United Kingdom
First flight: 5 March 1936



4,000 Kills

- During the Battle of Britain, Spitfires were generally tasked with engaging Luftwaffe fighters - mainly Messerschmitt Bf 109E-series aircraft, which were a close match for them.
- The Spitfire served in several roles, including interceptor, photo-reconnaissance, fighter-bomber, and trainer



North American P-51 Mustang

Fighter

Manufacturer: North American Aviation
Origin: United States
First flight: 26 October 1940



5,994 Kills

- Mustangs were used by the USAAF's Eighth Air Force to escort bombers in raids over Germany.
- Despite the advent of jet fighters, the Mustang remained in service with some air forces until the early 1980s.



Focke-Wulf Fw 190

Fighter

Manufacturer: Focke-Wulf
Origin: German Luftwaffe
First flight: 1 June 1939



20,000 Kills

- It was regarded as one of the best fighter planes of World War II.
- The majority of its kills were achieved over the Eastern Front. Later it would be used to protect Germany against Allied daylight bombing.



Messerschmitt Bf 109

Fighter

Manufacturer: Messerschmitt AG
Origin: German Luftwaffe
First flight: 29 May 1935



+20,000 Kills

- It was called the Me 109 by Allied aircrew and some German aces.
- 13 Luftwaffe pilots scored more than 200 kills with the Bf 109, while two scored more than 300. The Soviets lost more than 21,200 aircraft.



Military Acronyms

Do you know your HALO from your HAHO? Were you GV enough to stay out of DB? And did you prefer an FN to an AK? This month we're looking at military acronyms. See how many of these you get right. Answers on page 102.

1. What does NATO stand for?
2. The AK-47 is one of the most popular weapons of all time. What does the AK stand for?
3. In the SADF the term 'GV' was used to describe someone who was very enthusiastic. What did 'GV' stand for?
4. The Casspir was an armoured personnel carrier originally developed for and used by the South African Police and later used by the SADF. What did Casspir stand for?
5. In parachuting terms, what does HALO stand for?
6. The MP 40 was a submachine gun used by the Germans in World War II. What did the MP stand for?
7. PLAN was the military wing of SWAPO. What did PLAN stand for?
8. During the Cold War, the main security agency for the Soviet Union was the KGB. What did KGB stand for?
9. The South African R1 rifle was designed on the Belgian FN rifle. What did FN stand for?
10. The national intelligence agency of Israel is the Mossad. What does Mossad stand for?
11. The *Waffen SS* was the armed wing of the Nazi SS organisation. What did SS stand for?
12. In the SADF, DB was not a place where you wanted to spend any time. What did 'DB' stand for?
13. During World War II the ME 109 fighter aircraft that was the backbone of the Luftwaffe's fighter force. What did 'ME' stand for?
14. The PIAT Mk I was a British man-portable anti-tank weapon developed during the Second World War. What did PIAT stand for?
15. The RPG-7 is a Russian shoulder-launched anti-tank weapon. What does RPG stand for?
16. The M1918 BAR was an American weapon that saw action from World War I to the Vietnam War. What did BAR stand for?
17. With its distinctive sound and high rate of fire, the RPD was a popular Russian light machine gun. What did RPD stand for?
18. Flak is a common term for anti-aircraft fire. Where does the word Flak come from?
19. The 7.5 cm Pak 40 was a German 75 millimetre anti-tank gun used in World War II. What did Pak stand for?
20. In the SADF what did PF and CF stand for?

4



6



13



Heinz Guderian

Regarded by many as the father of modern tank warfare, Heinz Guderian redefined the concept of mobile warfare.

Nicknamed *Schneller Heinz* (Hurrying Heinz) and a veteran of World War I and World War II, Heinz Guderian is regarded by many to be the father of modern tank warfare.

Not only did he survive the war, he later served as an advisor overseeing the establishment of the military in

West Germany. Yet who exactly was he?

Early life

Heinz Wilhelm Guderian was born in Kulm, West Prussia (now Poland) on 17 June 1888.

In 1907, at the age 19, he joined the army. On 1 October 1913 he married Margarete Goerne, with whom he had two sons, Heinz Günther and Kurt.

At the start of World War I he served as a signals officer in the 5th Cavalry Division.

On 28 February 1918 Guderian was appointed to the General Staff Corps.

He was 29 years old at the time.

Like many Germans, Guderian was not happy when Germany signed the armistice in 1918. He believed that the German Empire should have continued the fight.

Between the wars

Early in 1919, Guderian was selected as one of the four thousand officers to continue on in military service for the reduced size German army, the *Reichswehr*.

He was assigned to serve on the staff of the central command of the Eastern Frontier Guard Service. This Guard Service was intended to control and coordinate the independent *Freikorps* units in the defence of Germany's eastern frontiers against Polish and Soviet forces engaged in the Russian Civil War.

In June 1919, Guderian joined the Iron Brigade (later known as the Iron Division) as its second General Staff officer. The commanders of the regular German army had intended that this move would allow the army to reassert its control over the Iron Division; however, their hopes were disappointed.

Rather than restrain the *Freikorps*, Guderian's anti-communism caused him to empathize with the Iron Division's efforts to defend Prussia against the Soviet threat.

The Iron Division waged a ruthless campaign in Lithuania and pushed into Latvia; however, traditional German anti-Slavic attitudes prevented the division's full cooperation with the White Russian and Baltic forces opposing the Bolsheviks.

Guderian was assigned as a company commander for the 10th Jäger-Battalion. Later he joined the *Truppenamt* ("Troop Office"), which was a clandestine form of the Army's General Staff which had been officially forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1927 Guderian was promoted to major and transferred to the command of Army transport and motorized tactics in Berlin. This placed Guderian at the centre of German development of armoured forces.

Guderian, who was fluent in both English and French, studied the works of British maneuver warfare theorists J. F. C. Fuller, Giffard Martel and B.H. Liddell Hart. In 1931, he was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* (Lieutenant-Colonel) and became chief of staff to the Inspectorate of Motorized Troops under Oswald Lutz. In 1933 he was promoted to *Oberst* or Colonel.

Guderian wrote many papers on mechanized warfare during this period. These papers were based on extensive study of the lessons of the First World War, research on foreign literature on the use of armour, and war gaming done with dummy tanks and later with early armoured vehicles. Some of these

trial manoeuvres were conducted in the Soviet Union.

Britain at this time was experimenting with tanks under General Hobart, and Guderian kept abreast of Hobart's writings using, at his own expense, someone to translate all the articles being published in Britain.

In October 1935 he was made commander of the newly created 2nd Panzer Division (one of three). On 1 August 1936 he was promoted to *Generalmajor*, and on 4 February 1938 he was promoted to *Generalleutnant* and given command of the XVI Army Corps.

In 1936, General Lutz asked Guderian to write a book on the developing panzer arm and the theories that had been developed on its use in war. The resulting volume, *Achtung - Panzer!*, was his most important work.

It reviewed the state of armoured development in the European nations and Soviet Russia, and presented Guderian's theories on the effective use of armoured formations and combined-arms warfare ideas of other general staff officers. The book included the importance of airpower in support of the panzer units for future ground combat.

Germany's panzer forces were created largely along the lines laid down by Guderian in his book.

Mobile warfare

The German army developed infiltration tactics towards the end of World War I.

Special combat teams of *sturmmtruppen* (storm troopers) would advance in dispersed order rather than in massed rushes. They would bypass strong points, attacking rear areas and causing their collapse.

This method was used in the 1918 German Spring Offensive, but the German forces lacked the mobility to exploit breakthroughs and achieve deep penetrations of the enemy defences. They were unable to sustain the impetus of the initial attack, and ultimately they failed to gain decisive results.

The key to sustaining a breakthrough was motorized troops. Once the *sturmmtruppen* had taken an area, reserve troops should have been brought up to hold the area. Yet up until the 1920s the extent of motorization necessary was not possible.

Soviet marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky pursued the idea, but he was executed in 1937 in Stalin's "Great Purge" of Soviet military leaders. So we will never know just how far he may have taken the idea.

Guderian was the leading advocate in Germany of motorization and tanks, and of using armoured forces in deep penetration operations. He is regarded as the chief architect of Germany's panzer divisions.

Guderian developed and advocated the strategy of concentrating panzer ("armoured") formations at the point of attack (the *Schwerpunkt*) and deep penetration.

In *Achtung Panzer*, he described what he believed were



essential elements for a successful panzer attack: surprise, deployment in mass, and suitable terrain.

He proposed armoured divisions in which motorized infantry and artillery would operate in conjunction with tanks to achieve a decisive success. In his memoir *Panzer Leader*, he wrote that as early as 1929, he “became convinced that it would be wrong to include tanks in infantry divisions: what were needed were armoured divisions which would include all the supporting arms needed to fight with full effect.”

After Hitler came to power and Germany began re-arming, Guderian was empowered to put his ideas into practice.

Guderian believed that among those things needed for success was for commanders of mobile forces to be able to communicate with each other and their sub-units. Guderian insisted in

1933 that German

tanks be equipped with radios and intercoms (throat microphones) to enable each tank commander to communicate with his crew and with other tanks in his platoon and company.

In each individual German tank, the tank crew worked as a team, and the tank commander could communicate with each crew member. Moreover, German tanks worked collectively as teams, providing mutual protection and increased effective firepower.

Of Guderian’s contributions, Hermann Balck (highly decorated tank commander) considered some of the most important to be the five man tank crew, with a dedicated radio operator in the hull of the tank, and the organization of divisional signals troops to allow the commander to direct the division from any unit.

This allowed forward control of the division,

which was critical to mobile warfare. The German victories from 1939 through 1941 were not due to superior equipment, but to superior tactics in the use of that equipment, and superior command and control which allowed the German panzer forces to operate at a much faster pace.

World War II

Guderian led the XIX Corps during the invasion of Poland. This corps comprised a panzer division and two motorized infantry divisions. Guderian led his corps in the Battle of Wizna and the Battle of Kobryn.

In each of these, he abandoned his theories of rapid manoeuvre and was highly successful using tanks to deliver offensive sapper companies that successfully blew up the majority of the Polish bunkers at Wizna.

During the invasion of France and the Low Countries, Guderian’s panzer group led the “race to the



sea” that split the Allied armies in two, depriving the French armies and the BEF in Northern France and Belgium of their fuel, food, spare parts and ammunition. Faced with orders from nervous superiors to halt on one occasion, he managed to continue his advance by stating he was performing a “reconnaissance in force”, but the German High Command ultimately denied him the authority to attack the Allied forces encircled in the pocket at Dunkirk.

Invasion of the Soviet Union

In 1941 Guderian commanded the 2nd Panzer Group, also known as *Panzergruppe Guderian*, during Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The unit later was redesignated 2nd Panzer Army.

Following the completion of the encirclement in the Battle of Kiev, Guderian was ordered to make a drive for Moscow in mid-September 1941. In November, the attack by the 2nd Panzer Group on Tula and Kashira, 125 km south of Moscow, achieved only fleeting and precarious success.

In the face of the Soviet counter-offensive, Guderian was not allowed to pull his forces back but instead was ordered to “stand fast”, keeping them all in their current positions. He disputed that order, going personally to Adolf Hitler’s headquarters, but it was not changed.

After returning to his command, Guderian carried out a series of withdrawals anyway, directly disobeying his orders.

A heated series of disputes with Field Marshal Günther von Kluge, the commander of Army Group Centre, then followed.

Guderian was relieved of command on 26 December 1941, along with 40 other generals. He was transferred to the reserve pool. Guderian was bitter towards Kluge, who he felt had failed to support him.

The final chapter

After the German defeat at Stalingrad, Hitler realized he needed Guderian’s expertise. He personally requested Guderian to take a new position as “Inspector General of Armoured Troops”. Guderian made a number of stipulations to ensure that he would have the requisite authority to perform his duties. Hitler agreed to these conditions, and on 1 March 1943 he was appointed to the newly created position.

His responsibilities were to oversee the rebuilding of the greatly weakened panzer arm, to oversee tank design and production, and the training of Germany’s panzer forces, and he was to advise Hitler on their use. His new position allowed him to bypass much of the Nazi bureaucracy and report to Hitler directly.

On 21 July 1944, after the failure of the 20 July Plot to assassinate Hitler, in which Guderian had no direct involvement, Guderian was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army (*Chef des Generalstabs des Heeres*) succeeding Kurt Zeitzler who had departed on 1 July after multi-

ple conflicts with Adolf Hitler.

Guderian and his staff surrendered to U.S. forces on 10 May 1945. He remained as a prisoner of war in U.S. custody until his release on 17 June 1948. His conduct was investigated and no charges were brought.

After the war he was often invited to attend meetings of British veterans’ groups, where he analysed past battles with his old foes. During the early 1950s Guderian was among the military advisors who helped in the establishment of West Germany’s military defence force, the Bundeswehr, which has gone on to be the military defence force of Germany today.

Guderian died on 14 May 1954 at the age of 65, in Schwangau near Füssen in Southern Bavaria.

Awards and Decorations

- Iron Cross (1914) 2nd Class & 1st Class
- Knight 2nd class of the Friedrich Order with Swords
- Saxe-Ernestine House Order Commander 2nd Class with Swords
- Royal Hungarian War Memorial Medal with Swords
- War Memorial Medal with Swords
- Order of St. Sava 1st Class
- Clasp to the Iron Cross (1939) 2nd Class & 1st Class
- Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves

Finnish Army - World War II

In this month's 'Forged in Battle', we look at the Finnish Army in World War II.

We all know the scenario. The playground bully wants something that does not belong to him and just goes ahead and takes it from the smaller kids. This was the case with Russia in 1939.

They wanted to claim territory that belonged to Finland. When the Finns refused, Rus-

sia invaded in November 1939. This campaign became known as 'The Winter War'.

The Russians had an over-

whelming advantage in both men and firepower. The Finns had 340,000 soldiers

while the Russians had 760,000. The Russians had more than 3,800 aircraft, the Finns had 114. The Finns had 32 tanks, most of which were obsolete. The Russians, however, had more than 6,500 tanks.

With odds like that the Russians expected that the war wouldn't last more than a couple of weeks. Instead it went on for three months, with the Russians

taking horrific casualties. In the end Finland agreed to sign over 11% of its land to Russia in the peace treaty that ended the war. Yet Finland retained its sovereignty and demonstrated that it was not easy target. If anyone wanted to take over their country it would involve a long and costly war.

Nikita Khrushchev, never one to mince his words, summed it

up when he said, "But on these most favourable terms, we could only win through huge difficulties and incredibly great losses. In fact, this victory was a moral defeat."

Yet how exactly did the Finns managed to hold the far superior Russians off for so long? How were they able to inflict such serious casualties on the Russians? These are some of



the tactics employed by an army that was forged in battle.

Food for thought

It was Napoleon, or Frederick the Great, that said an army marches on its stomach. This was something the Finns believed in. They ate well, and make sure that the Soviets didn't. The Finns had a secret weapon in this department, the *Lotta Svärd*. This was an organisation of patriotic Finnish women that managed catering efforts for the troops. Volunteers staffed small, mobile field kitchens, often pulled on sleds, to provide hot meals to their troops. Almost every unit had its own field kitchen staffed by cooks that followed the troops everywhere. These cooks carried their own firearms when they were in combat zones. The *Lotta Svärd* also had baking units that produced 200,000 kg of bread per day for the troops.

While they knew the value of a hot meal, the Finnish troops worked hard to deny the same opportunity to their Soviet opposition. The far bulkier Russian field kitchens were often the targets for an attack. Denied hot food, it hurt the Soviet morale.

This drink's on me

Severely lacking tanks and anti-tank weapons, the Finns used Molotov cocktails to neutralise Soviet tanks. In fact it was the Finns that coined the term 'Molotov Cocktail'. It was a simple, yet ingenious weapon. A bottle was filled with flammable liquid, such as petrol, and a rag was used for a fuse. The rag was soaked in flammable liquid

and tied around the neck of the sealed bottle. The rag was lit and the bottle thrown at a target such as a tank. The bottle would break on impact and the flammable liquid would be ignited. Burning liquid would often enter the tank through ventilation hatches. This would force the crew to evacuate the vehicle and they were gunned down.

While this type of device had been used before, it was during the Winter War that it became known as the Molotov cocktail. It was named after the Russian foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov, who the Finns blamed for starting the war. At the start of the war the Soviets dropped incendiary bombs on the Finnish capital, Helsinki.

When Finnish media reported these attacks, Molotov denied them. He said that the Soviet Union was merely delivering food aid to starving Finns. The Finns, who knew this was a lie, began referring to incendiary bombs as 'Molotov breadbaskets'. When the Finns began using their bottle bombs against the Russian, they named them 'Molotov cocktails', saying they were serving up a drink to go along with the Soviet breadbaskets.

The White Death

The Finns had something the Russians did not have – The White Death. Simo "Simuna" Häyhä was a Finnish sniper who was reported to have killed 505 Russian soldiers. The Russian were terrified of him and gave him the nickname, *Belaya Smert* (White Death). For more information on Häyhä read the article on page 34 of

this month's edition of Military Despatches.

Spa treatment

The Finns had another secret weapon that the Soviets did not have – saunas. While the idea may seem crazy, the Finns actually had saunas in front line positions. Saunas are an integral part of Finnish culture and 99% of Finns visit a sauna at least once a week. While Finnish troops were prepared to defend their homeland to the death, they weren't going to do it without saunas.

Every two to three days, if combat conditions permitted it, every Finnish soldier was scheduled for a turn at one of the front line saunas. While every village would have a number of saunas, the Finns also had mobile saunas. Besides being a morale boost, it also reminded them exactly what it was they were fighting for. The saunas also had another major benefit. They were useful for preventing frostbite and killing bacteria. The Russian troops in the field had no such luxuries.

Divide & Conquer

The Finns employed a tactic known as motti. Roughly this translates as "an abundance of firewood". During the Winter War the Finns would try and break the Russians into smaller groups known as motti. Once cut off from the main body, these groups could be dealt with individually by Finnish soldiers. The tactic was summed up as follows: "Finnish tactics aim to penetrate the front of the enemy, to separate the enemy's strong points from each other,

to cut off these strong points completely from all arteries of supply, and to encircle them."

Another tactic used was to allow the encircled Russians an opportunity to escape. They would normally abandon their heavy equipment and flee through the woods, where they could be easily picked off.

Mind Games

The Finns were also expert at using psychological warfare. They kept the Soviet troops off balance, denying them rest and keeping them in a constant state of fear. Besides the use of improvised explosives, snipers scattered throughout the woods, and the motti tactics, the Finns used other methods to keep the Soviets off balance. Most of the territory abandoned by Finnish troops was rigged with mines and booby traps, slowing down any Soviet advance. They also destroyed any abandoned villages and buildings, denying the Soviets a place to rest.

The Finns would often take the bodies of Soviet troops and prop them up as a warning to their comrades. They would often launch night attacks, resulting in a lack of sleep for the Russians and further demoralising them. Because of the risk of snipers, the Soviet troops were unable to light fires at night to keep warm. This increased the risk of frostbite.

Reindeer & Sleds

While the Soviets had massive superiority in armour and vehicles, they could only operate on Finland's few roads. The Finns, on the other hand, made use of sleds and reindeer.

They had the advantage of being able to traverse practically any terrain, as well as being stealthy. The sleds were used to transport supplies and to carry wounded. They were also often used as machine gun platforms.

Winter Games

Unlike the Russian troops, the Finns knew the terrain. After all, they were fighting on home ground. This was a major advantage to them. The Finns saw the harsh winter conditions as an ally rather than as a detriment. Most of the Finns were also able to ski, and their skis were far better than those used by the Soviets. In fact when the Finns captured Soviet skis they would use them as firewood.

Dressed for Success

With temperatures often going below -30 °C it was vital that troops dressed for the weather. Finnish troops dressed in layers, wearing their own thermal underwear and jerseys under their uniforms. They would remove layers to prevent sweating while cross country skiing. Finally, they would wear lightweight snow capes over everything, providing excellent camouflage in the snow.

In contrast the Soviets wore khaki uniforms and their vehicles were all army green. This made them stand out in the snow, something the Finnish snipers relished.

Sisu

Perhaps the main advantage held by the Finns was that they had *sisu*. It's a word that can't really be translated into English. The closest transla-

tion would be perseverance or determination, not giving up where other people would. And it was this *sisu* that helped them to hold off the Soviets for three months during the Winter War.

Final Tally

The Winter War did not go well for the Russians. What they bargained on taking no longer than two weeks, ended up taking three months.

While the war was a military victory for the Russians, it was a morale loss

Finland

- 25,904 dead or missing.
- 43,557 wounded.
- 800–1,100 captured.
- 20–30 tanks destroyed.
- 62 aircraft destroyed.
- **70,000 total casualties.**

Soviet Union

- 126,875–167,976 dead or missing.
- 188,671–207,538 wounded.
- 5,572 captured.
- 1,200–3,543 tanks destroyed.
- 261–515 aircraft destroyed.
- **321,000–381,000 total casualties.**

It was common for the Russians to report their losses as far less than they actually were. The first figures given are what the Russians reported, the second are what the Finns estimated.



During the negotiations of 1953 in the Korean War, hill battles became a test of wills. Every hill won by the communists made them more stubborn. This meant that Pork Chop Hill assumed a wider political significance than purely military.

On 23 June 1951 the Soviet Union suggested truce talks in Korean and many in the West thought that the war would soon be over.

Yet it took two years of argument, threat and counter-threat and more re-creation before the armistice was finally signed.

In the intervening two years the Chinese and the UN forces were considerably enhanced and their front line positions became fortified where World War I veterans would have felt at home. Yet battles were initiated by both sides.

These battles had the aim of weakening the resolve of the enemy, seizing ground in order to improve the local tactical situation or acquiring a bargaining counter to be used in the cease-fire talks.

One particular piece of ground became the centre of much attention and strenuous efforts by both sides. Pork Chop Hill (so named because of its shape) assumed an importance in tactical, political and even strategic terms that far outweighed its geographical significance.

The hill stood in no-man's land on 1 US Corps front and quite close to a boundary with IX Corps. It was approximately 1,5 km forward of the American positions on the Main Line of Resistance (MLR) itself, and about 80 km north of Seoul.

The communists occupied a hill roughly level with Pork Chop and to its west some 1,3 km. From this hill (known as Old Baldy) the Chinese could observe the American supply route from the MLR to Pork Chop Hill.

Background

The 300 meters-high hill was first seized by the US 8th Cavalry Regiment in October 1951. It was taken again in May 1952 by I Company of the US 180th Infantry Regiment. The 1st Battalion of the 21st Thai Regiment attached to the US 2nd Infantry Division defended the position in November 1952.

From 29 December 1952, it became part of the US 7th Infantry Division's defensive sector. Pork Chop Hill was among several exposed hill outposts along the UN Main line of resistance (MLR) that were defended by a single company or platoon positioned in sand-bagged bunkers connected with trenches.

Opposing the 7th Infantry Division were two divisions of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA): the 141st Division of the 47th Army and the 67th Division of the 23rd Army. These were veteran, well-trained units expert in night infantry assaults, patrolling, ambushes, and mountain warfare.

Both armies (Corps-equivalent units) were part of the 13th Field Army commanded by General Deng Hua, who was also deputy commander of PVA forces in Korea.

The opposing forces in this sector were roughly equal in size, the 7th Division (Major General Arthur Trudeau, commanding) totalling 11 infantry battalions (including attached battalions from Colombia and Ethiopia), a battalion of armour, and 6 battalions of artillery, while the PVA forces totalled 12 infantry, 10 artillery, and the equivalent of one tank battalion.

Both the UN and the PVA had used

military operations to gain leverage or make political statements relevant to the armistice negotiations since early 1952.

The first battle on Pork Chop Hill occurred near Operation Little Switch, the exchange of ill and injured prisoners-of-war scheduled for 20 April.

The PVA command authorized the April attack to demonstrate that agreement in contentious negotiations did not equal unwillingness to continue fighting, if necessary.

First battle 16–18 April

In a surprise night attack on 23 March 1953, a battalion of the PVA 423rd Regiment, 141st Division seized Old Baldy (Hill 266) an outpost near Pork Chop Hill and quickly overwhelmed B Company of the 31st Infantry's Colombian Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Alberto Ruiz Novoa, during its relief in the Fifth Battle for Old Baldy.

The regimental commander, Colonel William B. Kern, had ordered C Company of the Colombian Battalion to relieve B Company despite the Colombian commander's protest. The attack caught both companies amidst the rotation.

Two days of stiff resistance by the maimed and battered B and C Companies failed in retaking the hill due to the failure of the 31st Regiment Command to send reinforcements, causing the UN to order its abandonment. This preliminary fight exposed Pork Chop to three-sided attack, and, for the next three weeks, PVA patrols probed it nightly.

On the night of 16 April Com-

pany E, 31st Infantry (1st Lt. Thomas U. Harrold) manned Pork Chop Hill. Shortly before midnight, an artillery barrage foreshadowed a sudden infantry assault by a battalion of the PVA 201st Regiment; Pork Chop Hill was quickly overrun, although pockets of US soldiers defended isolated bunkers. Elsewhere in the sector, other positions were attacked, pressuring the entire 7th Division.

31st Infantry counter-attack

Company K (1st Lt. Joseph G. Clemons) and Company L (1st Lt. Forrest J. Crittendon), 31st Infantry, in reserve behind the MLR, were ordered to counter-attack and began their attack at 04h30 on 17 April.

By dawn they reached the main trenches on top of the hill but suffered almost 50% casualties, and half of Company L's troops had not been able to leave the trenches of an adjacent outpost, Hill 200.

Lt. Clemons, in tactical command of the assault, requested reinforcement. 2nd Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment was already attached to the 31st Infantry and its Company G (1st Lt. Walter B. Russell Jr., who was Clemons's brother-in-law) was immediately sent forward, linking up with Company K at 08h30.

All three companies were subjected to almost continuous shelling by PVA artillery as they cleared bunkers and dug in again.

Through a series of radiocommunications between command echelons, Division headquarters ordered Russell's company to withdraw at 15h00 after they

too had suffered heavy losses, and did not realize the extent of casualties among the other two companies.

By the time the situation was clarified the companies of the 31st Infantry were down to a combined 25 survivors. Maj. Gen. Trudeau, by then on scene, authorized Col. Kern to send in a fresh company to relieve all elements on Hill 255 and placed him in tactical command with both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 17th Infantry attached and at his direction.

17th Infantry counter-attack

Kern sent forward Company F, 17th Infantry (Captain Monroe D. King), which started up the hill at 21h30 under heavy artillery fire but reached the trenches at 22h00, suffering 19 killed in the process. Kern at 23h00 then ordered Company E, 17th Infantry (1st Lt. Gorman C. Smith), to move up to reinforce Company F. Smith, to avoid the bulk of the artillery fire, moved around the right flank of the hill and up the side facing the PVA positions.

Company K, 31st Infantry had incurred 125 casualties, including 18 killed, of its original 135 men. After twenty hours of steady combat the remaining seven members started off the hill singly just after midnight of 17/18 April and withdrew without further losses. Several of Company L's survivors remained with the relief troops to familiarize them with the layout of the hill defences.

During the early morning of 18 April, the PVA 201st Regiment renewed its attack at 01h30 and again inflicted heavy

losses on the defenders, nearly overrunning Company F in battalion strength. The timely counter-attack by Company E, 17th Infantry caught the PVA by surprise on their flank and ended the organized assault. The 141st Division renewed attacks in company strength at 03h20 and 04h20, but did not gain further ground.

At dawn on 18 April, an additional US rifle company (Company A, 17th Infantry) climbed the hill to reinforce the 2nd Battalion companies. Together the three companies spent the bulk of the day clearing the trenches and bunkers of all hiding PVA and securing the hilltop. The battle ended that afternoon.

UN artillery had fired over 77,000 rounds in support of the three outposts attacked, including nearly 40,000 on Pork Chop Hill alone on 18 April; the PVA expended a similar amount.

Tactics and losses

Both the PVA and US infantry assaulted the hill initially under cover of a moonless night. Each used a heavy preparatory artillery barrage to force the defenders to take cover in bunkers and to screen the approach of the attacking troops.

PVA forces used rapid movement and infiltration tactics to close quickly on the trenches and surprise the defenders, while the US forces used grazing fire to limit defensive small arms fire, then manoeuvred systematically up the hillsides under shellfire. Neither side employed supporting fire from tanks or armoured personnel carriers (APC) to protect attacking troops.



WAITING FOR THE ATTACK: US troops strengthen their defences while awaiting another Chinese attack.

Once inside the trench line, troops of both forces were forced to eliminate bunkers individually, using hand grenades, explosive charges and occasionally flame throwers, resulting in heavy casualties to the attackers. For the UN forces, infiltration of cleared bunkers by bypassed PVA was a problem throughout the battle and hand-to-hand combat was a frequent occurrence.

Evacuation of casualties was made hazardous by almost continuous artillery fires from both sides. The 7th Division made extensive use of tracked M-39 APCs to evacuate casualties and to protect troops involved in the resupply of water, rations, and ammunition, losing one during the battle.

In addition the UN forces employed on-call, pre-registered defensive fires called flash fire to defend its outposts, in which artillery laid down an almost continuous box barrage in a horseshoe-shaped pattern

around the outpost to cover all approaches from the PVA side of the main line of resistance.

US losses were 104 dead, including 63 in the 31st Infantry with only seven survivors, 31 in the 17th Infantry and 10 among engineers and artillery observers, and 373 wounded. PVA losses were unknown.

Second battle 6–11 July

The 7th Division rebuilt its defences on Pork Chop Hill in May and June 1953, during a lull in major combat. Final agreements for an armistice were being hammered out and the UN continued its defensive posture all along the MLR, anticipating a ceasefire in place.

On the night of 6 July, using tactics identical to those in the April assault, the PVA again attacked Pork Chop. The hill was now held by Company A, 17th Infantry, under the temporary command of 1st Lt. Alton Jr. McElfresh, its executive officer. Company B of the same reg-

iment, in ready reserve behind the adjacent Hill 200, was immediately ordered to assist, but within an hour, Company A reported hand-to-hand combat in the trenches. A major battle was brewing and division headquarters ordered a third company to move up.

The battle was fought in a persistent monsoon rain for the first three days, making both resupply and evacuation of casualties difficult. The battle is notable for its extensive use of APCs in both these missions.

On the second night, the PVA made a new push to take the hill, forcing the 7th Division to again reinforce. Parts of four companies defended Pork Chop under a storm of artillery fire from both sides. At dawn of 8 July, the rain temporarily ended and the initial defenders were

withdrawn. A fresh battalion, the 2nd Battalion of the 17th, counter-attacked and re-took the hill, setting up a night defensive perimeter.

7th Division counter-attacks

On both 9 and 10 July, the two sides attacked and counter-attacked. A large part of both PVA divisions were committed to the battle, and ultimately five battalions of the 17th and 32nd Infantry Regiments were engaged, making nine counter-attacks over four days. On the morning of 11 July, the commander of US I Corps decided to abandon Pork Chop Hill to the PVA and the 7th Division withdrew under fire.

Results and losses

Four of the thirteen US company commanders were killed.

Total US casualties were 243 killed, 916 wounded, and 9 captured. 163 of the dead were never recovered.

Of the Republic of Korea Army KATUSA troops attached to the 7th, approximately 15 were killed and 120 wounded. PVA casualties were estimated at 1,500 dead and 4,000 wounded.

According to Chinese sources, 6,800 soldiers of 67th division were involved in 1953 summer battles for five days, among them 533 were killed and 1,242 were wounded.

Less than three weeks after the Battle of Pork Chop Hill, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed by the UN, PVA and North Korean Korean People's Army, ending the hostilities.



THE PORK CHOP: The heights of Pork Chop Hill saw fierce fighting as both sides attacked and counter-attacked in an effort to take control of the hill.



The cold war has just turned hot, and Regimental Commander Matt “Chaos and Confusion” O’Brien is about to break the temperature gauge.

Over the past few months I’ve spent quite a bit of time playing ‘War-game: Red Dragon’.

While I’ve found it to be a good game, it does have a pretty steep learning curve. It also tends to have a good deal of micro-management.

My main problem with this is that it can get a bit confusing when you’re trying to control too many units. You’re busy trying to sort out a situation in one sector, only to find that you’ve been overrun in four other sectors.

Then on 16 August MicroProse released ‘Regiments’, a new Real-Time Tactics game that has been developed by Bird’s Eye Games.

And so far I must confess that I’m really enjoying the game. It’s fairly similar to Wargame, but with a lot less micro-management. In my opinion it makes the game a lot easier to control.

The game is set in 1989 and the Warsaw Pact has invaded West Germany. World War III is about to kick off.

Currently it is a single-player game and I’m not sure whether multi-player or co-op game play will be introduced in the future.

It features a plot-focused campaign of several operations

that tells a complex story of warfare around the Inner German border from multiple perspectives.

You can play either as the Warsaw Pact forces or the NATO forces.

There are seven diverse operations, each encompassing up to several days of fighting. You will need to fight tactical battles, manage limited resources in the lulls between combat, make operational decisions, and lead your regiment to victory. Trust me that this is a lot easier said than done.

If you play as the NATO forces you will start out with West German regiments, brigades and task forces. Later on you will get access to American, Belgium and United Kingdom forces.

The Warsaw Pact forces comprise of the Soviet Union and East Germany.

When you start the game you are allocated a number of command points. You then use these to set up, or ‘buy’ your initial forces.

You can choose from various unit types such as mechanised infantry, armour, engineers, scouts, anti-aircraft, artillery, support vehicles and, later on, aircraft. Each of these has tasks that they are good at.

Scouts are vital to your forces.

They are able to travel much faster than other vehicles and can use the terrain to remain hidden.

They are excellent for going ahead of your main force and spotting enemy units. They can also call in artillery and air strikes.

The disadvantage of scout units is that they are not well protected. If they are discovered they can be destroyed very quickly.

Infantry can be dismounted from their vehicles, but they are not able to split up or move too far away from the vehicle. They are good at taking on other infantry units and, if armed with anti-tank weapons, they can cause havoc against armour.

Engineers are also very useful. They can set up defences such as sandbags, tank barriers and barbed wire. They are also essential for repairing vehicles that have been damaged.

Troops and vehicles use ammo, and vehicles use fuel. A troop or vehicle without ammo is little more than an ornament, and a vehicle without fuel is going nowhere and becomes little more than a target.

To resupply units with ammo and fuel, you will need a supply vehicle. You will need to move troops and vehicles close enough to a supply vehicle. The



other option is to bring your supply vehicle to them. Always take into account that your supply vehicles have little protection and are extremely vulnerable to attack.

Another important asset is a command vehicle. These are used to coordinate and rally units. Some of them are combat vehicles and can take part in the firefight, others are unarmed headquarters platforms.

Aircraft are part of the Air Force and do not fall under your direct control. You can, however, request an air strike. Every faction in the game has access to aircraft. The Warsaw Pact has the Su-22, the Soviets have the Su-25, the USA the A-10 Warthog, West Germany the Alpha Jet, the UK the Harrier GR.3, and Belgium the Mirage 5BA.

Helicopters are potent weapons when they are available. Most of them are armed with rockets or ATGM (Anti-tank Guided Missiles) and some carry both.

The United Kingdom does not have access to any helicopters for some reason. While the USA has the heavily armed AH-64A Apache and AH-1F Cobra, they also have the OH-58D Kiowa. This is not armed, but has good speed and manoeuvrability. They are excellent at finding the enemy and calling in artillery strikes.

Regiments is a pretty good game and so far I am enjoying it. If you want to be victorious in a campaign or battle, you will have to use the right tactics.

There is a tutorial and I strongly suggest you play through this first. It shows you the basics of how to control your forces and give them orders.

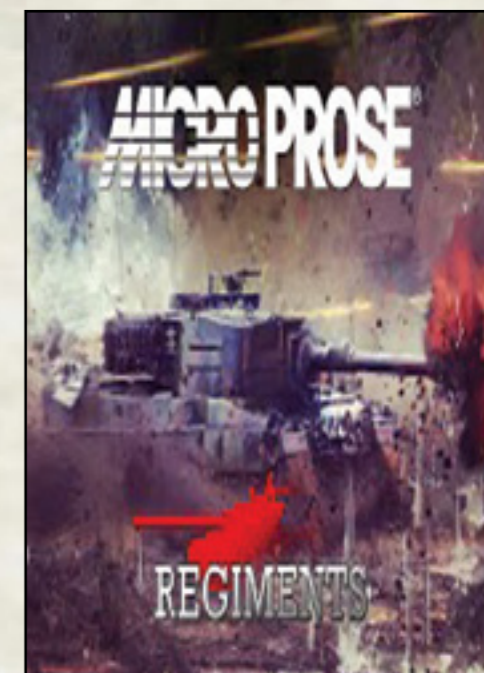
Another useful feature is the Skirmish Mode. Here you can set up individual battles and it’s another good way to learn the ropes before tackling the full campaign.

There is also something that they call the ‘Regipedia’. This shows you call the vehicles and troops that each force can use,

and it also gives you a load of information on each.

The graphics are decent, the terrain looks good, and there is a day/night cycle.

All in all this is a game that I can recommend and is great for those just starting out with Real Time Tactics games.



Publisher - MicroProse Software

Genre - Real Time Tactics

Score - 8/10

Price - R175 (on Steam)



Movie Review

The Cockleshell Heroes

Released: 1955
Running time: 97 minutes
Directed by: José Ferrer

Produced in 1955, just ten years after World War II had ended, this British film is a fictionalised account of Operation Frankton.

Using folding kayaks, a group of Royal Marine Commandos infiltrate Bordeaux Harbour in France to blow up shipping.

The film was produced by Cubby Broccoli, who would later go on to produce the James Bond franchise.

José Ferrer plays newly promoted Major Stringer of the Royal Marines, who comes up with a novel idea for a raid.

By using collapsible canoes, he believes it is possible for commandos to reach an enemy-held harbour undetected and blow up ships with limpet mines. He is given command of a small group of volunteers.

However, he clashes with his veteran second-in-command, cynical, by-the-book Captain Hugh Thompson (Trevor Howard).

The two officers represent the clash of cultures in the Royal Marines in the Second World War and postwar. Stringer is the enthusiastic promoter of commando operations requiring daring and initiative, but has no experience leading men or operations.

Thompson represents the old guard of traditional ship's detachments. Sergeant Craig (Victor Maddern) trains the men

following Stringer's directions, but Thompson strongly disapproves of his commander's lax methods. When a test mission ends disastrously, Stringer admits his mistake and turns to Thompson, who soon whips the marines into shape.

Part of their training involves the men being dressed in German uniform and parachuted into Scotland. They then have to make their way back to their base. Some of the methods they employ are really fun to watch.

The raid is launched soon afterwards by submarine in HMS Tuna under the Command of Lieutenant-Commander Dick Raikes DSO (Christopher Lee).

The commandos are inserted into sea close to the mouth of the Gironde river in their collapsible klepper canoes as Raikes resubmerges and HMS Tuna disappears.

As the swimmer canoeists arrive off the Gironde estuary a depth charge attack by a passing German patrol boat knocks out Ruddock's partner.

Thompson, who was not supposed to go on the raid, volunteers to take his place.

The raiders then disembark and begin their attack. Following hard routine they now face seventy miles of arduous paddling upriver in their Cockerle Mk II canoes.

After moving by night and hiding by day, only four crews

reach the target, where they plant limpet mines on a number of German cargo ships. All this during harsh December weather.

The raid is successful, but only Stringer and Clarke manage to escape. Four (including Thompson and Ruddock) are captured while the other four are killed on the way to the docks.

When Thompson and the other prisoners refuse to divulge what their mission was, they are shot by firing squad, but not before hearing the mines explode.

While its not that easy to get hold of a copy of this movie, it's well worth watch it if you can find it.



Click on the poster to watch a trailer of the film.

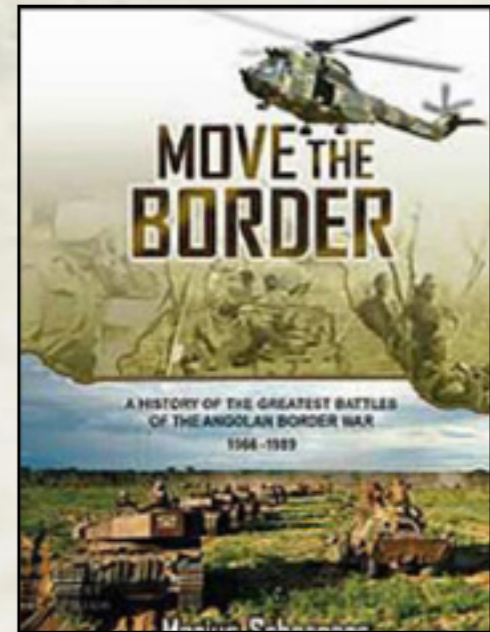
Move the Border

An account which strives to place the war which South Africa fought in Angola in a historically meaningful perspective. Although the conflict initially centered on the opposing agendas of the SADF and People's Liberation Army of Namibia of SWAPO, it was to escalate and take on an international Cold War character as Angolan, Cuban, and Soviet protagonists appeared on the stage of the unfolding drama.

Apart from the political resolution which was subsequently achieved in South Africa, the war represented the last African liberation struggle for independence from colonial rule.

The aim of this book is to present a concise history of the Angolan Border War from 1966 to

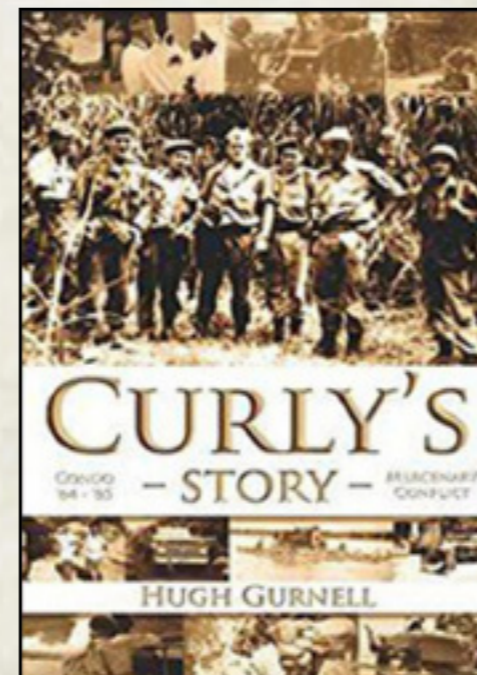
1989. It supplements previous books which have covered periods of the war by breaking the entire duration of the conflict down into six distinctive phases and meticulously reconstructing twenty specific military operations in Angola which changed the course of the war. The perspective which the strategy affords should enable readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the individual phases of the war and the context which they provide for its final outcome. Two highly significant events of the war, the battles of Cuvelai (1983/84) and the battle at Indungo (1987), are subjected to particular scrutiny in the overall narrative. The battle at Indungo has been relatively neglected by writers and historians prior to



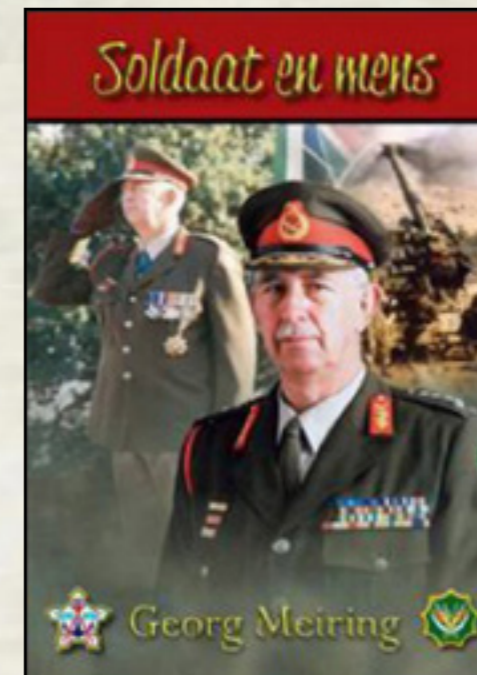
the publication of this book.

The information included in some six chapters of this book forms part of a dissertation for the degree M SocSci at the University of Pretoria.

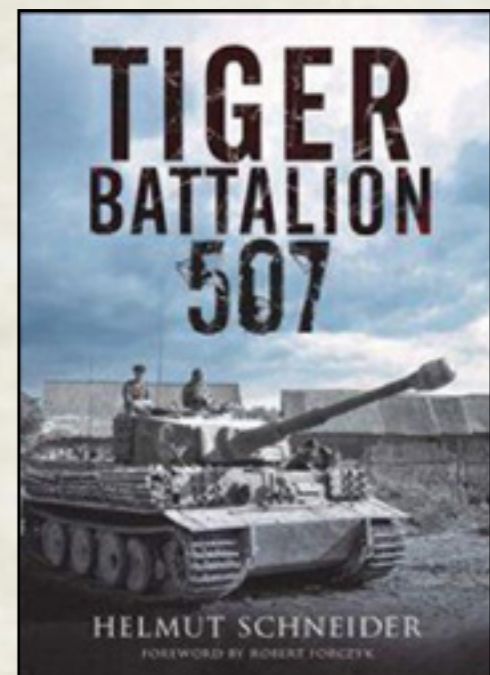
Softcover: 208 pages
R255.00



Curly's Story
R375



Soldaat en Mens
R395



Tiger Battalion 507
R600

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in October. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of October.

1 October

- **1756** - Battle of Lobositz: Prussians defeat the Austrians.
- **1880**- John Philip Sousa becomes director of the Marine Corps Band.
- **1918** - British and Arab forces liberate Damascus from the Turks.
- **1936** - Francisco Franco named leader of Spanish Nationalists.
- **1938** - Hitler's troops occupied the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia. In an effort to avoid war, the leaders of Britain and France had agreed to cede the German-speaking area to Hitler, who later broke the agreement and occupied all of Czechoslovakia.
- **1941** - The Royal New Zealand Navy is established.
- **1942** - Maiden flight of the Bell P-59 Airacomet, the first US jet fighter.
- **1943** - Allied forces liberate Naples.
- **1946** - Twelve Nazi leaders were sentenced to death at the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany.
- **1952** - The British colonial government in Kenya enact emergency measures to combat the growing threat from the Mau Mau.
- **1955** - The USS 'Forrestal' (CVA-59), the first super-carrier, is commissioned. It serves until 1993.
- **1957** - B-52 bombers begin full-time flying alert in case of USSR attack, which continues until the early 1990s.
- **1958** - Captain A.P. Barnard from 1 Locating Battery, South African Artillery was killed in a private motor vehicle accident between Johannesburg and Potchefstroom. He had been authorised to travel to Potchefstroom using his private transport to attend an official training course. He was 29.
- **1974** - Staff Sergeant Willem Jacobus Burger from D Squadron, 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally shot dead by own forces in an ambush 7 miles East of Katima Mulilo at Hippo Island, Eastern Caprivi. He was 29.
- **1976** - France confirms that it is selling two new combat submarines to South Africa, to help SA to protect the oil route round the Cape in the face of Soviet naval escalation in the Indian Ocean.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Edmond Jaime Leon Guillaume from the South African Medical Corps Headquarters Unit died after taking an overdose of pills while stationed in Grootfontein. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Quinton Clive Oosthuizen from 203 Battalion SWATF was killed

in a military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.

- **1983** - Rifleman Samuel Wilhelm van Rooyen from Infantry School was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident near Cape Town on the 29 September 1983 and succumbed to his injuries in the Tygerberg Hospital on 1 October 1983. He was 18.
- **1987** - Transkei Defense Force topples Transkei Bantustan leader George Matanzima, but denies coup.
- **1992** - The USS 'Saratoga' (CV-60) accidentally fires missiles at a Turkish destroyer in the Aegean. Five people are killed.

2 October

- **1187** - Saladin captures Jerusalem, ending 88 years of Christian rule.
- **1851** - Marechel de France, Ferdinand Foch, is born.
- **1895** - Colonel Ruth Cheney Streeter, USMC, first director of the USMC Women's Reserve is born.
- **1912** - Captain Eric Charles Twelves Wilson, Somaliland Camel Corps, is born on this day. He was awarded a VC "Posthumously" but was later discovered to be a prisoner of war.
- **1935** - Mussolini's Italian troops invaded Abyssinia, beginning an occupation

- lasting until 1941.
- **1941** - Operation Typhoon: Germans initiate an offensive to take Moscow.
- **1942** - Rabaul: U.S. air raid damages Japanese light cruiser 'Yubari' and other shipping.
- **1943** - Japanese sub 'Ro-103' sinks USS 'Henley' (DD-391) off Finschhafen, New Guinea.
- **1944** - Polish "Warsaw Uprising" suppressed by the Nazis.
- **1984** - Rifleman M. Kamwanga from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 22.
- **1988** - Large Turkish force raids Kurdish areas of Iraq.
- **1990** - James Elvin Nicholas Cruise was killed instantly and two others injured when he opened a parcel bomb that had been delivered to the computer company in Durban where he worked. It was known that the company worked with Trade Unions and other anti-apartheid organisations.
- **1992** - Gunner Marlon Patrick Dammert from 14 Artillery Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Nietverdiend after one of the tyres burst, causing the driver to lose control. He was 20.
- **1993** - Captain Charles Sergei Keith Rudnick from 85 Combat Flying School was killed when his Atlas MB326M Impala Mk I (Fal-

con 5) crashed during an air show display at Lanseria. He was 34.

- **1995** - Muziwendoda Mdluli of the National Intelligence Agency is found shot dead in his car in Silverton, Pretoria. He was investigating the possible involvement of fellow-agents in the failed Comoros Islands coup.

3 October

- **1882** - German field marshal Gunther von Kluge is born on this day.
- **1899** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War the British War Office informs the White colonies that they can contribute volunteers, preferably infantry.
- **1904** - Indigenous races in German South-West Africa rise against German troops.
- **1904** - France and Spain sign a treaty to divide Morocco.
- **1910** - Adolph Gysbert (Sailor) Malan, SA fighter pilot during WWII and later national president of the Torch Commando, is born in Wellington.
- **1921** - The Unknown Soldier sails from France aboard USS 'Olympia'.
- **1928** - Accidental sinking of the French submarine 'Ondine', 42 die.
- **1952** - Britain explodes its first atom bomb on the Montebello Islands, Australia.

- **1955** - Soviet battleship 'Novorossiisk' (ex-Italian 'Giulio Cesare') mined in the Baltic, many die.
- **1977** - Rifleman Michiel Daniel Johannes Mentz from the 2nd Battalion Regiment Bloemspruit was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-line in Northern Owamboland. He was 31.
- **1977** - Signaler Michael David Bosch from the South African Corps of Signals was killed in a military vehicle accident near Pretoria. He was 18.
- **1977** - Rifleman Gary John Fisher from the Army Ordnance Corps died from an accidental gunshot wound to the head, apparently self-inflicted while he was stationed at Messina. He was 21.
- **1979** - Captain (Navigator) Johannes Jacobus Strydom from 24 Squadron SAAF, attached to 5 Squadron Rhodesian Air Force, was Killed in Action together with his



Sailor Malan

Rhodesian Air Force Pilot, Air Lieutenant Kevin Peinke when their Rhodesian Air Force Canberra was shot down by enemy Anti-Aircraft Fire while attacking enemy targets near Chimoio in Mocambique during Operation Miracle. He was 28.

- **1984** - Trooper I. Unkongo from 202 Battalion SWATF was killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1985** - 21st Space Shuttle Mission: 'Atlantis' makes the first all-military space flight.
- **1986** - Soviet Yankee-class sub sinks off North Carolina, three die.
- **1987** - Sub Lieutenant Gavin John Sholto Douglas from the Strikecraft SAS P.W. Botha was killed during the 1987 floods in Natal. He was 22.
- **1987** - Lieutenant Adriaan Hodgson Hind from "C" Squadron 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Modular when his Ratel 90 was hit by a 100mm round fired from a Russian T-55 tank. He was 19.
- **1987** - General Magnus Malan acknowledges that South Africa has troops in Angola.
- **1989** - Panamanian Defense Force attempts a coup against Manuel Noriega.
- **1990** - After 45 years of Cold War division, East and West Germany were reunited as the Federal Republic

of Germany.

- **1993** - At least twelve US army soldiers are killed in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, in a fifteen-hour battle with supporters of Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aidid. The incident becomes known as 'Black Hawk Down' after two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down.

4 October

- **1836** - Pieter Arnoldus (Piet) Cronjé, politician, military leader and general during Second Anglo-Boer War, is born in Colesberg.
- **1903** - Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Nazi criminal, who was executed 1946, was born on this day.
- **1939** - Last Polish troops surrender to the Germans.
- **1940** - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini meet at Brenner Pass in the Alps, where the Nazi leader seeks Italy's help in fighting the British.
- **1943** - The Island of Corsica became the first French territory in Europe freed from Nazi control as Free French troops liberated the city of Bastia.
- **1944** - Aircraft off USS 'Ranger' (CV-4) raid German bases in Norway, sink or damage eight ships.
- **1950** - The UN consents to a US-backed invasion of North Korea. A squadron of the SA Air Force formed part of the United Nations forces.

- **1977** - Lieutenant John Melville Purdon from 11 Squadron was Reported Missing after his Cessna 185A failed to return from a routine low level cross-country training flight. The aircraft wreck was later located at Rysmiersbult near Potchefstroom and his body was successfully recovered. He was 22.
- **1983** - Rifleman Jan Ignatius Rigaard from Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident approximately 50km from Murraysburg while traveling on the Richmond to Beaufort West road. He was 20.
- **1992** - The Mozambique government and RENAMO rebel leaders sign an historic peace accord, and a ceasefire to end the sixteen-year civil war in the southeast African state.
- **1993** - Russian tank-soldiers loyal to President Boris Yeltsin shelled the Russian White House, crushing a hard-line Communist rebellion. Yeltsin then fired Vice-president Alexander Rutskoi and jailed other opposition leaders.
- **2013** - Vietnamese general and politician Võ Nguyên Giáp died on this day at the age of 102.

5 October

- **1816** - Shawnee Indian Chief Tecumseh was defeated and killed during the War of 1812. Regarded as one of

the greatest American Indians, he was a powerful orator who defended his people against white settlement. When the War of 1812 broke out, he joined the British as a brigadier general and was killed at the Battle of the Thames in Ontario.

- **1863** - Torpedoboat CSS 'David' damages USS 'New Ironsides' with a spar torpedo off Charleston.
- **1899** - During the Second Anglo-Boer War Western Australia offers military assistance to Britain.
- **1943** - US aircraft & ships raid Japanese positions on Wake Is, leading to the execution of American civilians held prisoner.
- **1966** - The South African Military History Society is formed.
- **1969** - Cuban defector flies an MiG-17 undetected to Homestead Air Force Base in America.
- **1971** - The Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster, announces at the National Party Congress incidences on the border of Zambia and the Caprivi Strip. He reminds the Congress of his previous warnings that South Africa will not tolerate the incursion of communist trained terrorists into South African territory and that they will be pursued to the land from where they came.
- **1973** - Trooper Daniel Petrus Boshoff from 1 Special Service Battalion was killed when his Eland 90 Ar-

moured Car overturned during military training exercises at the General De Wet Training Range. He was 18.

- **1976** - Corporal Marius Pieter De Swardt from the 1st Battalion Regiment De La Rey was accidentally killed after being struck by a bullet during a shooting incident at Grootfontein. He was 26.
 - **1977** - Rifleman Brian Alan Ross from the Rand Light Infantry was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion at a waterhole near Etale Base in Northern Owambo-land. He was 21.
 - **1986** - Former U.S. Marine Eugene Hasenfus was captured by Nicaraguan Sandinistas after a plane carrying arms for the Nicaraguan rebels (Contras) was shot down over Nicaragua.
 - **1986** - The London Times reports Israel is stocking nuclear arms.
- #### 6 October
- **1935** - Italian troops capture Adua, Abyssinia.
 - **1939** - Hitler announces he had no intention of making war on Britain and France.
 - **1940** - During World War II in Europe, German troops invaded Romania to take seize strategic oil fields.
 - **1943** - Himmler demands acceleration of the "Final Solution".

- **1944** - The 6th SA Armoured Division, having reached the watershed of Castiglione dei Pepoli in Italy, pushes forward to take Monte Vigese and Monte Sanco during World War II.
- **1944** - Soviet troops enter Hungary and Czechoslovakia.
- **1949** - "Tokyo Rose" (Iva Toguri d'Aquino) was sentenced in San Francisco to 10 years imprisonment and fined \$10,000 for treason. She had broadcast music and Japanese propaganda to American troops in the Pacific during World War II. She was pardoned by President Gerald Ford in 1977.
- **1951** - Stalin announces Russia has the atom bomb.
- **1973** - The Egyptians and Syrians launch surprise attacks on Israel on Yom Kippur day, catching Israel almost totally by surprise.
- **1978** - Rifleman Anton Wicht Cloete from 11 Commando Regiment was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Etale Base. He was 18.

Boris Yeltsin



- **1981** - Egyptian President Anwar Sadat is shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade, eleven years and one day after his inauguration. At least eight other people are also killed in the attack.
- **1982** - Lance Corporal Petrus Johannes Jakobus De Wee from the South African Cape Corps accidentally drowned. His body was eventually located and recovered on 8 October 1982. He was 20.
- **1986** - Major Benjamin Terblanche from 51 Battalion was critically wounded by shrapnel in a friendly fire Mortar Bomb incident at Ruacana on 05 October 1986. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria but succumbed to his wounds on 06 October 1986. He was 30.
- **1994** - South African National Defence Force soldiers go on strike.
- **1916** - Gefreiter Adolf Hitler is wounded on the inner left thigh by a shell fragment during the Battle of the Somme.
- **1923** - Irma Grese, the 'Witch of Belsen', was born on this day.
- **1935** - League of Nations declares Italy the aggressor in Ethiopia.
- **1940** - During World War II in Europe, German troops invaded Romania to take seize strategic oil fields.
- **1943** - U.S. carriers and cruisers raid Wake Island.
- **1956** - Israeli foreign minister Golda Meir says the UN failure to resolve the Suez Crisis means they must take military action.
- **1971** - SWAPO claims it was not responsible for placing landmines in the Caprivi Strip and that the guerrillas were not operating from Zambia, but from inside Namibia.
- **1976** - Candidate Officer Charles Robert Dickens from the School of Armour was killed when his Eland 90 Armoured Car overturned while travelling on the road between the De Brug Training Area and Bloemfontein. He was 18.
- **1985** - Palestinian terrorists seized the Italian passenger ship Achille Lauro carrying about 440 persons, threatening to blow it up if Israel did not free 50 Palestinian prisoners. Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly wheelchair-bound American, was murdered.

7 October

- **1854** - Gen. Christiaan Rudolph de Wet, chief commandant of the Free State forces during Second Anglo-Boer War, is born on the farm Leeuwkop, near Smithfield, Orange Free State.
- **1899** - Tension continues between the British and the Boers in South Africa, and the British Army is ordered to mobilise.
- **1899** - Sir Redvers Buller is appointed Commander-in-Chief in South Africa.

- **1990** - Gulf War: Israel begins handing out gas masks to its citizens.
- **2001** - US invades Afghanistan.
- **2003** - At least one-fifth of South Africa's military is infected with the virus that causes AIDS, and Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota states that 'the South African National Defence Force is no longer accepting HIV positive people into their ranks'.

8 October

- **1890** - American fighter pilot Ace Eddie Rickenbacker was born in Columbus, Ohio on this day. He commanded the first U.S. aero unit to take part in World War I and was credited with 26 victories, becoming America's leading Ace. He was awarded the Medal of Honour.
- **1895** - Argentine soldier, putschist, president Juan Peron was born on this day.
- **1912** - Montenegro declares war on Turkey, initiating the First Balkan War.
- **1916** - The German 'U-53' sinks five ships off Nantucket.
- **1918** - During World War I in the Argonne Forest in France, U.S. Sergeant Alvin C. York single-handedly took out a German machine-gun battalion, killing over a dozen and capturing 132. He was later awarded the Medal of Honour and the French Croix de Guerre.
- **1967** - Ernesto "Che"

- **1980** - Rifleman Gert Johannes Alwyn Barnard from 4 SAI attached to 37 Battalion suffered severe heat exhaustion and was to be medically evacuated at night from Ruacana. He was loaded aboard a Kudu aircraft flown by Lieutenant Mel Pienaar after the aircraft had been refueled. Shortly after take-off, the aircraft suffered total engine failure and crashed. He was fatally injured and died 30 minutes later. He was 20.
- **1982** - Captain William Robert McIntosh from 4 Reconnaissance Regiment was accidentally killed when his parachute failed to open during a practice jump at Langebaan. He was 30.
- **1983** - Rifeman Klaas Hausiku from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 21.
- **1987** - Gunner Anthony Wayne de Villiers of 4 SAI attached "Q" Battery was accidentally killed during Ops Modular in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1987** - Trooper Frederick de Jager from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was Killed in Action during Ops Modular. He was 19.
- **1988** - Rifleman Moleko Ivan Khumoeng from 21 Battalion was killed after being accidentally struck by a Buffel Troop Carrier

Guevara, 39, professional revolutionary, is executed.

while on duty at a night road block. He was 25.

9 October

- **1899** - Francis William Reitz, former president of the OFS and now Secretary of State in the ZAR, hands the ultimatum, which result in the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War, to Sir William Conyngham Greene, the British Agent in Pretoria.
- **1899** - Sir George White, who arrived in Cape Town on 3 October and in Durban on 7 October, proceeds to Ladysmith, where he takes command over the British forces in Natal.
- **1914** - General Salomon Gerhardus (Manie) Maritz rebels against General Smuts' order to invade German South-West Africa, goes over to enemy side and hands over as prisoners to the Germans those of his men who remained loyal to the SA government.
- **1914** - Germans capture Antwerp, as Belgians & British withdraw.
- **1915** - Belgrade surrenders to Austro-German forces.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Marines encircle Japanese 4th Inf Regt.
- **1950** - United Nations (UN) forces, led by the First Cav-

alry Division, cross the 38th parallel in South Korea and begin attacking northward towards the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. A division of the SA Air Force participated in this war.

- **1962** - Algerian-Moroccan border fighting, 130 die.
- **1963** - French air force gets nuclear weapons.
- **1968** - Defence Minister PW Botha announces that a missile base for experimental tests and launchings is to be established on the Zululand coast about 150 miles north of Durban.
- **1974** - Oskar Schindler dies at the age of 66.
- **1978** - Sub-Lieutenant Christo Bosman from the South African Navy Minesweeper SAS Walvisbaai was Reported Missing approximately 7 nautical miles West of Walvis Bay while the vessel was carrying out minesweeping operations up the West Coast. It appears that his foot became entangled in a cable that was holding a marker buoy and

Irma Grese



he was dragged overboard. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 24.

- **1978** - Gunner Andre Johan van der Bergh from 14 Artillery Regiment died in the Katima Mulilo Sickbay after contracting pneumonia. He was 20.
- **1982** - Applications for parole by the thirty-four mercenaries involved in the Seychelles attempted coup are refused. Most are due to be released in January 1983.
- **1985** - General Constand Viljoen, Chief of South Africa's Armed Forces admits on television that the military, without government authority, has flaunted the Nkomati Accord by supporting RENAMO.
- **1985** - The hijackers of the Achille Lauro cruise liner surrender after the ship arrives in Port Said, Egypt.
- **1987** - Two members of 53 Battalion, one of them an Ops Medic attached to the Unit, were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned North of Ogongo. They were: Rifleman John Ferreira (19). Rifleman Johannes Andries Le Roux (18).
- **1990** - Saddam Hussein threatens to hit Israel with a new missile.
- **1993** - Somali warlord General Mohammed Farah Aidid offers a cease-fire with US and UN forces in Somalia.

10 October

- **1896** - An attack by Rhodesian Colonial forces on the major stronghold during the Mashona Rebellion, Mashayombe's kraal, ends inconclusive. Though the kraal was destroyed and the rebels scattered, they came together again later.
- **1918** - British Gen. Sir Edmund Allenby enters Jerusalem, on foot.
- **1926** - Opening of SA War Memorial at Delville Wood.
- **1954** - Ho Chi Minh entered Hanoi, Vietnam, after the withdrawal of French troops, in accordance with armistice terms ending the seven-year struggle between Communist Vietnamese and the French.
- **1976** - Rifleman Richard Charles Palmer from the Natal Carbineers was accidentally killed after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds when a rifle grenade exploded prematurely after being fired. He was 25.
- **1976** - Corporal Jan Hendrik van Brandis from 2 SAI accidentally drowned during a river crossing while on patrol near Rundu. He was 19.
- **1980** - Lieutenant Steven Volkersz from 2 Squadron was reported missing when his Atlas MB326KM Impala Mk II was shot down by a shoulder-launched Soviet SA-7 Grail Surface-to-Air Missile some 20km South West of Mupa. He has no known grave. He was 23.
- **1980** - Rifleman Anthony

Hayton from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the National Road approximately 20km from Durban. He was 18.

- **1985** - US jet fighters force an Egyptian airliner carrying hijackers of cruise ship Achille Lauro to land in Italy, where the hijackers are arrested.
- **1988** - Rifleman Maphakela George Molokomme from 116 Battalion was killed instantly at the 116 Battalion Training area at Messina after being struck by lightning while sheltering under a tree during a thunderstorm. He was 27.
- **1998** - Rebels use a missile to shoot down a jetliner carrying forty civilians in eastern Congo, claiming it was ferrying government troops to the besieged town of Kindu.
- **2012** - Basil L. Plumley, Command Sgt Maj, US Army, veteran of three wars and five combat jumps, hero of the Ia Drang Valley, dies at the age of 92.

11 October

- **1899** - The Anglo-Boer War, the war between the British Empire and the two Boer republics, the Transvaal and Orange Free State, breaks out.
- **1939** - Albert Einstein warned President Franklin D. Roosevelt that his theories could lead to Nazi Germany's development of an atomic bomb. Einstein suggested the U.S. develop its

own bomb. This resulted in the top secret "Manhattan Project."

1944 - Japan announces it will "fight to the last man, woman, child, weapon, and piece of equipment."

- **1945** - Chinese civil war begins: Chiang Kai-Shek vs. Mao Tse-Tung.
- **1971** - Lewis "Chesty" Puller, iconic US Marine with five awards of the Navy Cross, plus a DSC, dies on this day at the age of 73.
- **1982** - At the 1 SAI Mechanised Leadership Wing at Oshivello, soldiers were undergoing familiarisation training on foreign weapons used by insurgents. During one of these lectures, a soldier accidentally detonated a Soviet hand grenade killing five members. They were: Candidate Officer Casper Willem Johannes Geustyn (20). Candidate Officer Paul Stephanus Venter (19). Lance Corporal Alan Rodger Jones (18). Lance Corporal Jacobus Theodorus Meyer (19). Lance Corporal Edgar Sydney Wessels (19).
- **1983** - Private Werner Eugene Kriel from SAMS attached to No.1 Military Hospital was killed in a military vehicle accident at Potgietersrus. He was 20.
- **1988** - Former United States army analyst Thomas Dolce pleads guilty before a US court to supplying a wide range of defence secrets to South Africa between 1979 and 1983.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Hermanus Swanepoel van der Merwe from 93 Ammunition Depot was critically injured in a mili-

tary vehicle accident on 25 September 1989 16km outside Jan Kempdorp while carrying out Military Police duties. He died from his injuries at the Universitas Hospital in Bloemfontein on 11 October 1989. He was 20.

1991 - Lance Corporal David John Boyd from Group 36 was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ladybrand. He was 19

12 October

- **1851** - The Irish 69th Regiment is accepted into the New York State Militia.
- **1860** - British & French troops capture Peking.
- **1870** - American Civil War General Robert E Lee dies at the age of 63.
- **1899** - The first shots of the Second Anglo-Boer War are fired at Kraaipan, about 50 kilometres south of Mafeking, where General De la Rey attacks the armoured train, Mosquito. Lieutenant Nesbit and thirty-four soldiers surrender the next morning.
- **1914** - First Battle of Ypres begins.
- **1914** - Off Easter Island, Graf von Spee concentrates the largest German naval squadron ever seen outside the North or Baltic Seas; two armoured cruisers, seven protected cruisers, and three colliers.
- **1942** - US aircraft sink two Japanese destroyers near

Guadalcanal.

- **1943** - Fifth Air Force begins a series of air raids on Rabaul.
- **1944** - German army withdraws from Athens.
- **1963** - Air Corporal Hermanus Pieter Bodenstein from the School of Technical Training died from head injuries sustained in a private motor vehicle accident 8km from Middelburg on the Hendrina Road. He was 25.
- **1972** - Race riot aboard the USS 'Kitty Hawk' (CV 63), results in 46 injured.
- **1975** - Trooper David Barand Le Roux from 1 SSB was Killed in Action when his Eland 90 Armoured Car detonated a landmine near Luiana in Southern Angola during Operation Karen 2 that was launched to clear SWAPO/PLAN bases in South-Eastern Angola prior to the launch of Operation Savannah. He was 20.
- **1984** - Unsuccessful IRA attempt to assassinate PM Margaret Thatcher. Five people are killed.



Constand Viljoen

- **2000** - Islamist suicide boat attack on the USS 'Cole' (DDG-67) at Aden. 17 people are killed and 40 wounded.

13 October

- **1307** - Simultaneous arrest of all Knights Templar in France - the original "Friday the Thirteenth".
- **1775** - The United States Navy was born after the Second Continental Congress authorized the acquisition of a fleet of ships.
- **1914** - Pro-German Boer insurrection in South Africa.
- **1918** - Gefreiter Adolf Hitler is temporarily blinded in a mustard gas attack near Ypres.
- **1943** - Italy declared war on its former Axis partner Germany after the downfall of Mussolini and collapse of his Fascist government.
- **1944** - Red Army liberates Riga from the Germans.
- **1973** - Rifleman Michael Wulfsohn from the Cape Town Highlanders was accidentally killed when he fell off the back of a moving Bedford Troop Carrier just north of Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1982** - Private D.S. Bedenhann from the Technical Service Corps died from an R1 Rifle gunshot wound apparently self-inflicted while he was on weekend pass. It is believed he was suffering serious depression at the time of the incident and no foul play was suspected. He

was 19.

- **1983** - Special Warrant Officer Immanuel Hendjala from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 36.
- **1983** - Private Johannes Mattheus Strauss from the Technical Service Corps was found dead. It is suspected that he may have taken his own life. No foul play was suspected as at the time of his death, nobody had been in the area where his body was found. He was 18.
- **1985** - Corporal Johan Schoeman from 5 SAI was Killed in Action after he was ambushed and stabbed to death by persons unknown while on foot patrol in Kwazakele Township during unrest in the area. He was 19.
- **1987** - First operational use of dolphins by the US Navy, in the Persian Gulf.
- **1988** - Rifleman John Rex from the 2nd Battalion South African Cape Corps died at the Rooiberg Training Area when he accidentally stepped on an unexploded 40mm "Snotneus" High Explosive Grenade. He was 20.
- **1988** - Special Constable Thomas Kastodiu from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/

PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.

- **1992** - Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha warns Unita leader Jonas Savimbi in Angola that South Africa will withdraw support for Unita if he decides to resume the Angolan civil war.

14 October

- **1066** - The Norman Conquest began with the Battle of Hastings in which King Harold II of England, the last of the Saxon kings, was defeated and killed by William of Normandy's troops.
- **1882** - Irish revolutionary Eamon De Valera was born on this day.
- **1890** - Dwight D. Eisenhower, US Army Five-star general and Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, was born on this day. He would go on to become President of America.
- **1899** - Start of the siege of Mafeking under Col. Robert Baden-Powell by the Boer forces.
- **1933** - Nazi Germany announced its withdrawal from the League of Nations and stated it would take no further part in the Geneva Disarmament Conference.
- **1941** - US Navy Admiral Husband Kimmel warns of possible surprise attack on Pearl Harbour.
- **1943** - Attempted mass escape from Sobibor Concentration Camp.
- **1943** - US Army Air Force

bombs Schweinfurt.

- **1944** - German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, famous German commander of German forces in North Africa, suspected of complicity in the 20 July plot against Hitler, is visited at home by two of Hitler's staff and given the choice of public trial or suicide by poison. He chooses suicide and dies on this day.
- **1947** - U.S. Air Force Captain Chuck Yeager became the first man to break the sound barrier, flying in a rocket-powered research aircraft.
- **1970** - Commandant Johannes Frederick "Doons" van Heerden from 24 Squadron was killed when his Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S-50 crashed on the weapons range West of Bloemfontein while carrying out a low level "retarded bomb" sortie. He was 34.
- **1977** - Lieutenant Phillipus Lodewyk Le Roux from the Delmas Commando was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 48.

15 October

- **1815** - Napoleon Bonaparte arrived on the Island of St. Helena beginning a British-imposed exile following his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.
- **1899** - The siege of Kimberley starts.
- **1914** - Montenegro declares

war on Bulgaria.

- **1917** - World War I spy Mata Hari was executed by a French firing squad at Vincennes Barracks, outside Paris.
- **1917** - USS 'Cassin' (DD-43) torpedoed by German 'U-61' off Ireland.
- **1942** - Japanese aircraft off 'Zuikaku' sink the USS 'Meredith' (DD 434) off San Cristobal.
- **1943** - British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham is appointed First Sea Lord of the Admiralty and Chief of the Naval Staff.
- **1945** - Pierre Laval, the former premier of Vichy France, was executed for collaborating with Nazi Germany during World War II.
- **1946** - Nazi leader Hermann Goering committed suicide by swallowing poison in his Nuremberg prison cell just hours before his scheduled hanging for war crimes.
- **1978** - Corporal James Barnard Phillander from the South African Cape Corps was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1981** - Two members from 4 SAI were killed in an accidental hand grenade explosion in Northern Owamboland. They were: Rifleman Thomas Johannes Ferreira

(20). Rifleman Martin Johannes Lodewyk Kruger van Niekerk (19).

- **1981** - Three members from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Reported Missing while carrying out an operation against the Harare-Beira railway line near Doeroi in Mocambique, some 300 miles from the South African border. It would appear that there was a premature detonation while they were laying their demolition charges that killed them instantly. The casualties were: Lieutenant Alan Gingles (28). Rifleman B. Michael (24). Rifleman F. Tombo (25).
- **1982** - Rifleman Piet Bhayana from 111 Battalion accidentally drowned during a river crossing while on patrol in the Kruger National Park. He was 21.
- **1982** - Corporal Servaas de Kock from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally killed while on weekend pass when his private vehicle was involved in a collision with an extra heavy articulate vehicle. He was 20.
- **1981** - Two US surveillance planes arrive over Egyptian airspace to demonstrate

Chuck Yeager



increased US support for Egyptian and Sudanese security against any hostile moves by Libya.

- **1987** - Thomas Sankara, head of the Military Council of the Revolution in Burkina Faso, is assassinated in a military coup and replaced by Captain Blaise Compaoré.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Joseph Montslo Moletsane from 115 Battalion was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during a patrol in Mamelodi. He was 25.
- **1997** - Rebels, backed by foreign troops, enter Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo, ending President Pascal Lissouba's four-month struggle to remain in power.
- **2002** - The Sudanese government signs a temporary cease-fire with Sudan's main rebel group, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), so that peace talks could resume. The agreement calls for both sides to avoid impeding international relief efforts for civilians affected by the nineteen-year-old civil war.

16 October

- **1853** - The Crimean War began after the Turkish Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia, Britain, France and portions of Italy allied with the Turks against Russia. It became the first war observed up close by newspaper reporters and

photographers. One of the battles was immortalized in Tennyson's poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Amid poor sanitary conditions, disease killed many wounded French and British troops. British nurse Florence Nightingale then pioneered modern-style sanitation methods, saving many lives.

- **1899** - Boer Gen. P.A. Cronje shells Mafeking, causing only one casualty. After the bombardment, Silas Molemo, a spokesman for the Barolong tribe, visits magistrate Bell, informing him: "Never mind this, we will stick with you and see it through."
- **1900** - Republican forces under Gen. J.B.M. Hertzog attack Jagersfontein and release all prisoners in the gaol before they retire.
- **1916** - T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) arrives in Cairo with a British fact-finding mission whose purpose is to recommend ways of supporting the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire.
- **1916** - Oswald Boelcke, German air ace with 40 victories, is killed in action at the age of 25.
- **1926** - Chinese troop ship sinks in the Yangtze. 1,200 die.
- **1939** - First German air raid on the British Isles in WW II, against naval installations at Rosyth, as the RAF downs one attacker.

- **1940** - First black American promoted to general: Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr.
- **1940** - Nazis establish the Warsaw Ghetto.
- **1946** - Ten former Nazi leaders were hanged by the Allies following their conviction for war crimes at Nuremberg, Germany.
- **1962** - Missile Crisis: JFK learns of Soviet missiles in Cuba.
- **1963** - Lieutenant Henry Andre' Botha from 17 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III Helicopter crashed near Dullstroom in heavy fog while on a flight from Pilgrimsrest to Pretoria. He was 20.
- **1964** - China detonated its first nuclear bomb at the Lop Nor test site in Sinkiang.
- **1969** - Two members from 24 Squadron were Reported Missing when their Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S-51 disappeared over the sea 30km east of the Tugela River Mouth while carrying out night exercises. The crew were: Major Stephanus Sebastiaan Odendaal (31). Major Peter Webb (28).
- **1973** - Rifleman Raymond Fourie from 4 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Ventersdorp to Randfontein Road. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Alfredo Samba from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 32.

- **1981** - Israeli general and former Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan died at the age of 66.
- **1982** - Rifleman Barend Jacobus Christoffel Strydom from 7 SAI accidentally drowned at Phalaborwa. He was 19.
- **1986** - Captain Fred Turner from 32 Battalion was killed in private motor vehicle accident at Paternoster. He was 25.
- **1986** - Two members from the Sasolburg Commando were killed in a military vehicle accident at Deneysville while returning from a military funeral. They were: Commandant Wallace Goosen (56). Captain Christiaan Johannes Cloete (34).
- **1987** - Three members from 4 Artillery Regiment were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Mariental while trying to avoid a head-on collision with a civilian delivery vehicle. The casualties were: 2nd Lieutenant George Michael Howard (20). Lance Bombardier Peter Mansfield (19). Gunner Sean Rene Biet (20).
- **1988** - Rifleman Nicolaas Johannes Wolmarans from the Bethal Commando was killed when he was struck down by a civilian vehicle while carrying out road block duty on the Delmas / Kriel Road. He was 32.
- **1988** - 2nd Lieutenant Riaan Frans Janse van Vuuren from Sector 20 Headquar-

ters Unit SWATF was killed in a Private Motor Vehicle Accident while on leave. He was 19.

- **1990** - US forces in the Persian Gulf reach 200,000.
- **1992** - The Goldstone Commission reports the finding of a secret operational centre run by Military Intelligence and seizes plans to destabilise the ANC.
- **2005** - William Allan, last Australian combat veteran of WW I, dies at the age of 106.

17 October

- **1777** - During the American Revolutionary War, British General John Burgoyne and his entire army of 5,700 men surrendered to American General Horatio Gates after the Battle of Saratoga, the first big American victory.
- **1781** - British General Lord Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown.
- **1917** - First British air raid over Germany.
- **1933** - Albert Einstein arrives in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany.
- **1944** - The Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in history, took place off the Philippine Islands, during World War II in the Pacific. The battle involved 216 U.S. warships and 64 Japanese ships and resulted in the

destruction of the Japanese Navy including the Japanese Battleship Musashi, one of the largest ever built.

- **1948** - Thirty-one SA pilots participate in the air-lift to provide food and fuel to West Berlin. The operation continued for seven months.
- **1973** - Egyptian and Israeli forces clash in the Sinai desert in fierce fights.
- **1977** - West German commandos storm a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner in Mogadishu, Somalia, freeing all 86 hostages. Three Palestinian hijackers are killed.
- **1977** - Corporal Karel Christiaan Strydom from the Klein Karoo Commando was accidentally killed in a shooting incident at Nkurenkuru near Rundu. He was 33.
- **1977** - Sapper Johannes Hercules Viljoen from 2 Field Engineer Regiment was killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle near Kwando. He was 19.
- **1981** - Lieutenant F.T.

Moshe Dayan



- Edeling from 102 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned at Epupa Falls during operations in Southern Angola. He was 23.
- **1982** - Corporal Adam Johannes Barends from the South African Cape Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the Grabouw to Botrivier road. He was 24.
- **1983** - Rifleman Tian van Jaarsveld from 8 SAI was a member of a patrol that was in the process of checking their kit just outside the base at Okalongo prior to heading out on a patrol. It was during this process that a RPG-7 anti-tank rocket carried by another soldier was accidentally discharged and he was critically wounded. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria where he sadly succumbed to his wounds later in the day. He was 19.
- **1983** - SA forces attack an apartment block in Maputo, Mozambique, close to President Samora Machel's suburban residence, injuring five people. The SA Defence Force says the building housed offices from which the ANC was planning a series of attacks in South Africa.
- **1984** - Special Constable Elifas Ipinge from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN

- insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 28.
- **1985** - Attempted military coup in Guinea-Bissau.
- **1992** - In Angola's first multi-party election, the MPLA wins 53.74% of the vote for the 233-seat parliament, and Unita 34.10%. Unita accuses the MPLA of rigging the election results, withdraws its troops from the joint army and threatens to return to civil war.

18 October

- **1912** - Italo-Turkish War ends.
- **1941** - Russian spy Richard Sorge arrested in Tokyo.
- **1945** - The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial began with indictments against 24 former Nazi leaders including Hermann Göring and Albert Speer. The trial lasted 10 months, with delivery of the judgment completed on October 1, 1946. Twelve Nazis were sentenced to death by hanging, three to life imprisonment, four to lesser prison terms, and three were acquitted.
- **1946** - The Special Service Battalion of the Defence Force of the Union of South Africa is dissolved, and gymnasiums for the army, air force and navy established.
- **1968** - Lieutenant John Andrew Zimmerman from Central Flying School Duntottar was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Devon while on a routine

- training flight. He was 21.
- **1978** - Rhodesian forces launch a raid against ZIPRA guerrillas in a wide area around Chimoio, Mozambique.
- **1980** - Sergeant Jonathan Sykes from the Infantry School was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the National Road near Ladysmith. He was 30.
- **1984** - Rifleman Domingos Antonio from 32 Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned near Buffalo. He was 24.
- **1986** - Special Constable Simon Daniel from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 29.
- **2001** - Four Osama bin Laden followers convicted in the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Africa are sentenced in New York to life without parole.

19 October

- **1812** - Napoleon begins his retreat from Moscow.
- **1915** - Russia and Italy declare war on Bulgaria.
- **1925** - The War of the Dog: A stray dog initiates a ten day border incident between Greece & Bulgaria.
- **1950** - UN forces enter Pyongyang, capital of North Korea.
- **1951** - British troops seize

- Suez canal zone in a swift dawn raid.
- **1952** - Airman Caspar Willem Petrus Nel from Air Force Station Congella suffered fractured vertebrae when he was dumped by a large wave while playing in the sea during March 1952. He was re-admitted to the Sanitarium Hospital in Durban on 15 Oct 1952 after complications had set in but he unfortunately died following surgery. He was 20.
- **1954** - Britain and Egypt sign Suez Canal agreement. British will withdraw troops over next twenty months.
- **1986** - President Samora Machel of Mozambique is killed in an air crash in eastern South Africa shortly after 21:00. Thirty-four people die in the disaster.
- **1987** - British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher criticises the ANC, calling it "a terrorist organisation".
- **1987** - US warships destroy Iranian oil platforms in Persian Gulf.

20 October

- **1899** - British forces dislodge the Boers at Talana Hill in Natal.
- **1944** - During World War II in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur set foot on Philippine soil for the first time since his escape in 1942, fulfilling his promise, "I shall return."
- **1944** - US First Army secures Aachen.
- **1952** - Emergency pro-

- claimed in Kenya due to Mau Mau rebellion.
- **1977** - Three crew members of 15 Squadron "A" Flight and one passenger from the SAAF 250 Air Defence Artillery Group (250 ADAG) were killed when their Super Frelon Helicopter 303 crashed in the mountains on the farm "Leyden" at Sheepmoor near the border of Mocambique and Swaziland while flying in dense fog and mist. The casualties were: Commandant Gert Hermanus Jacobus Strydom van Rooyen (35). Captain Don Bezuidenhout (31). 2nd Lieutenant Dawid Petrus Burger (21). Sergeant Willem Adriaan Jacobus van der Merwe (33).
- **1979** - Rifleman Deon Botha from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a military vehicle accident at Mariental. He was 20.
- **1979** - Sapper Gerhardt Wagener from the South African Engineer Corps was killed after being accidentally run over by a military vehicle at Bossiespruit. He was 19.
- **1980** - Major John Kendrick Murphy from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment (former member of the Rhodesian SAS and Selous Scouts) was killed when his parachute failed during a practice training jump at Westonaria. He was 37.

- **1980** - Two members of 32 Battalion were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Buffalo. They were: Lance Corporal Alfred Jose Mindo (34). Rifleman Jaquin Francisco (24).
- **1981** - Corporal Peter Andrew Chapman from 8 SAI was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a boosted landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman Joao Augusto from 32 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident at Linus Shashipapo. He was 19.
- **1983** - Private Johan Beyers Human from the South African Medical Corps was killed instantly when his private motor vehicle overturned near Bloemhof. He was attached to the Army Battle School at the time and was travelling from Lohatla to Pretoria on leave pass when the accident occurred. He was 20.

Samora Machel



- **1986** - Rifleman Christiaan Marthinus Arnoldus Adam Venter from Regiment Oos Rand was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Ellisras. He was 20.
- **1987** - Trooper Herman Ziemkendorf from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed when his Eland 90 armoured car overturned at Siftersnek near Zeerust during training exercises in the area. He was 19.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Pieter Johannes Klue from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident on the old Warmbaths Road near the Wonderboom Military Base. He was 19.

21 October

- **1805** - The Battle of Trafalgar took place between the British Royal Navy and the combined French and Spanish fleets. The victorious British ended the threat of Napoleon's invasion of England. British naval hero Admiral Horatio Nelson was mortally wounded aboard his ship Victory.
- **1899** - The Boer forces are defeated by the British at the Battle of Elandslaagte.
- **1914** - Battle of Warsaw: Germans defeat the Russians.
- **1942** - Eight American and British officers land from a submarine on an Algerian beach to take measure of Vichy French to the Operation Torch landings.
- **1952** - Jomo Kenyatta is arrested in Kenya when the

- British forces defeat the Mau-Mau.
- **1960** - HMS 'Dreadnought' is launched, Britain's 1st nuclear submarine.
- **1967** - The Egyptian navy sinks the Israeli destroyer Eilat off Sinai, killing forty people.
- **1982** - Corporal Donald Craig Clerk from 1 Special Service Battalion Died from a gunshot wound resulting from an accidental discharge of the fellow soldiers rifle while based at Oshakati. He was 20.
- **1983** - Four members of 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Reported Missing after being captured during the night of 20/21 October 1983 while carrying out pseudo operations against enemy forces during Operation Slyk. It is presumed that they were subsequently executed by their captors. They have no known grave and remain unaccounted for. The four casualties were: Corporal D. Dula (27). Corporal R. Mhlinga (29). Rifleman Frans Mkoshi (26). Rifleman Manuel Shikondau (33).
- **1996** - The UN reports that over 200,000 Hutu refugees are fleeing into the hills to escape the conflict between the Zaire military and Tutsi.
- **2003** - Veteran French war journalist Jean Helene is shot dead in cold blood in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast by a police officer.

22 October

- **1847** - Gen. Jacobus Her-

- cules (Koos) de la Rey, also known as 'The Lion of Western Transvaal' because of his brave leadership during the Anglo-Boer War, is born on the farm Doornfontein in the Winburg district, Orange Free State.
- **1859** - Spain declares war on the Moors in Morocco.
- **1944** - Japanese naval forces converge on Leyte.
- **1954** - West Germany joins NATO.
- **1962** - President John F. Kennedy appeared on television to inform Americans of the existence of Russian missiles in Cuba. The President demanded their removal and announced a naval quarantine of Cuba. Six days later, the Russians announced they would remove the weapons. In return, the U.S. later removed missiles from Turkey.
- **1968** - SA signs treaty with Greece concerning the graves of members of the armed forces of the Commonwealth in Greek territory.
- **1986** - Corporal Pieter Johannes Jacobus Meisenheimer from the Army Gymnasium was killed when the Bedford Water Tanker he was driving, overturned at Heidelberg. He was 20.

23 October

- **1642** - Edgehill, first battle of the English Civil War.
- **1901** - General Redvers Buller is dismissed as officer in command of the British forces, probably because of his defeat in the Battle of Spioen-

- kop in 1900.
- **1942** - The Second Battle of El Alamein, in which many SA soldiers took part, commences with a thousand-gun barrage. The opening attack by the British Eighth Army starts at 9:30pm. Montgomery eventually defeated Rommel. On 4 November 1942, the British finally broke through the German defences.
- **1942** - Guadalcanal: Battle of Edson's Ridge - Japanese assault broken.
- **1970** - Five members from Quartermaster General (QMG) in Voortrekkerhoogte were accidentally killed in a private station wagon vehicle when it was involved in a head-on collision with a truck between Sasolburg and Parys while they were travelling home to the Eastern Cape on a Weekend Pass. The casualties were: Rifleman Friederich David Warren Bloomberg (18). Rifleman John Merwyn Albert Payne (18). Rifleman Andrew John Hough (19). Rifleman Leonardus Hendrik Botha (19). Rifleman Roderick George Duncan (18).
- **1978** - Private Coenraad Hendrik Basson from 6 Ordnance Base Depot died in the Tygerberg Hospital from injuries received in a military vehicle accident at SAS Wingfield. He was 20
- **1981** - Corporal Werner Oberholzer from 2 Special Service Battalion was accidentally killed when his Eland Armoured Car overturned during a training exercise at

- Zeerust. He was 20.
- **1983** - Rifleman N. Riem from 201 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion. He was 22.
- **1983** - Terrorists drove a truck loaded with TNT into the U.S. and French headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, exploding it and killing 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French paratroopers.

24 October

- **1899** - The Battle of Rietfontein, near Dundee, Natal, takes place, with the British falling back to Ladysmith.
- **1943** - Japanese destroyer 'Mochizuki' is sunk by Marine aircraft southwest of Rabaul.
- **1945** - Vidkun Quisling, 58, Norwegian politician, executed, leaving us a new word for "traitor".
- **1973** - Yom Kippur War ends with Israeli troops 100 km from Cairo and 40 km from Damascus. Several other dates are given for this event, e.g. 22, 26 or 28 October, depending which phase of the peace process is considered most decisive.
- **1976** - Rifleman Ignatius Philippus Coetzee, acting as the Patrol medic for an Infantry Patrol was Killed in Action near Eenhana. He was 18.
- **1983** - Corporal Pedro Giovanni Torre from 7 SAI was killed when his Buffel Troop

- Carrier overturned at Lataba Ranch near Phalaborwa. He was 20.
- **1986** - Sergeant Gerhardus Hendrik van der Westhuizen from the South African Corps of Military Police was killed when his military motorcycle was struck by a truck while overtaking about 8km from Lindley. He fell under the wheels of the truck. He was 35.
- **1994** - For the first time in 25 years, British troops were absent from the streets of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, following cease-fires by Irish Republican Army (IRA) and pro-British forces.
- **1998** - A gas explosion devastates the officers' club of the SA National Defence Force, a national monument, in Wynberg, Cape Town.

25 October

- **1854** - During the Crimean War, the Charge of the Light Brigade occurred as Lord Cardigan led the British cavalry against the Russians at Balaclava. Of 673 British



John F. Kennedy

cavalrymen taking part in the charge, 272 were killed. The Charge was later immortalized in the poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

- **1943** - Japanese open the Burma railroad ("The Bridge on the River Kwai").
- **1955** - Austria reassumed its sovereignty with the departure of the last Allied forces. The country had been occupied by the Nazis from 1938-45. After World War II, it was divided into four occupation zones by the U.S., Russia, Britain and France.
- **1956** - Egypt, Jordan and Syria form a united military command.
- **1975** - Rifleman Christian Lambert Kruger from Infantry School was accidentally killed when his private motor vehicle was involved in a head on collision with another motor vehicle near Kroonstad while traveling home on a weekend pass. He was 19.
- **1976** - Rifleman Jan Hendrik Malan from 11 Commando Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents near Eenhana in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1980** - Rifleman Paulo Almeida from 32 Battalion died from injuries accidentally sustained in a military vehicle accident at Buffalo.. He was 23.
- **1980** - Corporal Christopher Bruce Catto from 5 SAI was accidentally shot dead when he and his Section set up an ambush near Etale Base. He

was 20.

- **1983** - Operation Just Cause: US and West Indian forces invade Grenada.

26 October

- **1922** - Lt Cdr Godfrey Chevalier makes first underway US carrier landing, on 'Langley' (CV-1).
- **1973** - Signaler Petrus Johannes Pienaar from 2 Signal Regiment collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during Basic Training. He was 18.
- **1977** - Two members of Regiment De Wet were killed when they accidentally detonated a Claymore Directional Fragmentation Anti-Personnel Mine near Elundu. Rifleman Antonie Michael Jacobz (27). Rifleman Lodewicus Johannes Oberholzer (22).
- **1983** - Airman Wernich Haupt from 250 Air Defence Artillery Group, South African Air Force suffered critical head injuries when he accidentally fell off the back of a moving Land Rover. He died from his injuries in 1 Military Hospital later the same day. He was 18.
- **1985** - Rifleman David Bowers from the South African Cape Corps was killed when struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while at the Touwsrivier Training Area. He was 20.
- **1987** - Private Charles Matthew Dirkse from 5 Maintenance Unit died in Oshakati Hospital from heart failure

resulting from a blood clot in the lung. He was 29.

- **1990** - Private Dirk Cornelius Pieterse from 31 Field Workshop Squadron died in 1 Military Hospital after being critically injured in a military vehicle accident 35km from Vryburg. He was 25.
- **1997** - Angola promises to withdraw its troops from Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, where they helped rebels oust elected President Pascal Lissouba.

27 October

- **1941** - Nazis establish a gypsy ghetto in Belgrade.
- **1942** - Battle of the Santa Cruz Is: USS 'Hornet' (CV-8) sinks.
- **1948** - Negev: Israel recaptures Nizzanim from the Egyptians.
- **1973** - UN peacekeeping forces arrive in Cairo to attempt to set up a lasting cease-fire between Israeli and Arab forces.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Victor from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces near Numuidi in Southern Angola during Operation Kropduif. He was 28.
- **1978** - Ugandan troops invade Tanzania, occupying the Kagera salient.

28 October

- **1918** - In the waning days of World War I, mutiny broke out in the German fleet at Kiel. Ships in port ran up the

red flag of revolution. The uprising spread to Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck, resulting in a general strike in Berlin which brought the government of Kaiser Wilhelm to a halt.

- **1933** - General Constand Laubscher Viljoen, former head of the SADF and leader of the Vryheidsfront, is born in Standerton, Eastern Transvaal.
- **1940** - Greece rejects an ultimatum, and Italy declares war and invades from Albania.
- **1940** - 'U-32' sinks RMS 'Empress of Britain', killing hundreds of children being evacuated to Canada; Goebbles claims the British did it.
- **1956** - Israeli troops invade Sinai Peninsula, later to be joined by British and French forces, following Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal from European control.
- **1962** - The Cuban Missile Crisis ended with the announcement by Soviet Russia's leader Nikita Khrushchev that his Soviet government was halting construction of missile bases in Cuba and would remove the offensive missiles. President Kennedy immediately accepted the offer then lifted the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba.
- **1977** - Six members of 1 and 2 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action at Onalomo in Southern Angola while attacking Eheke during Operation Kropduif. The

casualties were: Warrant Officer Class II Francois Carl van Zyl PMM MMM (34). Sergeant Michiel Labuschagne Kruger MMM (26). Sergeant Wentzel Christoffel Marx (29). Sergeant Neville Grant Clack (30). Corporal Antonie Badenhorst (25). Lance Corporal Gary William John Walker (20).

- **1977** - Sergeant Bernado Andre Mwonambunga from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action after suffering multiple shrapnel wounds in an enemy mortar bomb explosion during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN forces near Onalumona in Southern Angola during Operation Kropduif. He was 34.
- **1978** - Three young Ops Medics attached to 52 Battalion at Ogongo in Northern Owamboland died when they unselfishly put their lives on the line to ensure the safety of others. These three young heroes were posthumously awarded the Honoris Crux for their unselfish act of self-sacrifice in an attempt to save others in circumstances of extreme danger. They were: Private Burgert van Dyk van Papendorp HC (P) (19). Private Johannes Cornelius Jooste HC (P) (19). Private Frederick Johannes Smith HC (P) (18).
- **1986** - Major Daniel Kotze from the Financial Service

Corps at Defence Headquarters died after suffering a fatal heart attack at his home. He was 46.

- **1987** - Rifleman Aaron Alfred Khumalo from 111 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with MK operatives after they had crossed into South Africa from Swaziland approximately 57km east of Vryheid. He was 25.
- **1991** - President Sese Seko Mobutu orders Belgium to withdraw all its troops from Zaire.
- **1992** - Lance Corporal Jacob Johannes le Roux from Group 36 was killed in a military vehicle accident at Thaba N'Chu. He was 18.
- **1997** - Forces loyal to Zambian president Frederick Chiluba quash a coup by disgruntled military officers, arresting nine men including the captain who said an angel told him to overthrow the government.

29 October

- **1618** - Sir Walter Raleigh, English admiral and explorer-



Mobutu Sese Seko

er, is beheaded, allegedly for treason, at the age of 66.

- **1897** - Nazi propaganda minister Paul Joseph Goebbels was born in Rheydt, near Dusseldorf, Germany.
- **1914** - Russia declares war on Turkey.
- **1914** - Ottoman Empire enters the war with a naval attack on Russian Black Sea ports.
- **1914** - Serbia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.
- **1941** - Germans massacre 10,000 Jews in Kaunas, Lithuania.
- **1942** - Nazis murder 16,000 Jews, Pinsk, USSR.
- **1956** - Israel invades the Sinai Peninsula and troops push on towards the Suez Canal, just 32 km away. Israeli paratroopers drop into the Sinai to open the Straits of Tiran.
- **1962** - Three members from Central Flying School Duntottar were killed when an AT-6 Harvard that was executing a spin recovery in the General Flying area, was involved in a mid-air collision with another AT-6 Harvard. The casualties were: Air Mechanic Hendrik Jacobus Burger (18). Air Mechanic Jakobus Schabort Bischoff (22). Lieutenant Jan Jacob Christiaan van Zyl (23).
- **1968** - 2nd Lieutenant Charles Frederick Du Toit from 1 Squadron was killed when his Canadair C13L Sabre crashed into rising ground near Bandolierkop while on a routine low lev-

el navigation training flight from AFB Pietersburg. He was 21.

- **1975** - Four members from the SADF, one pilot and three passengers, were accidentally killed when their UNITA supplied Beechcraft Baron known as "Dinky Toy", crashed 6km north of Norton de Matos in Central Angola while carrying out aerial observations for Battle Group Foxbat in the Silva Porta area during Operation Savannah. The casualties were: Colonel Desmond Brian Harmse (46). Major Pieter Benjamin Uys (34). Major Nicholas Jacobus Visser (37). Corporal Neville Roland Beechey (19).
- **1977** - Rifleman Johannes Ferdinand Baum from the East Park Commando accidentally drowned in the Chobe River near Mpalela Island. He was 20.
- **1984** - Rifleman J. Paulus from 101 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents near the Cut-Line. He was 23.
- **1987** - Private Erwin Benade from the Headquarters Unit, Logistics Base Grootfontein, died from a gunshot wound apparently self-inflicted. He was 21.

30 October

- **1270** - The Eighth Crusade begins, and accomplishes nothing.
- **1799** - William Balch becomes the US Navy's first

commissioned Chaplain.

- **1899** - "Mournful Monday": the British lose 106 killed, 374 wounded and 1 284 captured in two battles.
- **1899** - General Christiaan de Wet and 300 Boers capture Nicholson's Nek and take 800 British soldiers prisoner.
- **1899** - In the Battle of Modderspruit, Commandant General Piet Joubert causes the British to fall back. He is urged to order a pursuit, but refuses on religious grounds, one of the fatal mistakes during the war.
- **1952** - Troops round up 500 Mau Mau suspects in Kenya.
- **1956** - Israel captures the Egyptian military post at El-Thamad.
- **1956** - France and Britain instruct Egypt and Israel to withdraw from the Suez Canal.
- **1961** - Congolese army begins an offensive against Katangan rebels.
- **1961** - Soviet Union tests a 58 megaton hydrogen bomb.
- **1963** - Morocco and Algeria sign a ceasefire.
- **1978** - Reports of fighting between Ugandan and Tanzanian troops in Uganda.
- **1979** - Rifleman Dirk Cornelius Odendaal from the SADF Dog Training Centre attached to 16 Maintenance Unit was killed at Grootfontein after being struck by a bullet resulting from the accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while in

the barracks. He was 18.

- **1992** - Heavy fighting breaks out in Luanda, Angola, between the government and Unita. The conflict rages for three days, claiming at least 1,000 lives.

31 October

- **1917** - Third Battle of Beer-sheba: Australian, New Zealand, & British mounted troops capture the city from the Turks.
- **1940** - The Battle of Britain concluded. Beginning on July 10, 1940, German bombers and fighters had attacked coastal targets, airfields, London and other cities, as a prelude to a Nazi invasion of England. British pilots in Spitfires and Hurricanes shot down over 1,700 German aircraft while losing 915 fighters. "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few," declared Prime Minister Winston Churchill.
- **1952** - The U.S. detonated its first hydrogen bomb at the Elugelab Atoll in the Eniwetok Proving Grounds in the Pacific Marshall Islands.
- **1956** - Following a twelve-hour ultimatum to Egypt and Israel, British and French forces bombard military airfields near Cairo in the Suez Canal Zone.
- **1968** - During the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson ordered a halt of American bombing of North Vietnam.

- **1980** - Two members from the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg were Reported Missing when their Civilian Piper Cherokee PA28-180, Registration ZS-VVK, disappeared while on a flight from Wonderboom Airport to Graskop. They were: Lance Corporal Gunther Jurgen Dreyer (19). Lance Corporal Andre' Coetzee (19).
- **1987** - A 101 Battalion Battle Group, supported by members of 5 Reconnaissance Regiment together with D Company, 1 Parachute Battalion, attacked SWAPO/PLAN positions at Nindango in Southern Angola. The Operation was known as Ops Firewood. The Battle Group suffered 15 casualties with approximately 67 wounded before contact was finally broken off at nightfall. The Battle Group casualties for this engagement were: Rifleman Hughes Norbert De Rose (21). Rifleman Wayne Valentine Ewels (21). Lance Corporal Raymond Mark Light (21). Corporal Nico Smith Olivier (19). Rifleman Dirk Willem van Rooyen (20). All from D Company, 1 Parachute Battalion. 2nd Lieutenant Dylan Chevalier Cobbold (20) from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment. Captain Andries Hercules Du Bruyn Rademeyer (27). 2nd Lieutenant Deon Botes

(20). Sapper Erasmus Albertus Steyn (19). Rifleman W. Abraham. Rifleman P. Epafu. Rifleman V.Petrus. Rifleman T. Sheepo. Rifleman M. Uusshona. All from 101 Battalion Romeo Mike.

- **1992** - More than 300 people are killed in renewed fighting as Angola slides back into civil war.
- **2006** - The Star reports that poor management of SANDF equipment and the theft of weapons that ended up in rebels' hands are fueling the conflict in Burundi where SA troops had been sent to keep the peace. It says sources confirmed that millions of rands worth of vehicles, guns, ammunition and bombs vanished from the SANDF army base in Burundi over the last four years. The South African department of defence indicated it would be able to comment only later this week "after conducting the proper research," report says.
- **2006** - Former South African Minister of Defence and President PW Botha dies at the age of 90.



PW Botha



Acronyms

1. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
2. *Avtomat Kalashnikova*.
3. *Grens Vegter* (Afrikaans for 'border fighter').
4. The word Casspir is taken from the joint designers of the vehicle - The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the South African Police (SAP).
5. High Altitude, Low Opening.
6. *Maschinenpistole*.
7. People's Liberation Army of Namibia.
8. *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (Committee for State Security).
9. *Fabriek Nasionale*.
10. *HaMossad leModi'in ule-Tafkidim Meyuhadim* (Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations).
11. *Schutzstaffel* (Protection Squadron).
12. Detention Barracks.
13. Messerschmitt. They were the manufacturers.
14. Projector, Infantry, Anti Tank.
15. *Ruchnoy Protivotankoviy Granatomyot*, but we'll also accept Rocket Propelled Grenade.
16. Browning Automatic Rifle.
17. *Ruchnoy Pulemyot Degtyaryova* (Degtyaryov hand-held machine gun).
18. From the German *Fliegerabwehrkanone* (aircraft defence cannon).
19. *Panzerabwehrkanone*.
20. Permanent Force and Citizen Force.



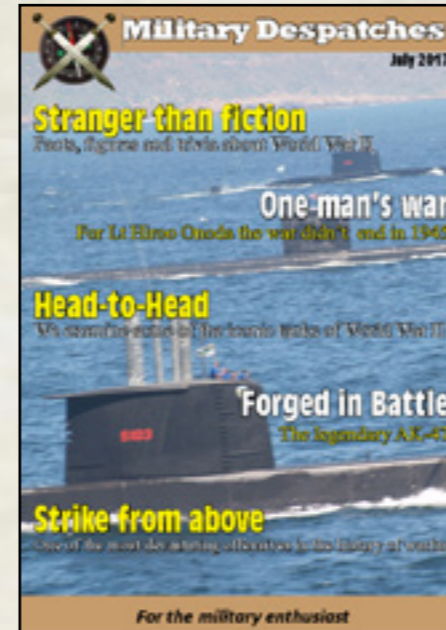
Useful links

Every month we feature a few useful links to military websites, newsletters and online magazines. Stuff that we think our readers will appreciate.

Here are two of our favourites. The first one is Nongqai, the unofficial police newsletter for veterans of the former South African Police Force and for those interested in Police History. The second is Jimmy's Own, the official newsletter of the South African Signals Association. Click on the magazine covers to go to the respective websites.



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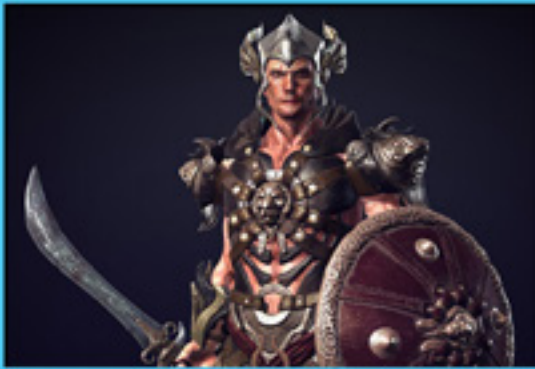
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