



# Military Despatches

Vol 67 January 2023

## Booby traps

Winning the booby prize

## Stalin's Organ

The World War II weapon feared by the Germans

## Mind games

The importance of psy-ops

## Joe Maseko

An often forgotten World War II warrior

*For the military enthusiast*



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**Paratrooper Wings Quiz**

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

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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.

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**Elite Military Units Quiz**

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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.

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**Who said that?**

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**Please remember to subscribe to our channel.**  
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## Editor's Sitrep

So the year 2022 fades into history and we welcome in the new year, 2023.

I would like to say that 2023 is going to be a better year. And I hope and pray that this will be the fact. Yet somehow I have my doubts.

Even the most optimistic of us has to admit that our country is in a mess. Load shedding - a cunning way of saying that Eksom is unable to supply the country with electricity - is getting totally out of hand. And it doesn't look as if it's going to improve in the near future. Quite the opposite in fact.

Crime is out of control and law enforcement does not appear to be able to deal with the problem. In many case law enforcement actually is the problem.

The price of everything seems to be going up on a weekly basis. Many people are now reaching the stage where they just cannot afford to live.

And then let's not forget the state of government. There is so much political infighting that most people have no idea of what is going on.

I really wish there was some magic spell that we could use to put an end to all this nonsense

and get our country back on a stable path.

Getting on to matters of the magazine, you will notice that there is no letters page this month. That's because I did not receive a single letter from anyone. So I have decided to cancel the letter page altogether.

This is now the 67th edition of the magazine. I will continue to bring out a magazine each month. Until I reach the stage where I fell that it is not worth the effort. When, and if, this takes place I guess only time will tell.

As we close out the year there are a few people I would like to thank. First of all to my regular contributors that take the time and effort to produce articles for the magazine - all with no compensation.

I must also thank those regular readers that bother to send me emails.

And lastly, to Robbie Roberts for all of his support, and also because he's just a really good guy. Robbie, I love you to bits old friend.

Until next time, stay safe and stay healthy.

*Matt*

# Hipe! media

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A troop sweeps for landmines. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and landmines are two of the most common types of booby traps encountered in conflict areas.



## Top Ten Longest Wars

*Imagine fighting in a war that lasted only 38 minutes? In this article, however, we are not looking at short wars. Rather we are examining the ten longest wars in history.*

**W**ars have been with us since the start of written history and probably even before then.

All of these wars have dragged on for years, with the exception of eight of them.

Most readers will be familiar with the Six Day War of 1967. Yet there were two wars that were even shorter than this.

The 100 Hour War, also known as the Football War, between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969 lasted only four days.

The shortest official war, known as the Anglo-Zanzibar War, was fought between Great Britain and the Zanzibar Sultanate on 27 August 1896. It lasted a mere 38 minutes.

The majority of wars, however, lasted for years. Some of these wars were never classified as official wars because war was never declared.

A good example of this was the Vietnam War. It was a conflict that saw American involvement for 19 years, five months, four weeks and one day. It would cost America 58,281 lives.

Our own Border War between 1969 and 1990 lasted for 23 years, four months, two weeks and six days - even longer than the Vietnam War.

There have been some wars that have lasted not for decades,

but for centuries.

Many are familiar with the 100 Year War between the kingdoms of England and France. Although it was called the 100 Year War it actually lasted for 116 years.

And if you think that this was the longest war in history, you're not even close. In fact the 100 Years War is only ranked as the 44th longest war in history.

A total of 59 wars lasted for more than 100 years. In this month's 'Top Ten' we're going to look at the 10 longest wars in history.

### 10. Yemeni-Ottoman conflicts (373 years)

The Yemeni-Ottoman conflicts were a series of conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Zaidi tribes in Upper Yemen, which began in 1538 and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Daan on 9 October 1911.

The first Ottoman attempt to conquer Yemen occurred in 1538, after the end of Mamluk rule in Yemen following the end of the Ottoman-Mamluk War (1516-17).

The Ottomans were unable to capture cities north of Sana'a in Upper Yemen such as Sa'dah, Shaharah and Hajjah remained in the hands of Yemeni Zaidi

imams.

A long series of wars and revolutions would continue until the end of World War I.

In August 1906, an Ottoman delegation arrived to the Imam, expressing the desire to re-open negotiations, to which the Imam reportedly responded by stating his desire to end the bloodshed.

Five years of negotiations ensued, and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Daan on 9 October 1911, which led to Yemen becoming a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire.

It was effective for seven years, until the Imam of Yemen capitalized on the Ottoman collapse in World War I and created the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen on 30 October 1918.

### 9. Yaqui Wars (396 years)

The Yaqui Wars were a series of armed conflicts between New Spain, and its successor state, the Mexican Republic, against the Yaqui Natives.

The period began in 1533 and lasted until 1929. The Yaqui Wars, along with the Caste War against the Maya, were the last conflicts of the centuries long Mexican Indian Wars.

Over the course of nearly 400 years, the Spanish and the Mexicans repeatedly launched military campaigns into Yaqui territory which resulted in several

serious battles and massacres.

The cause of the conflicts was like many of the Indian Wars. In 1684, the Spanish colonists in the present day Mexican state of Sonora discovered silver in the Rio Yaqui Valley. Following this, the Spanish gradually began settling on Yaqui land, and by 1740, the natives were ready to resist.

Some minor conflicts from before dated back to 1533 but in 1740 the Yaqui united with the neighbouring Mayo, Opata, and Pima tribes and successfully drove the colonists out by 1742.

During the 396 years of the Yaqui Wars a number of countries became involved. These included the Crown of Castile (1533-1716), Spain (1716-1821), Mexico (1821-1929), and the United States (1896-1918).

### 8. Byzantine-Arab Wars (400 years)

Between 780-1180, the Byzantine Empire and the Abbasid & Fatimid caliphates in the regions of Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia and Southern Italy fought a series of wars for supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

After a period of indecisive and slow border warfare, a string of almost unbroken Byzantine victories in the late 10th and early 11th centuries allowed three Byzantine Emperors, namely Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes and finally Basil II to recapture territory lost to the Muslim conquests in



**THE LAST BATTLE:** The last major battle of the Yaqui Wars was the raid on Bear Valley which was carried out by the US Army in 1927.

the 7th century Arab-Byzantine wars under the failing Heraclian Dynasty.

Consequently, large parts of Syria, excluding its capital city of Damascus, were taken by the Byzantines, even if only for a few years, with a new theme of Syria integrated into the expanding empire.

In addition to the natural gains of land, and wealth and manpower received from these victories, the Byzantines also inflicted a psychological defeat on their opponents by recapturing territory deemed holy and important to Christendom, in particular the city of Antioch - allowing Byzantium to hold two of Christendoms' five most important Patriarchs, those making up the Pentarchy.

Nonetheless, the Arabs remained a fierce opponent to the Byzantines and a temporary Fatimid recovery after c. 970 had the potential to reverse many of the earlier victories.

And while Byzantium took

large parts of Palestine, Jerusalem was left untouched and the ideological victory from the campaign was not as great as it could have been had Byzantium recaptured this Patriarchal seat of Christendom. Byzantine attempts to stem the slow but successful Arab conquest of Sicily ended in a dismal failure.

Syria would cease to exist as a Byzantine province when the Turks took the city of Antioch in c. 1084. The Crusaders took the city back for Christendom in 1097 and established a Byzantine protectorate over the Crusader Kingdoms in Jerusalem and Antioch under Manuel I Komnenos.

The death of Manuel Komnenos in 1180 ended military campaigns far from Constantinople and after the Fourth Crusade both the Byzantines and the Arabs were engaged in other conflicts until they were conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the 15th and 16th centuries, respectively.

**7. Arab–Byzantine Wars (421 years)**

The Arab–Byzantine wars were a series of wars between a number of Muslim Arab dynasties and the Byzantine Empire between the 7th and 11th centuries AD. Conflict started during the initial Muslim conquests, under the expansionist Rashidun and Umayyad caliphs, in the 7th century and continued by their successors until the mid-11th century.

The emergence of Muslim Arabs from Arabia in the 630s resulted in the rapid loss of Byzantium’s southern provinces (Syria and Egypt) to the Arab Caliphate. Over the next fifty years, under the Umayyad caliphs, the Arabs would launch repeated raids into still-Byzantine Asia Minor, twice besiege the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, and conquer the Byzantine Exarchate of Africa.

The situation did not stabilize until after the failure of the Second Arab Siege of Constantinople in 718, when the Taurus Mountains on the eastern rim of Asia Minor became established as the mutual, heavily fortified and largely depopulated frontier.

Under the Abbasid Empire, relations became more normal, with embassies exchanged and even periods of truce, but conflict remained the norm, with almost annual raids and counter-raids, sponsored either by the Abbasid government or by local rulers, well into the 10th century.

During the first centuries,

the Byzantines were usually on the defensive, and avoided open field battles, preferring to retreat to their fortified strongholds. Only after 740 did they begin to launch their raids in an attempt to combat the Arabs and take the lands they had lost, but still the Abbasid Empire was able to retaliate with often massive and destructive invasions of Asia Minor.

With the decline and fragmentation of the Abbasid state after 861 and the concurrent strengthening of the Byzantine Empire under the Macedonian dynasty, the tide gradually turned. Over a period of fifty years from ca. 920 to 976, the Byzantines finally broke through the Muslim defences and restored their control over northern Syria and Greater Armenia.

The last century of the Arab–Byzantine wars was dominated by frontier conflicts with the Fatimids in Syria, but the border remained stable until the appearance of a new people, the Seljuk Turks, after 1060.

The Arabs also took to the sea, and from the 650s on, the entire Mediterranean Sea became a battleground, with raids and counter-raids being launched against islands and the coastal settlements.

Arab raids reached a peak in the 9th and early 10th centuries, after the conquests of Crete, Malta and Sicily, with their fleets reaching the coasts of France and Dalmatia and even the suburbs of Constantinople.

**6. Crusades (602 years, 5 months, 1 week and 4 days)**

The Crusades were a series of religious wars initiated, supported, and sometimes directed by the Latin Church in the medieval period. The best known of these Crusades are those to the Holy Land in the period between 1095 and 1291 that were intended to recover Jerusalem and its surrounding area from Islamic rule.

Beginning with the First Crusade, which resulted in the recovery of Jerusalem in 1099, dozens of Crusades were fought, providing a focal point of European history for centuries.

In 1095, Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont. He encouraged military support for Byzantine emperor Alexios I against the Seljuk Turks and called for an armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Across all social strata in western Europe, there was an enthusiastic response.

The first Crusaders had a variety of motivations, including religious salvation, satisfying feudal obligations, opportunities for renown, and economic or political advantage. Later crusades were conducted by generally more organized armies, sometimes led by a king. All were granted papal indulgences. Initial successes established four Crusader states: the County of Edessa; the Principality of Antioch; the Kingdom of Jerusalem; and the County of Tripoli.

The Crusader presence re-

mained in the region in some form until the fall of Acre in 1291. After this, there were no further crusades to recover the Holy Land.

Concurrent military activities in the Iberian Peninsula against the Moors and in northeastern Europe against pagan West Slav, Baltic, and Finnic peoples (the Northern Crusades) have also been called crusades – sometimes retroactively, long after the event had ended – due to the facts that they also had central approval by the Roman Catholic Church and that the military campaigns were organized in comparable fashion, with often similar rhetoric, symbolism, and banners as applied during the campaigns in the Middle East.

Other church-sanctioned campaigns called crusades were fought against heretical Christian sects (precursors of proto-Protestantism), against the Ottoman Empire, and for political reasons. Unsanctioned by the church, there were also several Popular Crusades of ordinary citizens.

Proclaimed a crusade in 1123, the struggle between the Christians and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula eventually became better known as the Reconquista in European historiography, and only ended in 1492 with the fall of the Muslim Emirate of Granada. From 1147, campaigns in Northern Europe against pagan tribes were considered crusades. In 1199, Pope Innocent III began the practice of proclaiming crusades against

Christian heretics.

In the 13th century, crusading was used against the Cathars in Languedoc and against Bosnia; this practice continued against the Waldensians in Savoy and the Hussites in Bohemia in the 15th century and against Protestants in the 16th. From the mid-14th century, crusading rhetoric was used in response to the rise of the Ottoman Empire, and ended around 1699 with the War of the Holy League.

**5. Byzantine-Bulgarian Wars (675 years)**

The Byzantine–Bulgarian wars were a series of conflicts fought between the Byzantines and Bulgarians which began when the Bulgars first settled in the Balkan peninsula in the 5th century, and intensified with the expansion of the Bulgarian Empire to the southwest after 680 AD.

The Byzantines and Bulgarians continued to clash over the next century with variable success, until the Bulgarians, led by Krum, inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the Byzantines. After Krum died in 814, his son Omurtag negotiated a thirty-year peace treaty. Simeon I had multiple successful campaigns against the Byzantines during his rule from 893 to 927.

His son Peter I negotiated another long-lasting peace treaty. His rule was followed by a period of decline of the Bulgarian

state.

In 971 John I Tzimiskes, the Byzantine emperor, subjugated much of the weakening Bulgarian Empire by defeating Boris II and capturing Preslav, the Bulgarian capital. Samuel managed to stabilize the Bulgarian state with a center around the town of Prespa.

Near the end of his rule, the Byzantines got the upper hand again, and under Basil II they won the Battle of Kleidion and completely conquered Bulgaria in 1018.

There were rebellions against Byzantine rule from 1040 to 1041, and in the 1070s and the 1080s, but these failed. In 1185,



**Crusader knight**

however, Theodore Peter and Ivan Asen started a revolt, and the weakening Byzantine Empire, facing internal dynastic troubles of its own, was unable to quash the revolt.

After the Fourth Crusade army conquered Constantinople in 1204, Kaloyan, the Bulgarian emperor, tried to establish friendly relations with the crusaders, but the newly created Latin Empire spurned any offer of alliance with the Bulgarians.

Because of his cold reception, Kaloyan allied with the Nicaeans, which reduced the crusaders' power in the area. Even though his nephew Boril allied with the Latin Empire, Boril's successors sided with the Nicaeans, despite a few continuing attacks from them.

After the Latin Empire collapsed, the Byzantines, taking advantage of a Bulgarian civil war, captured portions of Thrace, but the Bulgarian emperor Theodore Svetoslav retook these lands.

The Byzantine-Bulgarian relations continued to fluctuate until the Ottoman Turks captured the Bulgarian capital in 1393 and the Byzantine capital in 1453.

**4. Roman–Persian Wars (681 years)**

The Roman–Persian Wars, also known as the Roman–Iranian Wars, were a series of conflicts between states of the Greco-Roman world and two successive Iranian empires: the Parthian and the Sasanian.

Battles between the Parthian

Empire and the Roman Republic began in 54 BC; wars began under the late Republic, and continued through the Roman (later Byzantine) and Sasanian empires. A plethora of vassal kingdoms and allied nomadic nations in the form of buffer states and proxies also played a role. The wars were ended by the early Muslim conquests, which led to the fall of the Sasanian Empire and huge territorial losses for the Byzantine Empire, shortly after the end of the last war between them.

Although warfare between the Romans and Persians continued over seven centuries, the frontier, aside from shifts in the north, remained largely stable. A game of tug of war ensued: towns, fortifications, and provinces were continually sacked, captured, destroyed, and traded.

Neither side had the logistical strength or manpower to maintain such lengthy campaigns far from their borders, and thus neither could advance too far without risking stretching its frontiers too thin.

Both sides did make conquests beyond the border, but in time the balance was almost always restored. Although initially different in military tactics, the armies of both sides gradually adopted from each other and by the second half of the 6th century, they were similar and evenly matched.

The expense of resources during the Roman–Persian Wars ultimately proved catastrophic for both empires. The prolonged and escalating war-

fare of the 6th and 7th centuries left them exhausted and vulnerable in the face of the sudden emergence and expansion of the Rashidun Caliphate, whose forces invaded both empires only a few years after the end of the last Roman–Persian war.

Benefiting from their weakened condition, the Rashidun armies swiftly conquered the entire Sasanian Empire, and deprived the Eastern Roman Empire of its territories in the Levant, the Caucasus, Egypt, and the rest of North Africa. Over the following centuries, more of the Eastern Roman Empire came under Muslim rule.

**3. Anglo-French Wars (706 years, 5 month, 2 weeks, and 1 day)**

The Anglo-French Wars were a series of conflicts between England (and after 1707, Britain) and France.

These included the High Middle Ages from 1109 to 1243, and the Late Middle Ages from 1294 to 1498.

Then there was what was known as the Modern Period that lasted from 1512 to 1967 and again from 1702 to 1802.

After 1802 there was the Anglo-French War from 1803 to 1815. It was part of the Napoleonic Wars and their peripheral conflicts.

The final war between Britain and France took part between 1940 and 1942. This of course was the Anglo-Vichy French War during World War II. Although it must be noted that Britain fought alongside Free

France against Vichy France.

**2. Roman–Germanic Wars (708 years)**

A long series of wars were fought between the Romans and various Germanic peoples between 113 BC and 476.

The nature of these wars varied through time between Roman conquest, Germanic uprisings and later Germanic invasions in the Western Roman Empire that started in the late second century BC.

The series of conflicts was one factor which led to the ultimate downfall of the Western Roman Empire in particular and ancient Rome in general in 476.

**1. Reconquista (781 years)**

The *Reconquista* (Spanish, Portuguese and Galician for “reconquest”) is a historiographical construction describing the 781-year period in the history of the Iberian Peninsula between the Umayyad conquest of Hispania in 711 and the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada in 1492, in which the Christian kingdoms expanded through war and conquered al-Andalus; the territories of Iberia ruled by Muslims.

The concept of a Reconquista emerged in Western and especially in Spanish historiography in the 19th century, and was a fundamental component of Spanish nationalism.

The beginning of the Reconquista is traditionally marked with the Battle of Covadonga (718 or 722), the first known victory by Christian military

forces in Hispania since the 711 military invasion which was undertaken by combined Arab-Berber forces.

The rebels who were led by Pelagius defeated a Muslim army in the mountains of northern Hispania and established the independent Christian Kingdom of Asturias.

In the late 10th century, the Umayyad vizier Almanzor waged military campaigns for 30 years to subjugate the northern Christian kingdoms. His armies ravaged the north, even sacking the church of Santiago de Compostela.

When the government of Córdoba disintegrated in the early 11th century, a series of petty successor states known as taifas emerged. The northern kingdoms took advantage of this situation and struck deep into al-Andalus; they fostered civil war, intimidated the weakened taifas, and made them pay large tributes (*parias*) for “protection”.

After a Muslim resurgence under the Almohads in the 12th century, the great Moorish strongholds in the south fell to Christian forces in the 13th century after the decisive battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) - Córdoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248 - leaving only the Muslim enclave of Granada as a tributary state in the south. After the surrender of Granada in January 1492, the entire Iberian peninsula was controlled by Christian rulers.

On 30 July 1492, as a result of the Alhambra Decree, all

the Jewish community - some 200,000 people - were forcibly expelled. The conquest was followed by a series of edicts (1499–1526) which forced the conversions of Muslims in Spain, who were later expelled from the Iberian peninsula by the decrees of King Philip III in 1609.

Beginning in the 19th century, traditional historiography has used the term Reconquista for what was earlier thought of as a restoration of the Visigothic Kingdom over conquered territories.

The concept of Reconquista, consolidated in Spanish historiography in the second half of the 19th century, was associated with the development of a Spanish national identity, emphasizing nationalistic and romantic aspects.

The concept continues to have importance in far-right European political parties regarded as anti-immigrant and Islamophobic - especially with the Spanish Vox party and the French Reconquête party.

**Final thought**

As I write this article, there are no fewer than 61 wars or conflicts that are still continuing right at this moment.

The longest of these wars, the Tuareg rebellion, has already been going for the past 106 years.

Who knows how much longer some of these wars and conflict could last. Eventually one of them could make the Top Ten list.

# Gran Sasso Raid

Carried out by the German 2nd Parachute Division and the 502nd SS Jäger Battalion, Operation Oak was a classic special forces operation during World War II.

- **Date:** 12 September 1943
- **Location:** Hotel Campo Imperatore, Italy
- **Units involved:** 2nd Parachute Division, 502nd SS Jäger Battalion

**D**uring World War II, the Gran Sasso raid, code-named *Unternehmen Eiche* (Operation Oak), carried out by the German military on 12 September 1943.

It was a successful operation by German paratroopers and Waffen-SS commandos to rescue the deposed Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini from custody in the Gran Sasso d'Italia massif.

The airborne operation was personally ordered by Adolf Hitler, approved by General Kurt Student and planned and executed by Major Harald Mors.

## Background

On the night between 24 and 25 July 1943, a few weeks after the Allied invasion of Sicily and bombing of Rome, the Grand Council of Fascism voted a motion of no confidence against prime minister Benito Mussolini.

On the same day, King

Victor Emmanuel III replaced him with Marshal Pietro Badoglio and had Mussolini arrested.

This is commonly known as the Fall of the Fascist regime in Italy (or 25 Luglio in Italian); Badoglio's government at first continued the war on the Axis powers' side, but after Italian and German forces were defeated during the Allied invasion of Sicily (17 August), the Italian government began secret negotiations with the Allies to surrender.

This resulted in the Armistice of Cassibile on 3 September, coinciding with the Allied invasion of mainland Italy.

## Badoglio government

Italian high command, led by Marshal Badoglio, was well aware that the German army would probably try to seize control of Italy as soon as the government switched sides to the Allies.

Therefore, the Italian government wanted the Allied troops to have landed on the mainland before the armistice took effect and was announced publicly – which happened on 8 September – so that the Allies could move north quickly to help defend especially the capital city of Rome against the looming German invasion.

Indeed, Mussolini's fall prompted German military commanders to develop Opera-

tion Achse (the plans, originally codenamed Operation Alarich, were changed several times from 28 July to 30 August) to mitigate the impact of a potential Italian defection as much as possible.

The Badoglio government also realised that the Germans were likely to attempt breaking Mussolini out of prison, reinstate him and rally Fascist support to keep Italy in the war on Germany's side, and so strict measures to hide and secure Mussolini were taken: he was moved several times and guarded by almost a battalion of troops.

## Mussolini's imprisonment

Mussolini was arrested on the king's orders by the Carabinieri on 25 July just after he left the king's private residence, and he was initially brought to the Podgora Carabinieri Headquarters in Trastevere.

In the afternoon he was transferred to the Carabinieri Cadet School in the via Legnano, where he was held until 27 July.

On 27 July, military police led by General Francesco Saverio Pólito took Mussolini to Gaeta, boarded the ship *Persefone* and imprisoned Mussolini in an isolated house on the island of Ponza in the Tyrrhenian Sea from 12:00 on 28 July to 7 August.

On 7 August, Mussolini was transferred to a private villa on La Maddalena (until 27 August). Since 28 August, Mussolini had been held at the Hotel Campo Imperatore, which was built on a remote and defensible mountain plateau 2,112 metres above sea level in the Gran

Sasso d'Italia mountain range.

A ski station was located next to the hotel, linked with a cable car. The hotel was one of originally three planned hotels (but the only one that was ever built) shaped in the letters 'D', 'V' and 'X', together 'DVX', the Latin word meaning "leader", from which Mussolini's Italian title *il Duce* was derived.

Ironically, the D-shaped Hotel Campo Imperatore constructed to celebrate Mussolini's rule served as his prison for several weeks.

## German tracking and planning

Adolf Hitler's common procedure was to give similar orders to competing German military organisations.

He ordered Hauptsturmführer Otto Skorzeny to track Mussolini and simultaneously ordered the paratroop General Kurt Student to execute the liberation.

Skorzeny was the perfect man for the job. During World War II he specialised in guerrilla warfare and commando-style raids. He mounted numerous operations with varying degrees of success that involved either the rescue, kidnapping, assassination, or defence of numerous wartime leaders in Europe.

As a result, he became Hitler's favourite commando and dubbed "the most dangerous man in Europe" by the Allies.

On September 7, German signals intelligence intercepted a coded Italian report which indicated that Mussolini was imprisoned somewhere in the Abruzzi mountains.

Next, the Germans employed a ruse to confirm the exact location in which a German doc-

tor pretended to try to establish a hospital at the hotel on the Grand Sasso.

Informants of SS-Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kappler used counterfeit notes with a face value of £100,000 forged under Operation Bernhard to help obtain information.[citation needed] Skorzeny used information gathered by agents to plan his raid.

## The raid

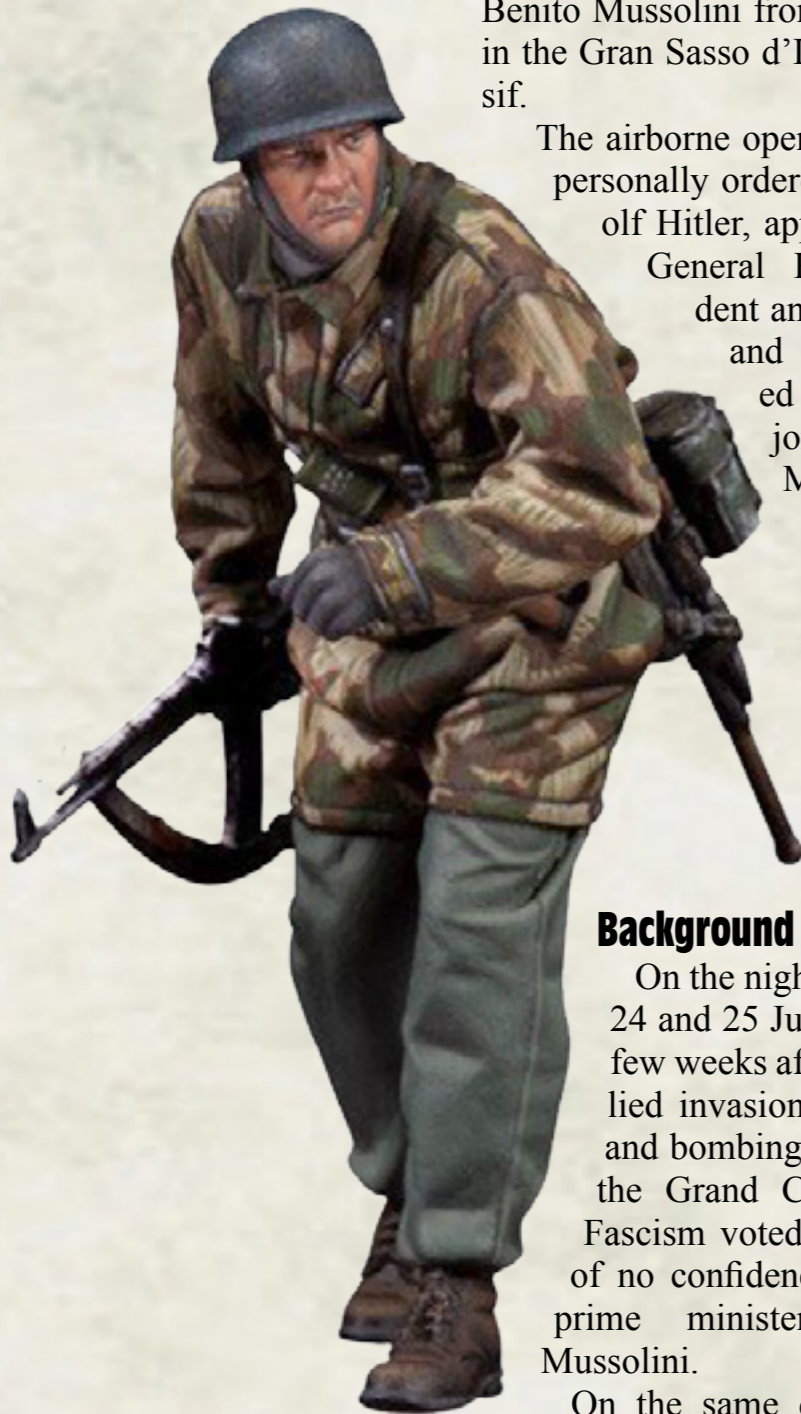
After the Italian government announced the Armistice of Cassibile and thereby its defection from the Axis to the Allies on 8 September, the German army launched Operation Achse and quickly occupied strategic points in northern and central Italy within days, effectively disarming hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers who had nominally just switched sides.

The Allied Italian military and political leaders including marshal Badoglio and king Victor Emmanuel III fled to Allied-controlled territory in southern Italy.

On 12 September 1943, Skorzeny and 16 SS troopers joined the Fallschirmjäger to rescue Mussolini in a high-risk glider mission. Ten DFS 230 gliders, each carrying nine soldiers and a pilot, towed by Henschel Hs 126 planes started between 13:05 and 13:10 from the Pratica di Mare Air Base, near Rome.

The leader of the airborne operation, Oberleutnant Georg Freiherr von Berlepsch, entered the first glider while Skorzeny and his SS troopers sat in the fourth and the fifth gliders.

To gain height before cross-



ing the close by Alban Hills, the leading three glider-towing plane units flew an additional loop.

All of the following units considered that manoeuvre to be unnecessary and preferred not to endanger the given time of arrival at the target. That led to both of Skorzeny's units arriving first over the target.

Meanwhile, the valley station of the funicular railway leading to the Campo Imperatore was captured at 14:00 in a ground attack by two paratrooper companies, led by Major Harald Mors, the commander-in-chief of the whole raid, which cut all telephone lines.

This ground attack caused the only two deaths of the operation, Italian forestry guard Pasqualino Vitocco, who was killed while attempting to warn the garrison of the approaching German troops, and carabinieri Giovanni Natale, who was killed while preparing to open fire on the attackers.

Two more carabinieri were slightly wounded by a hand grenade. At 14:05, the airborne commandos landed their ten DFS 230 gliders on the mountain near the hotel. One crashed and caused injuries.

The Fallschirmjäger and Skorzeny's special troopers overwhelmed Mussolini's captors, 200 well-equipped Carabinieri guards, without a single shot being fired.

General Fernando Soleti of the Italian African Police, who flew in with Skorzeny, had told them to stand down.

Skorzeny attacked the radio operator and his equipment and stormed into the hotel, followed

by his SS troopers and the paratroopers.

Ten minutes after the beginning of the raid, Mussolini left the hotel and was accompanied by the German soldiers. At 14:45, Mors accessed the hotel via the funicular railway and introduced himself to Mussolini.

Mussolini was then to be flown out by a Fieseler Fi 156 STOL plane that had arrived in the meantime. Although under the given circumstances the small plane was overloaded, Skorzeny insisted on accompanying Mussolini, which endangered the mission's success.

After an extremely-dangerous but successful take-off, they flew to Pratica di Mare. They then immediately continued to fly in a Heinkel He 111 to Vienna, where Mussolini stayed overnight at the Hotel Imperial.

The next day he was flown to Munich, and on 14 September, he met Hitler at Führer Headquarters, in Wolf's Lair, near Rastenburg.

### Aftermath

The operation granted a rare public relations opportunity to Hermann Göring late in the war, with German propaganda hailing the operation for months afterward.

The landing at Campo Imperatore was in fact led by First Lieutenant von Berlepsch, commanded by Major Mors and under orders from General Student, all of whom were Fallschirmjäger officers, but Skorzeny stewarded the Italian leader right in front of the cameras.

After an SS propaganda coup at the behest of Reichsführ-



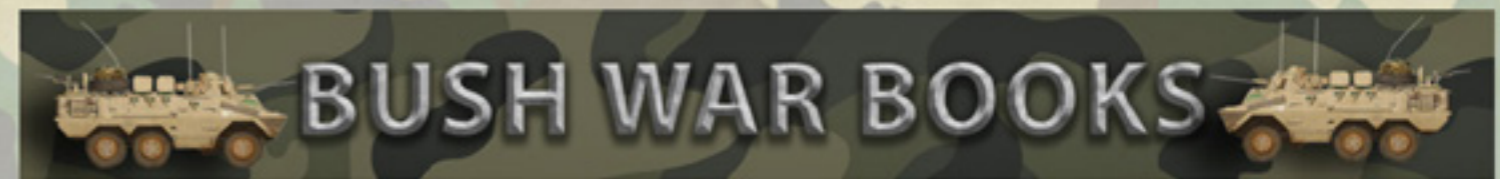
Otto Skorzeny claimed the lions share of the credit for the operation.

er-SS Heinrich Himmler and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, Skorzeny and his special forces of the Waffen-SS were granted the majority of the credit for the operation.

Skorzeny gained a large amount of success from the mission. He received a promotion to Sturmbannführer, the award of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross and the fame that led to his image as the "most dangerous man in Europe".

After hearing of Mussolini's escape, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated in the House of Commons: "Knowing that il Duce was hidden in a safe place and that the Government of Badoglio was committed to handing him over to the Allies, a daring attack, completely beyond all foresight, prevented this from happening".

Skorzeny published an autobiography in 1950 (*Geheimkommando Skorzeny*) and another book (*Meine Kommandounternehmen*) in 1976.



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**"War does not determine who is right - only who is left"**



# Surrender! Forget about it.

On given an ultimatum to surrender, some responses have been rather surprising to say the least. In this article we look at some of them.

When I was in my late teens, many years ago, I had a tee-shirt with a slogan on it that I really enjoyed.

It featured an eagle swooping down on a mouse. The mouse was sitting on its hind legs with its right paw in the air with the middle finger extended. The slogan read, "The last great act of defiance."

When faced with overwhelming odds and greatly outnumbered and given the ultimatum to surrender, the logical thing to do would be exactly that - surrender.

The following people, however, did not follow the rules. When given an ultimatum to surrender, they had other ideas.

## The Spartans

Many people will have seen the film *300* where a mere 300 Spartans, wearing little more than tight little Speedo swimsuits, held out against hordes of invading Persians.

While the movie was a bit over the top, it was based on a real battle - the Battle of Thermopylae.

The battle took place during the Greco-Persian Wars, which were ultimately little more than a grudge match between the ancient Greeks and the kings of the Persian Empire.

The Persian kings were Xerxes the Great, and his subsequent successor Artaxerxes I. I always wonder if Artaxerxes was also known as Artaxerxes the not as

great?

During the First Greco-Persian War the Greek victory at the Battle of Marathon put a spoke in the Persian's wheels and brought the war to a close.

King Xerxes I was not all that impressed with the defeat and vowed to overthrow and destroy Greece. He amassed an invasion force which, according to the 'Father of History', Herodotus, was the largest ever to have walked the earth. He estimated the Persian army to measure well over one million men.

In order to buy the Greek army some time, a contingent of 300 Spartan troops gathered in the narrow coastal path of Thermopylae (The Hot Gates).

The Persian generals ordered them to lay down their arms. The Spartans' reply was "Come and take them!"

And make no mistake, the Persian army did exactly that. The thing is that it took them more than three days to achieve. The Spartans achieved their objective of buying time for the Greek army.

The Spartans were destroyed to the last man. A commemorative epitaph engraved on a plaque marks the spot where the last of the Spartans perished; it reads "Go tell the Spartans, thou who passest by, that here, obedient to their laws, we lie..."

Inspired by the courage of the Spartans, the Greeks united and successfully drove the Persians

out of the nation, winning the second Greco-Persian War in one of the greatest military upsets of all time.

Yet while "Come and take them" was a great response to a demand to surrender, the Spartans really outdid themselves over a century later.

Once again the Spartans found themselves threatened and imposed upon by the expansion of empire. This was in the mid 300s B.C. when the Macedonian Kingdom under Phillip II, predecessor of Alexander the Great, approached the heavily defended city of Lacedaemonia.

The Macedonian's warned that if the Laconians chose to resist, all inhabitants of the city would be slain if the Spartans were defeated.

The Spartan's replied with a single word: "If...."

## Commander John Paul Jones

Often referred to as the "Father of the United States Navy",



**DEFIANCE:** The slogan on a tee-shirt that inspired this article.

John Paul Jones is perhaps best remembered for his actions during a scrap between the Continental Navy and the British Royal Navy during the American Revolutionary War.

Jones was a mere 13 years old when he began his career at sea. He served on private merchant vessels before volunteering for the Continental Navy in 1775.

Jones distinguished himself in maritime military service and, as a result, was awarded command of the USS *Bonhomme Richard*, a rebuilt French merchant cargo ship gifted to the Continental Navy by Jacques Donatien LeRay.

On 23 September 1779, Jones ran into two escorts of the Baltic merchant fleet, the HMS *Serapis* and the Countess of Scarborough.

Logic dictates that the wise thing for Jones do have done was cut and run. Instead he decided to engage both British vessels.

HMS *Serapis* was armed with 44 guns, while the Countess of Scarborough had 22 guns. The USS *Bonhomme Richard* had 42 guns.

Not long after the battle began, the USS *Bonhomme Richard* was badly damaged. The captain of the HMS *Serapis* instructed Jones to surrender. Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!"

And then, true to his word, Jones did begin to fight. Mounting a furious counterattack, the listing and heavily damaged USS *Bonhomme Richard* defeated and captured both enemy vessels in a surprising victory.

The USS *Bonhomme Richard* sank the following day, and

Jones took command of the captured HMS *Serapis*. The victory not only enhanced Jones' reputation, it stunned the British Royal Navy.

## Ioannis Metaxas

To say that Ioannis Metaxas was a controversial figure in Greek political history would be putting it mildly.

His tenure as Prime Minister of Greece was marred with authoritarianism and elements of a fascist, strongman regime.

A former soldier, Metaxas was elected Prime Minister in 1936. For the first four months he toed the line and complied with Greek Constitutional Law.

It didn't last long and he soon began to abuse his power as he observed the rise of fascism in both Italy and Germany. Whatever Adolf and Benito could do, he could do just as well.

Yet his most famous moment came during the early years of World War II, towards the very end of his career.

As the German Wehrmacht *blitzkrieged* their way across Europe, it soon became clear that the Nazi war machine was unstoppable.

The Germans had already taken Luxembourg, France, Holland, and most of Belgium by the time Italian forces under the command of Benito Mussolini, ally of the German state, arrived on the doorstep of Greece.

On 28 October, 1940, Italian ambassador to Greece Emanuele Grazzi demanded unconditional Greek surrender and total cooperation with Axis occupation. Metaxas gave a clear and simple answer - "No!"

The Italians crossed the bor-

der and attacked Greece. This initiated the Greco-Italian War and Greece's brief participation in World War II.

That same day Greek citizens poured into the streets shouting *Ohi* (No), in open defiance of the Italian invasion.

It all ended with a decisive Axis victory, with Athens being captured on 27 April, 1941, and the Battle of Greece ending on 30 April, 1941.

To this day 28 October is observed in Greece as *Epeteios tou "Ohi"* ("No" Day).

## Maor Digby Tatham-Warter

The following incident may or may not have taken place. But it's worth a look at.

In a scene from the epic film *A Bridge Too Far* Lt Col John Frost and Major Harry Carlyle of the British Parachute Regiment watch as an SS *panzer* officer approaches their position during a lull in the Battle of Arnhem. The SS officer is under a white flag.

"Rather interesting development, sir," says Major Carlyle to Lt Col Frost. He then addressed the German. "That's far enough! We can hear you from there!"

"My general says there is no point in continuing this fighting! He wishes to discuss terms of a surrender!" shouts the SS officer.

"Shall I answer him, sir?" Carlyle asks Frost.

"Tell him to go to hell," says Frost.

"We haven't the proper facilities to take you all prisoner! Sorry!" Carlyle shouts to the SS officer.

"What?" says the SS officer,

looking very confused.

“We’d like to, but we can’t accept your surrender! Was there anything else?” shouts Carlyle.

The German walks off shaking his head.

“Well, that’s that,” says Frost.

The German officers returns to General Wilhelm Bittrich, commander of the 2nd SS Panzer Corps.

“They rejected our surrender offer. What are your orders, Herr General?” he tells the general.

“Flatten Arnhem,” General Bittrich says.

Now while this makes a great scene for the movie, there is debate as to whether this incident really occurred as it was portrayed in the film.

It is a fact that General Bittrich did give the British an ultimatum to surrender at Arnhem.

What makes the dialogue above seem authentic was that the character in the film, Major Harry Carlyle, was based on the real life Major Allison Digby Tatham-Warter.

Better known as Digby Tatham-Warter, or simply Digby, he was a legendary figure in the Parachute Regiment.

He always had an umbrella with him which he carried into battle. When asked why, he said that he had trouble remembering passwords and felt that anyone who saw him with it would think that “only a bloody fool of an Englishman” would carry an umbrella into battle.

During Operation Market Garden he was part of A Company of the British Parachute Regiment. They were dropped kilometres away from Arn-

hem Bridge, their intended drop zone. To reach the bridge they had to go through Arnhem where the streets were blocked by German forces.

Digby led his men through back gardens of nearby houses, avoiding the Germans. They travelled nearly 13 kilometres in seven hours while also taking 150 German soldiers, including members of the SS, prisoner.

During the battle, Digby wore his red beret instead of a helmet and waved his umbrella while walking about the defences despite heavy mortar fire.

When the Germans started using tanks to cross the bridge, Digby led a bayonet charge against them wearing a bowler hat. He later disabled a German armoured car with his umbrella, incapacitating the driver by shoving the umbrella through the car’s observational slit and poking the driver in the eye.

When the Regiment Padre was pinned down by enemy fire, Digby walked over, opened the umbrella as if to give him cover from the fire, and calmly escorted the padre to safety.

Injured by shrapnel during the Battle of Arnhem, Digby was captured. Because of his injury, Digby was sent to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital but escaped out of a window with his second in command Captain Tony Frank.

Having made contact with the Dutch Resistance, Digby was given a bicycle and a fake Dutch identity card that allowed him to pose as Peter Jensen, a deaf-mute son of a lawyer.

Digby used the bicycle to visit fellow soldiers in hiding. At one stage during his travels he helped push a German staff car



**LEGEND:** Major Allison Digby Tatham-Warter, British Parachute Regiment.

out of a ditch.

He managed to gather 150 escaped British soldiers and led them towards the front line. Once there he used a torch to flash a V for Victory sign.

Members of XXX Corps then ferried them across the river. Upon return to the United Kingdom, Digby was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

So considering the type of character that Digby Tatham-Warter was, it would not have been unusual for him to give the type of answer depicted in the film.

### **Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe**

During the winter of late 1944 things were not looking too promising for the Germans.

Since the D-Day landings in June 1944 in Normandy, the Allies had advanced across the Rhine River and into Germany. At the same time on the East-



**NUTS:** Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe (middle) poses with some of his officers at Bastogne.

ern Front, the Russians were pushing forward. It became clear that they would have to do something drastic if they were not going to lose the war.

The plan was *Unternehmen Wacht am Rhein* (Operation Watch on the Rhine). The Germans would launch an offensive through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in eastern Belgium, northeast France, and Luxembourg.

The offensive was intended to stop Allied use of the Belgian port of Antwerp and to split the Allied lines, allowing the Germans to encircle and destroy four Allied armies and force the Western Allies to negotiate a peace treaty in the Axis powers’ favour.

Once that was accomplished, Hitler believed he could fully concentrate on the Soviets on the Eastern Front. The offensive was planned by the German forces with utmost secrecy, with minimal radio traffic and movements of troops and equip-

ment under cover of darkness. Intercepted German communications indicating a substantial German offensive preparation were not acted upon by the Allies.

The Germans launched their attack on the morning of 16 December 1944. The Allies were overconfident and preoccupied with their own offensive plans, so the Germans achieved total surprise.

The Americans retreated in disarray, causing a massive bulge in their defenses.

The US 101st Airborne, the “Screaming Eagles”, retreated as far as the Belgian town of Bastogne. It was here that the commander of the 101st, Brigadier General Anthony Clement McAuliffe, decided to make a stand.

While the Allies held overwhelming air superiority, the dense overcast weather meant that they were effectively grounded. The 101st were surrounded and outnumbered by 5 to

1. The Germans demanded that McAuliffe surrender. Like the Spartans and Ioannis Metaxas before him, McAuliffe’s replied with a single word - “Nuts!”

The demand to surrender had been typed out and delivered by two German officers under a white flag. McAuliffe’s response had also been typed out. When it was given to the two German officers they obviously did not understand American slang and asked if “nuts” was an affirmative or negative response to their demand.

PFC Ernest Premetz, a German-speaking medic, told the German officers, “*Du kannst zum Teufel gehen.*” (You can go to hell.”). That they did understand and they stormed off to take the reply back to their commanding officer.

Against all odds, despite being surrounded, outnumbered and outgunned, the 101st held Bastogne for a remarkable one month.

Then the weather cleared and the Allies were able to launch a counter-offensive. Bastogne was relieved by General George S. Patton and the US 3rd Army.

While officially known as the Ardennes Counteroffensive, it was also known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Patton rallied the American troops, and, in a brilliant counter thrust offensive, broke through the German line and pushed the German military back across the border.

The Germans never recovered, and continued retreating back towards Berlin for the remainder of the war.

# Winning the booby prize

A simple act such as picking up a torch and switching it on, opening a door, or starting a vehicle can be lethal. In a war zone anything could be booby trapped and throughout history these sneak devices have been employed with great success.

Not everything on the battlefield or in a war zone may be what it appears to be.

You open a door that is slightly ajar, and it blows up in your face. You pick up a pair of discarded binoculars and raise them to your eyes, but they are out of focus. When you try to adjust the focus the binoculars explode, along with your head.

You've just had your first introduction to the world of booby traps.

The Spanish word *bobo* translates to "stupid, daft, naïve, simple, fool, idiot, clown, funny man, one who is easily cheated" and similar pejorative terms. The slang of *bobo*, *bubie*, translates to "dunce".

The term "booby trap" gives rise to the idea that an individual with the misfortune to be caught in the trap does so because the individual is a "booby", or that an individual who is caught in the trap thereby becomes a "booby".

A booby trap is a device or setup that is intended to kill, harm, or surprise a person, unknowingly triggered by the presence or actions of the victim. As the word trap implies, they sometimes have some form of bait designed to lure the victim towards it. At other times, the trap is set to act upon trespassers that violate personal or restricted areas.

The device can be triggered

when the victim performs some type of everyday action, e.g., opening a door, picking something up, or switching something on. They can also be triggered by vehicles driving along a road, as in the case of victim-operated improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Booby traps can range from the simple to the very complex.

Booby traps are often used in warfare, particularly guerrilla warfare. Many booby traps are designed to injure or maim, rather than kill the victim. And there is very sound reasoning for this.

If a soldier activates a booby trap and is killed, there is nothing more that you can do for him. The troops may pause for a moment, and then move on.

Let's say, however, that the booby trap blows the soldier's foot off. At least one, but probably two, other troops will have to move the injured soldier out of the combat zone. The injured soldier will have to be evacuated, often by helicopter, for medical treatment.

This treatment and rehabilitation of the injured soldier will cost time, resources and money.

If the soldier has lost a limb it can have a demoralising effect on others.

Booby traps are also often employed by defending or retreating armies. They can be effective at slowing down advancing forces.

In addition to the obvious ability of booby traps to kill or injure, their presence has other effects such as these:

- Demoralise soldiers as booby traps kill or maim comrades.
- Keep soldiers continually stressed, suspicious and unable to relax because it is difficult for them to know which areas, buildings or objects are safe.
- Slow down troop movement as soldiers are forced to sweep areas to see if there are more booby traps.
- Make soldiers cautious instead of aggressive and confident.
- Create no-go areas (real or imagined) after a booby trap has killed or wounded someone.
- Cause a section or platoon to have to stop in order to deal with casualties, thus slowing and delaying those troops.
- Create confusion and disorientation as a prelude to an ambush

During the Vietnam War the Viet Cong became masters at constructing cheap, simple, but highly effective booby traps.

## Punji Stakes

Few booby traps were as simple, or as cheap to make, as the punji stake.

Bamboo was cut into lengths, heated to harden it, and then sharpened to form a stake or

spike. This task was normally carried out by the women and children of a village.

A pit would then be dug and the stakes would be embedded in the ground with the sharp side pointing upward. The pit was then covered with thin branches and soil, leaves, grass or bush to match the surrounding terrain.

When a person stood on the trap their weight would cause the sticks to break and the person's leg would fall into the pit. The sharpened punji stake would penetrate through the boot and foot.

Sometimes punji stakes would be embedded into the side of the pit, with the sharp tips angled downwards.

This would make extricating an injured soldier even more difficult because if he merely tried to pull his leg out of the pit, the downward stakes would penetrate the leg as well.

Often the tips of the punji stakes were coated with animal or plant toxin. Another common tactic was to smear the punji stakes with human faeces. In the hot and humid climate of the Vietnam jungle, wounds would quickly turn septic.

Punji sticks are banned from use as weaponry under the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Not that this has ever stopped anyone, or even slowed them down.

The Viet Cong also employed a number of other home made booby traps. One of them was the deadfall trap.

A heavy object, usually a log, was suspended by roped in a tree. the log would have a number of spikes driven into it,

with the sharp tips pointing outwards. This was connected to a trip wire. When the wire was tripped, the log would swing down at chest or head height, impaling anyone unlucky enough to be in its path.

Another Viet Cong booby trap was the 'grenade in a tin'. A hand grenade was fitted with a zero second delay fuse, the pin was pulled, and the grenade pushed into an empty tin can. The can would stop the firing lever from being released.

A trip wire was then attached to the grenade. When the wire was tripped the grenade would be pulled from the tin, the firing lever would be released, and it would explode immediately.

The VC would also rig a motorcycle with explosives and then abandon it. Some US sol-

dier would be tempted to ride the motorcycle and thus trigger the explosives.

## Project Eldest Son

The Americans had a few tricks of their own during the Vietnam War.

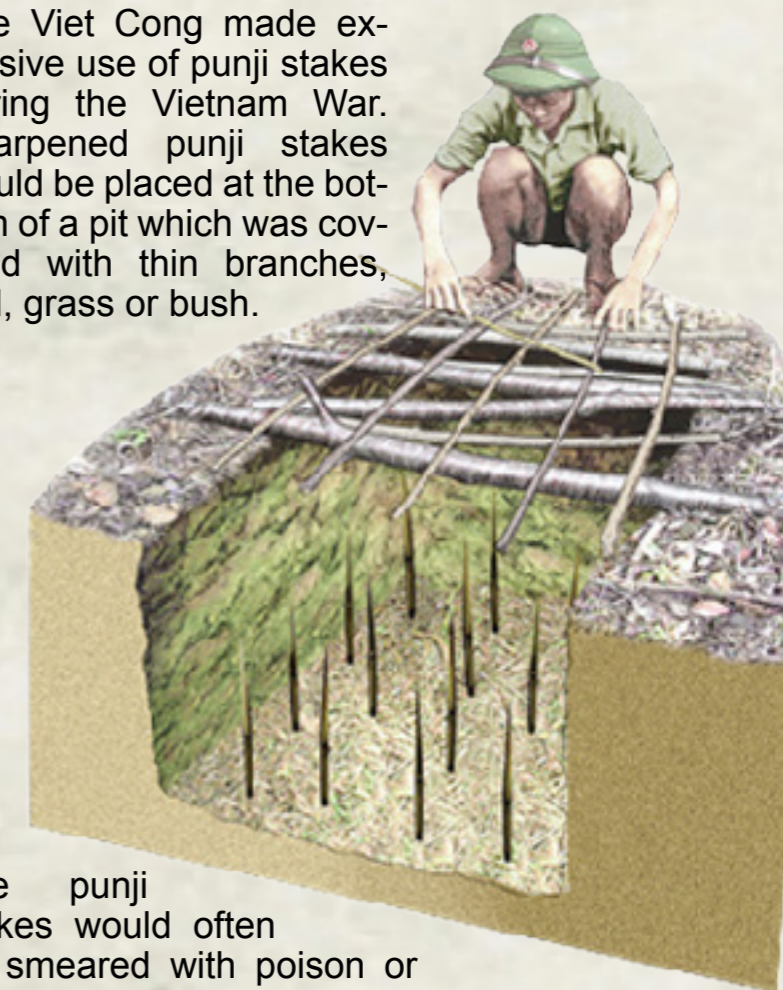
The CIA and Green Berets would booby trap the enemy's ammunition supply in an operation code-named 'Project Eldest Son'.

The propellant in a rifle or machine-gun cartridge was replaced with high explosive. Upon being fired, the sabotaged round would destroy the gun and kill or injure the shooter.

Mortar shells were similarly rigged to explode when dropped down the tube, instead of launching properly.

This ammunition was then

The Viet Cong made extensive use of punji stakes during the Vietnam War. Sharpened punji stakes would be placed at the bottom of a pit which was covered with thin branches, soil, grass or bush.



The punji stakes would often be smeared with poison or even human faeces.

carefully re-packed to eliminate any evidence of tampering, and planted in enemy munitions dumps by covert insertion teams.

A sabotaged round might also be planted in a rifle magazine or machine-gun belt and left on the body of a dead VC soldier, in anticipation that the deceased's ammo would be picked up and used by his comrades.

No more than one sabotaged round would be planted in any case, magazine, or belt of ammunition, to reduce the chances of the enemy finding it no matter how diligently they inspected their supplies.

False rumours and forged documents were circulated to make it appear that the Communist Chinese were supplying the VC with defective weapons and ammunition.

American radio stations, which were naturally monitored by the North Vietnamese, would broadcast warnings to American troops, telling them to be careful of picking up and using enemy weapons.

### The 'Troubles'

During the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, booby trap bombs were often used by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) to kill British Army soldiers and Royal Ulster Constabulary officers.

A common method was attaching the bomb to a vehicle so that starting or driving it would detonate the explosive.

According to the Sutton Index of Deaths, 180 deaths during the Troubles were the result

of booby trap bombs, the vast majority of them laid by the Provisional IRA.

### Baiting the trap

Attractive or interesting objects are frequently used as bait. For example, troops could leave behind empty beer bottles and a sealed wooden packing case with "Scotch Whisky" marked on it before leaving an area. The rubble-filled packing case might be resting on top of an M5 or M142 firing device, connected to some blocks of TNT or to some C4 explosive stuffed into the empty fuze pocket of a mortar shell.

Alternatively, the weight of the packing case might simply be holding down the arming lever of an RGD-5 grenade with a zero-delay fuse fitted and the pin removed. Either way, when the case is moved; the booby trap detonates, killing or severely injuring anyone in the immediate area.

Many different types of bait object can be used e.g. soldiers will be tempted to kick an empty beer can lying on the ground as they walk past it. However, the can (partially filled with sand to add weight) may be resting on top of an M5 pressure-release firing device screwed into a buried M26 grenade.

As a rule, booby-traps are planted in any situation where there is a strong likelihood of them being encountered and triggered by the targeted victims. Typically, they are planted in places that people are naturally attracted to or are forced to use. The list of likely placement areas includes:

- The only abandoned hous-



**HELLO HITLER - GOODBYE IVAN:** During World War II no Russian soldier could resist ripping a painting of Hitler off the wall. The results were often fatal.

es left standing in a village, which may attract enemy soldiers seeking shelter.

- A door, drawer or cupboard inside a building that someone will open without thinking of what might be connected to it. If a door is locked, this makes people believe there could something valuable behind it so they are more likely to kick it open, with fatal results.
- Vehicles abandoned by the roadside, perhaps with some kind of victim "bait" left on the back seat such as a suitcase or large cardboard box.
- natural choke-points, such as the only footbridge across a river, which people must use whether they want to or not.
- Important strategic installations such as airfields, railway stations and harbour facilities, all of which the invading forces will want to occupy and use.

- Anything of use or value that people would naturally want to possess or which makes them curious to see what is inside it, e.g. a crate of beer, a pistol, a flashlight, discarded army rucksack or even a picture torn out of a pornographic magazine.

During World War II when the Germans were retreating from Russia, they often made use of booby traps to slow down the advancing Red Army.

For example, all the buildings in an area would be destroyed, but one would be left intact. More often than not this building would be used as a command post by the Russians. It would be packed with explosives that were attached to one or more trigger devices. When the explosives were triggered the building and those inside would be destroyed.

A common German booby trap was to leave a painting of Adolf Hitler hanging on the wall. No Russian soldier could resist ripping the painting from the wall, thereby triggering the explosives that the painting was attached to.

Another ingenious German booby trap involved fixing a crucifix to a wall. While the

communists claimed not to believe in God, the Germans knew that most common Russian soldiers were actually deeply religious. They would never dream of defiling a crucifix.

This was not the case with the political commissars. The political commissar or political officer was a supervisory officer responsible for the political education (ideology) and organization of the unit they were assigned to. They were introduced by the Cheka (Soviet secret police and forerunner of the NKVD and later KGB) to ensure the government's political control of the military.

The commissar would have no problem with ripping a crucifix off the wall. This would then detonate the explosives. Down would come the crucifix, up would go the commissar.

This would be ideal for the Germans because a political commissar was regarded as a high value target.

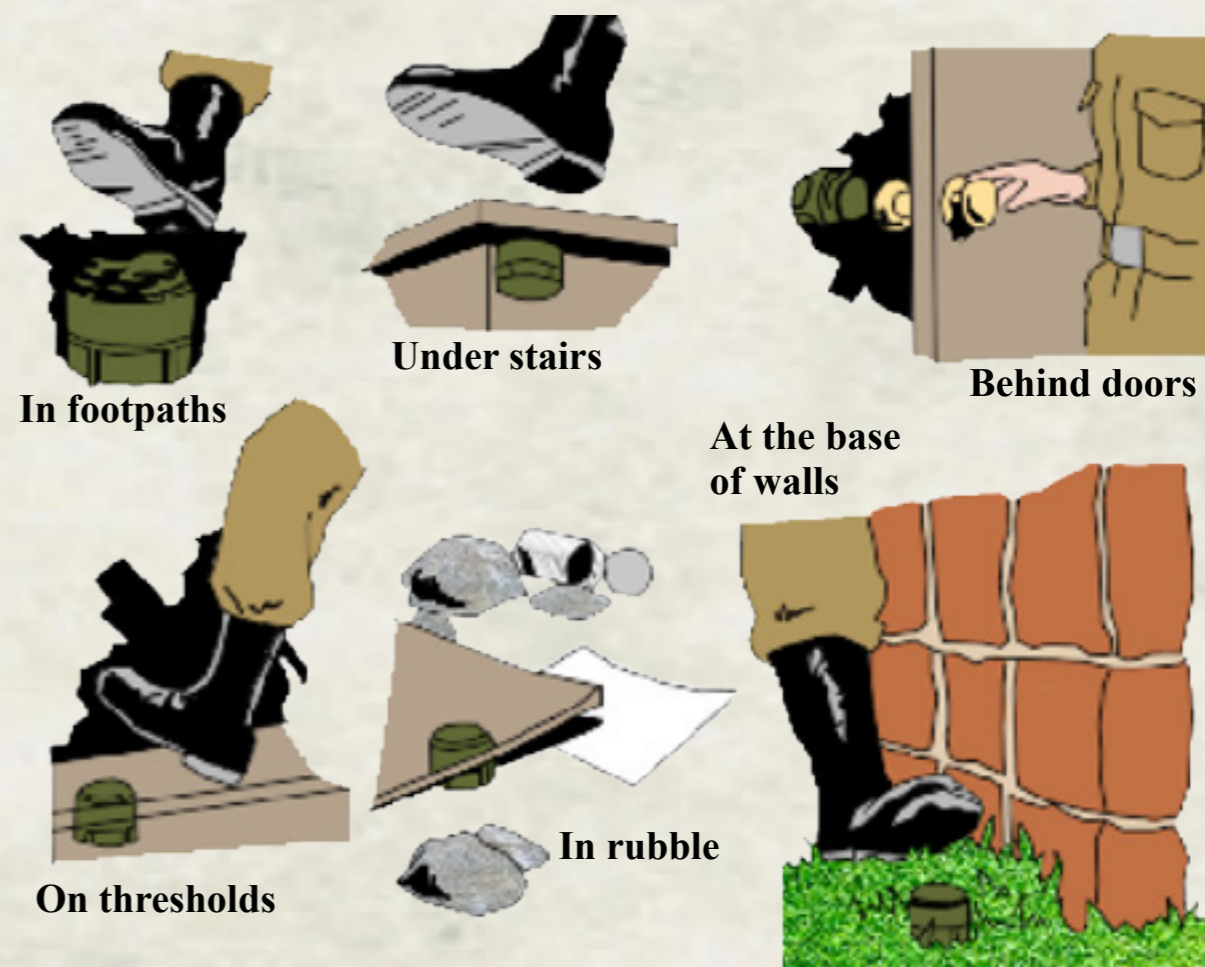
### Here to stay

Booby traps have been around for a long time and they look set to remain a part of warfare for the foreseeable future.

In many conflict areas, particularly in the Middle East, the IED (Improvised Explosive Device) has become part of the scenery.

Many of these IED's can be command detonated. A cellphone is attached to the explosives and acts as the trigger. Once the target is nearby, an observer dials the number of the phone and this sets off the explosion.

### Possible booby trap and mine locations



# EM-2 - ahead of its time

Since the turn of the century, many armed forces have adopted the bullpup rifle as their standard infantry weapon. It was the British Armed Forces that were the first to consider the idea.

Bullpup rifles have become quite the rage in the 21st century with many military forces now adopting them as their standard assault rifles. Yet what exactly is a bullpup rifle?

A bullpup firearm is one with its firing grip located in front of the breech of the weapon, instead of behind it.

This creates a weapon with a shorter overall length for a given barrel length, and one that is often lighter, more compact, concealable and more manoeuvrable than a conventionally configured firearm.

Where it is desirable for troops to be issued a more compact weapon, the use of a bullpup configuration allows for barrel length to be retained, thus preserving muzzle velocity, range and ballistic effectiveness.

The bullpup concept was first tested militarily in 1901 with the British Thorneycroft carbine, but it was not until the Cold War that more successful

designs and improvements led to wider adoption.

In 1977, the Austrian Army became the first military force in the world to adopt a bullpup rifle, the Steyr AUG, as a principal combat weapon. Since then the militaries in many countries have followed suit with other bullpup designs, such as the Chinese QBZ-95, Israeli IWI Tavor, French FAMAS and British SA80.

Yet the first bullpup rifle to go into service was back in the 1950s - and it was briefly adopted by the British forces.

The EM-2, also known as Rifle, No. 9 Mk 1, or Janson rifle, was adopted by the British in 1951. The decision, however, was overturned shortly thereafter by Winston Churchill's incoming government. This was in an effort to secure NATO standardisation of small arms and ammunition.

It was an innovative weapon with the compact bullpup layout, built-in carrying handle and an optical sight.

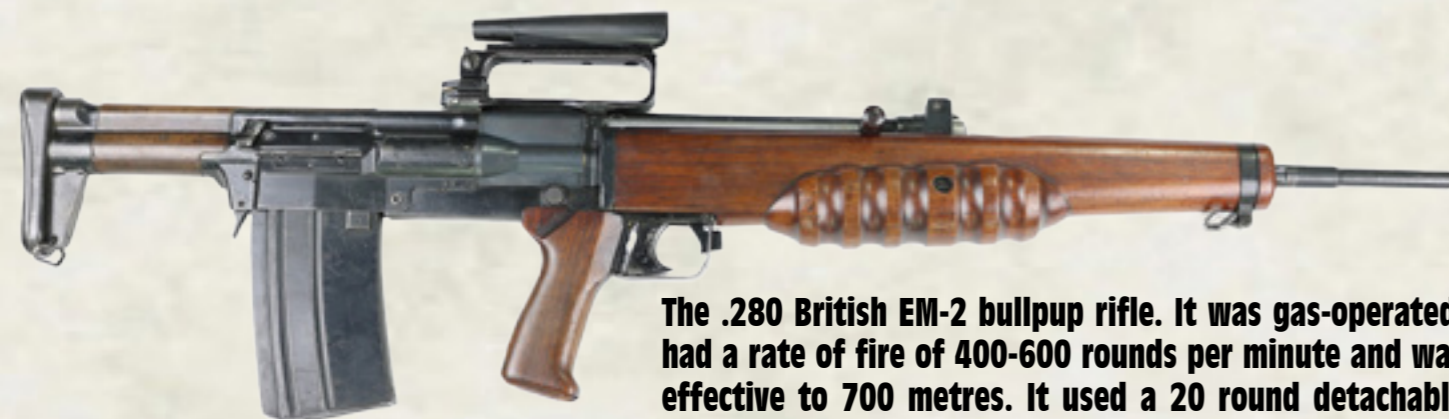
The gun was designed to fire one of the first purpose-designed entirely new intermediate cartridges, designed to a 1945 requirement as a result of combat experience and German advances in weapons design during World War II.

The round, the .280 British, was designed to replace the .303 round, which dated to the late 19th century. The EM-2 was intended to replace the Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles and various submachine guns, while the TADEN would replace the Bren gun and Vickers machine gun.

As part of NATO standardization efforts, the United States claimed the .280 British round was too weak for use in rifles and machine guns, and instead favoured the much more powerful 7.62x51 mm NATO round.

The British then adopted the 7.62 mm L1A1 SLR semi-automatic rifle, a licence-built version of the Belgian FN FAL.

It wasn't too long before the American military began



The .280 British EM-2 bullpup rifle. It was gas-operated, had a rate of fire of 400-600 rounds per minute and was effective to 700 metres. It used a 20 round detachable box magazine.



FROM TOP: Austrian Steyr AUG, Chinese QBZ-95, Israeli IWI Tavor, French FAMAS, and British SA80.

finding fault with the standard 7.62x51 mm cartridge. While the rounds were powerful and accurate, they were also heavy, expensive, and created a great deal of recoil.

As early as 1957, development began on a new, small calibre, high velocity round and rifle platform.

These new cartridges would be based on the much smaller and lighter .22 calibre round, but despite the smaller projectile, U.S. specifications also required that it maintained supersonic speed beyond 500 yards and could penetrate a standard-issue ballistic helmet at that same distance.

From this the 5.56x45mm NATO round was developed and adopted. In 1969, the M16A1 replaced the M14 rifle to become the US military's standard service rifle.

The British eventually replaced the L1A1 rifle with the 5.56x45 mm SA80 rifle. The L85 Rifle variant has been the standard issue service rifle of the British Armed Forces since 1987.

When the British Armed Forces adopted the SA80, one could almost say that they had come a full circle.

Like Britain, many countries have now adopted bullpup weapons as their standard issue rifles. In fact in 18 countries the bullpup is now standard issue.

While America has developed bullpup weapons, such as the 12.7x99 mm Barrett series of sniper rifles and the 5.56x45 mm Desert Tech MDR and Desert Tech MDRx, they have stuck with a conventional assault rifle as standard issue. This is, of course, the M4 carbine.



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

# Messing with your mind

Since prehistoric times, warlords and chiefs have recognised the importance of weakening the morale of opponents. In modern times it has been refined to an art form.

These days it is known as psychological warfare (PSYWAR) or psychological operations (PSYOP). But it has been known by many other names, including MISO, Psy Ops, political warfare, “Hearts and Minds”, and propaganda.

The term is used “to denote any action which is practiced mainly by psychological methods with the aim of evoking a planned psychological reaction in other people”.

Various techniques are used, and are aimed at influencing a target audience’s value system, belief system, emotions, motives, reasoning, or behaviour. It is used to induce confessions or reinforce attitudes and behaviours favourable to the originator’s objectives, and are sometimes combined with black operations or false flag tactics. It is also used to destroy the morale of enemies through tactics that aim to depress troops’ psychological states.

Target audiences can be governments, organizations, groups, and individuals, and is not just limited to soldiers. Civilians of foreign territories can also be targeted by technology and media so as to cause an effect in the government of their country.

There is evidence of psychological warfare throughout written history. In the Battle of Pelusium (525 BC) between

the Persian Empire and ancient Egypt, the Persians used cats and other animals as a psychological tactic against the Egyptians, who avoided harming cats due to religious beliefs.

Genghis Khan, leader of the Mongolian Empire in the 13th century AD, employed tactics that made his numbers seem greater than they actually were.

During night operations he ordered each soldier to light three torches at dusk to give the illusion of an overwhelming army and deceive and intimidate enemy scouts.

He also sometimes had objects tied to the tails of his horses, so that riding on open and dry fields raised a cloud of dust that gave the enemy the impression of great numbers. His soldiers used arrows specially notched to whistle as they flew through the air, creating a terrifying noise.

Another tactic favoured by the Mongols was catapulting severed human heads over city walls to frighten the inhabitants and spread disease in the besieged city’s closed confines.

## World War I

The start of modern psychological operations in war is generally dated to the World War I. By that point, Western societies were increasingly educated and urbanized, and mass media was available in the form of large circulation newspapers and

posters.

It was also possible to transmit propaganda to the enemy via the use of airborne leaflets or through explosive delivery systems like modified artillery or mortar rounds.

At the start of the war, the belligerents, especially the British and Germans, began distributing propaganda, both domestically and on the Western front.

The British had several advantages that allowed them to succeed in the battle for world opinion; they had one of the world’s most reputable news systems, with much experience in international and cross-cultural communication, and they controlled much of the undersea cable system then in operation. These capabilities were easily transitioned to the task of warfare.

In August 1914, David Lloyd George, then British Chancellor of the Exchequer, appointed Charles Masterman MP, to head a Propaganda Agency at Wellington House.

A distinguished body of literary talent was enlisted for the task, with its members including Arthur Conan Doyle, Ford Madox Ford, G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling and H. G. Wells.

Over 1,160 pamphlets were published during the war and distributed to neutral countries, and eventually, to Germany.

One of the first significant pub-



**OVERSEXED, OVER PAID, AND OVER HERE:** A German propaganda pamphlet telling British soldiers that while they were fighting and dying, the Americans were back in England chasing their women.

lications, the Report on Alleged German Outrages of 1915, had a great effect on general opinion across the world. The pamphlet documented atrocities, both actual and alleged, committed by the German army against Belgian civilians. A Dutch illustrator, Louis Raemaekers, provided the highly emotional drawings which appeared in the pamphlet.

Aerial leaflets were dropped over German trenches containing postcards from prisoners of war detailing their humane conditions, surrender notices and general propaganda against the Kaiser and the German generals.

The Germans began shooting the leaflet-dropping pilots, prompting the British to develop unmanned leaflet balloons that drifted across no-man’s land.

At least one in seven of these leaflets were not handed in by the soldiers to their superiors, despite severe penalties for that offence.

Even General Hindenburg admitted that “Unsuspectingly,

many thousands consumed the poison”, and POWs admitted to being disillusioned by the propaganda leaflets that depicted the use of German troops as mere cannon fodder.

## World War II

Adolf Hitler was greatly influenced by the psychological tactics of warfare the British had employed during World War I, and attributed the defeat of Germany to the effects this propaganda had on the soldiers.

He became committed to the use of mass propaganda to influence the minds of the German population in the decades to come. By calling his movement The Third Reich, he was able to convince many civilians that his cause was not just a fad, but the way of their future.

Joseph Goebbels was appointed as Propaganda Minister when Hitler came to power in 1933, and he portrayed Hitler as a messianic figure for the redemption of Germany. Hitler also coupled this with the resonating projections of his orations for effect.

The British were no slouches when it came to psyops during World War II. During the lead up to the Allied invasion of Normandy, many new tactics in psychological warfare were devised.

Operation Bodyguard set out a general strategy to mislead German high command as to the exact date and location of the invasion.

Operation Fortitude was intended to convince the Germans of a greater Allied military strength than existed, through fictional field armies, faked operations to prepare the ground for invasion and leaked information about the Allied order of battle and war plans.

Elaborate naval deceptions (Operations Glimmer, Taxable and Big Drum) were undertaken in the English Channel. Small ships and aircraft simulated invasion fleets lying off Pas de Calais, Cap d’Antifer and the western flank of the real invasion force. At the same time Operation Titanic involved the RAF dropping fake paratroopers to the east and west of the Normandy landings.

The operations were a strategic success and the Normandy landings caught German defences unaware. Subsequent deception led Hitler into delaying reinforcement from the Calais region for nearly seven weeks.

## Vietnam

The United States ran an extensive program of psychological warfare during the Vietnam War. The Phoenix Program had the dual aim of assassinating National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Viet Cong) per-

sonnel and terrorizing any potential sympathizers or passive supporters.

When members of the Viet Cong were assassinated, CIA and Special Forces operatives placed playing cards in the mouth of the deceased as a calling card. During the Phoenix Program, over 19,000 Viet Cong supporters were killed.

The United States also used tapes of distorted human sounds, known as 'Ghost Tapes', and played them during the night making the Vietnamese soldiers think that the dead were back for revenge.

### Recent operations

The CIA made extensive use of Contra soldiers to destabilize the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

The CIA used psychological warfare techniques against the Panamanians by delivering unlicensed TV broadcasts. The United States government has used propaganda broadcasts against the Cuban government through TV Marti, based in Miami, Florida. However, the Cuban government has been successful at jamming the signal of TV Marti.

In the Iraq War, the United States used the shock and awe campaign to psychologically maim and break the will of the Iraqi Army to fight.

The Internet has become a valuable tool used in psychological warfare. In cyberspace, social media has enabled the use of disinformation on a wide scale.

Analysts have found evidence of doctored or misleading photographs spread by social media in the Syrian Civil War and

2014 Russian military intervention in Ukraine, possibly with state involvement.

Military and governments have engaged in psychological operations (PSYOPS) and informational warfare on social networking platforms to regulate foreign propaganda, which includes countries like the US, Russia, and China.

### Methods

One of the most common methods of psychological warfare is to demoralise the enemy. It's a process in psychological warfare with the objective to erode morale among enemy combatants and/or non-combatants. This can encourage them to retreat, surrender, or defect rather than defeating them in combat.

Pamphlets are often distributed that encourage desertion or supply instructions on how to surrender.

Shock and awe (technically known as rapid dominance) is a tactic based on the use of overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force to paralyse the enemy's perception of the battlefield and

destroy their will to fight.

Another method is by projecting repetitive and annoying sounds and music for long periods at high volume towards groups under siege.

An example of this was Operation Nifty Package, a 1989 operation designed to capture Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega. When Noriega took refuge in the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See (diplomatic quarter), deafening music and other psychological warfare tactics were used to convince him to exit and surrender himself.

Propaganda radio stations, such as Lord Haw-Haw in World War II on the "Germany calling" station, are still used to this day.

False flag events are also used effectively. A false flag is a covert operation designed to deceive; the deception creates the appearance of a particular party, group, or nation being responsible for some activity, disguising the actual source of responsibility.

The term "false flag" originally

referred to pirate ships that flew flags of countries as a disguise to prevent their victims from fleeing or preparing for battle. Sometimes the flag would remain and the blame for the attack be laid incorrectly on another country.

The term today extends beyond naval encounters to include countries that organize attacks on themselves and make the attacks appear to be by enemy nations or terrorists, thus giving the nation that was supposedly attacked a pretext for domestic repression and foreign military aggression.

The threat of chemical weapons is another ploy that is used. One country will accuse another country of having chemical weapons and will claim that they have proof that this country is planning on using them. This will give them an excuse to launch an invasion or military operation against the other country.

Terrorism and the use of terrorist organisations is another tactic used in psychological warfare. Countries will sometimes use a terrorist organisation as a proxy to carry out operations.

While their official policy may be to openly condemn the organisation, they will clandestinely support them by providing them with finances, weapons, training, intelligence, and sometimes even shelter.

Information warfare is now a very real danger, and many countries make use of it, although most countries will deny it.

The media is often used, either knowingly or unwittingly, to spread what has become known as 'fake news'.

The Internet has become one of the most valuable tools in psychological warfare and most

countries will make use of it.

Anyone can set up a website or open social media accounts on many different platforms. These can be used to create and spread false news and disinformation. They can also be used to discredit a government, organisation or even individuals.

Countries will also employ highly effective hackers to hack into websites and online accounts. These cyber attacks are used to steal information, gather intelligence, change information or even upload false information. Sometimes a country will even hack into accounts, such as e-mail and social media accounts, to keep track of their own citizens.

In closing, just remember the old joke, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that there isn't someone watching you."



## SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

**SAAFA is an all-ranks Association formed to perpetuate a tradition of comradeship, knowing no distinction of rank, race, language, gender or creed, which has developed over the years among members of the South African Air Force.**

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# The highest honour

While most military forces award medals and decorations, it is the ones awarded for bravery that are held in the highest regard. We look at medals awarded for valour by a few different countries.

The Roman Republic adopted an elaborate system of military awards that included medals called *phalerae* to be issued to soldiers and units for a variety of achievements.

The practice was revived in the Early Modern period, and medals began to be worn on the chest as part of standard military uniform.

Medals may be awarded for a number of reasons and these include campaign medals and medals for long service.

The medals held in the highest regard are normally those that have been awarded for bravery, and most countries will have such an award.

According to many sources, medals issued for bravery originated in the 1700s. One of these was the *Tapferkeitsmedaille* or Medal for Bravery. This was awarded by Austria-Hungary from 19 July 1789 and continued to the end of World War I in 1918.

Numerous awards for bravery no longer exist due to a number of reasons. For example the Grand Cross of Valour (GCV) was Rhodesia's highest military decoration, awarded for conspicuous valour by members of the Security Forces in combat.

The GCV was instituted in 1970 and only two were ever awarded. The first was in 1978 to Acting Captain Chris F. Schu-

lenberg of the Selous Scouts. He had previously been awarded the Silver Cross of Rhodesia (SCR), the country's second highest award for bravery.

The second recipient was Major Grahame Wilson, second-in-command of the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS). He had previously won the SCR and the BCR (Bronze Cross of Rhodesia), making him Rhodesia's most highly decorated soldier.

In 1980 Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and the Grand Cross of Valour was superseded by the Gold Cross of Zimbabwe.

One of Germany's highest awards for bravery was the *Pour le Mérite*, also known by its nickname 'The Blue Max'.

The *Pour le Mérite* was founded in 1740 by King Frederick II of Prussia. It was named in French, which was the leading international language and the favoured language at Frederick's court. Both a military class and civil class of the medal could be awarded.

The award ceased with the end of the Prussian monarchy in November 1918.

The military class of the medal was awarded 5,415 times. Notable recipients of the medal during World War I included Manfred von Richthofen (The Red Baron), Ernst Udet, Oswald Boelcke, Max Immelmann, and Hermann Göring -

all of the German Air Force.

Members of the German Army included Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, Fedor von Bock, and Erwin Rommel.

During the Napoleonic Wars, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia instituted another award for bravery. It was called the Iron Cross (*Eisernes Kreuz*, abbreviated EK).

It was also awarded during the Franco-Prussian War (EK 1870), World War I (EK 1914), and World War II (EK 1939). The Iron Cross that was awarded during World War II had a swastika in the centre.

There were two versions of the award: the Iron Cross Second Class (EKII) and the Iron Cross First Class (EKI).

During World War I, approximately 218,000 EKIs, 5,196,000 EKIIs and 13,000 non-combatant EKIIs were awarded.

Exact numbers of awards are not known, since the Prussian military archives were destroyed during World War II. The multitude of awards reduced the status and reputation of the decoration. Among the holders of the 1914 Iron Cross 2nd Class and 1st Class was Adolf Hitler.

During World War II the colour of the Iron Cross ribbon was changed from black and white to black, red and white as these were the colours of Nazi Ger-



**GROUND ATTACK ACE:** During the war, Hans-Ulrich Rudel was credited with the destruction of 519 tanks, as well as one battleship, one cruiser, 70 landing craft and 150 artillery emplacements. He was the only German in World War II to be awarded the Iron Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds.

many. A new class of the Iron Cross was also introduced - The Knights Cross.

The Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (*Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes*, often simply *Ritterkreuz*) recognized military valour or successful leadership. The Knight's Cross was divided into five degrees:

- Knight's Cross (*Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes*)
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves (*mit Eichenlaub*)
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords (*mit Eichenlaub und Schwertern*)
- Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds (*mit Eichenlaub, Schwertern und Brillanten*)
- Knight's Cross with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds (*mit Goldenem Eichenlaub, Schwertern und Brillanten*)

In total, 7,313 awards of the Knight's Cross were made. Only

883 received the Oak Leaves; 160 both the Oak Leaves and Swords; and 27 with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds.

Only one person was awarded the Golden Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds and that was *Oberst* Hans-Ulrich Rudel of the Luftwaffe. The award ceased at the end of World War II.

Since World War II, Germany has seen its military as a defensive force, but during the 1990s Germany began playing a bigger role with its military within the European Union. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, Germany joined International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and has continued to deploy *Bundeswehr* troops to areas under combat conditions.

In 2007, the Petitions Committee of the *Bundestag* made a recommendation to create a decoration to recognize mili-

tary personnel for valour.

In 2008, Ernst-Reinhard Beck, the president of the German Reservists Association, suggested the re-establishment of the Iron Cross. However, the historical connotations assigned to the Iron Cross from World War II provoked criticism from some groups.

On 13 August 2008 the Bundeswehr Cross of Honour for Valour (*Ehrenkreuz der Bundeswehr für Tapferkeit*) was created. Since the inception of the medal it has been awarded 28 times.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) medal for bravery was the *Honoris Crux* Decoration. There were two distinct versions. The first type, introduced on 6 April 1952, was awarded for gallantry in action against the enemy in the field. Only five awards were made, all to members of the South African Air Force, the first in 1973 and the others in 1975.

The second type was introduced on 1 July 1975 and there were four classes - *Honoris Crux*, *Honoris Crux Silver*, *Honoris Crux Gold*, and *Honoris Crux Diamond*.

The *Honoris Crux* was awarded 201 times. The *Honoris Crux Silver* was awarded 27 times. The *Honoris Crux Gold* was awarded six times. The *Honoris Crux Diamond* was never presented.

The only *Honoris Crux Diamond* Class decoration ever to be produced was donated to the South African National Museum of Military History by the Department of Defence on 21 May 2009.

Major Andre Diedericks of



Special Forces Headquarters was awarded the Honoris Crux Silver on 1 June 1985. In 1976, while a serving as a corporal with 1 Reconnaissance Commando, he was awarded the Honoris Crux.

Captain Arthur W. Walker of the South African Air Force won the Honoris Crux Gold, not once, but twice. He was awarded the Honoris Crux Gold on 15 January 1981. Later during the same year, 29 December 1981, he was awarded a bar to his HCG. Many believe that Captain Walker should have been awarded the Honoris Crux Diamond, but it was not to be.

In April 1994 the SADF was replaced by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The Honoris Crux Decorations were discontinued and replaced with new awards on 27 April 2003. The Honoris Crux was superseded by the *Nkwe ya Boronse*. The Honoris Crux Silver by the *Nkwe ya Selefera*, and the Honoris Crux Gold by the *Nkwe ya Gauta* decoration.

Most people know that the United Kingdom's highest award for bravery is the Victoria Cross. They also know that the United States highest award is the Medal of Honour.

There are in fact three different types of Medal of Honour - one for the US Army, one for the US Navy, US Marine Corps and US Coast Guard, and one for the US Air Force.

In the remainder of this article we will look at some lesser known awards from a number of countries.

## Argentina



Argentine Nation to the Heroic Valour in Combat Cross (*La Nación Argentina Al Heroico Valor En Combate*) is the highest national military decoration in Argentina.

It is awarded for "acts of heroic valour in action in hazardous circumstances".

The medal has been awarded a total of 18 times, with the last award being in 1982 during the Falklands War (*Guerra de las Malvinas*).

## Bangladesh



The *Bir Sreshtho* (The Most Valiant Hero), is the highest military award of Bangladesh. It was awarded to seven freedom fighters who showed utmost bravery and died in action for their nation. They are considered martyrs.

The other three gallantry awards are named, in decreasing order of importance, *Bir Uttom*, *Bir Bikrom* and *Bir Protik*. All of these awards were introduced immediately after the

Liberation War in 1971.

## Brazil



The Order of Military Merit (*Ordem do Mérito Militar*) is an award of the Brazilian Army, established on 11 June 1943 by President Getúlio Vargas.

The order is presented in five grades and recognizes distinguished service and exceptional contributions to Brazil by members the Brazilian Army and the armies of friendly nations.

The grades, in descending order, are: Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer, and Knight.

## Spain



The Royal and Military Order of Saint Ferdinand (*Real y Militar Orden de San Fernando*), is a Spanish military order whose

decoration, known as Laureate Cross of Saint Ferdinand (*Cruz Laureada de San Fernando*), is Spain's highest military decoration for gallantry.

It is awarded in recognition of action, either individual or collective, to protect the nation, its citizens, or the peace and security of the international community in the face of immediate risk to the bearer. Those eligible are current and former members of the Spanish Armed Forces.

Since it was instituted on 1 January 1812 it has been awarded 336 times.

## Israel



The Medal of Valour (*Itur HaGvura*) is the highest Israeli military decoration.

The medal was established in 1970 by the Knesset in an act of law as a replacement for the Hero of Israel military decoration.

To this day, 40 medals have been awarded: 12 for actions in the War of Independence (Hero of Israel recipients automatically awarded the Medal of Valour), four for the Sinai War, 12 for the Six-Day War, one for the

War of Attrition, eight for the Yom Kippur War and three others awarded on other occasions.

## India



The *Param Vir Chakra* (PVC) is India's highest military decoration, awarded for displaying distinguished acts of valour during wartime.

*Param Vir Chakra* translates as the "Wheel of the Ultimate Brave", and the award is granted for "most conspicuous bravery in the presence of the enemy".

As of January 2018, the medal has been awarded 21 times, of which 14 were posthumous and 16 arose from actions in Indo-Pakistani conflicts. Of the 21 awardees, 20 have been from the Indian Army, and one has been from the Indian Air Force.

## China



The Order of August First is a military decoration of People's

Republic of China awarded by the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and is the highest military award given to Chinese military personnel and civilians of the People's Liberation Army, People's Armed Police and public security active troops.

Established on 12 June 2017 it has been awarded 10 times.

## Pakistan



*Nishan-e-Haider* is Pakistan's highest military gallantry award. "*Nishan-e-Haider*" literally means "Emblem of the Lion" in the Urdu language.

The *Nishan-e-Haider* can only be awarded to members of the Pakistan Armed Forces for the highest acts of extraordinary bravery in the face of the enemy in air, land or sea. Its exclusivity can be gauged by the fact that, since Pakistan's independence in 1947, it has been awarded only 11 times.

# Seven days a week

**Bruce Jacobs** spent 18 months of his national service on the border. And while he never saw any action, he does believe that what he did was of value.

In December 1976 three important events took place in my life. First of all, I completed my schooling after passing matric.

The second event was that I celebrated my 18th birthday. Thirdly I received my call-up papers, or Instructions to Report for National Service.

In those days it was compulsory to do one year of military service once you had completed school. In fact it was a law.

In January 1977 I arrived at the Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg. I would be doing my national service as a member of the South African Corps of Signals.

It wasn't too bad. I lived in Johannesburg, which was only about 45 kilometres away. I did my basic training and, towards the end of basics, we started to receive a weekend pass every second weekend. My sister used to drive through on a Friday afternoon to fetch me and then drop me off again on the Sunday evening.

After basic training a large group of us went on a signals course. It was called an R9 course if I remember correctly.

When we completed the course we were told that we were being sent to the operational area, better known as the

Border. This of course was the border between South West Africa (now Namibia) and Angola.

I must admit that I had mixed feelings about it. First of all I would be thousands of kilometres away from home. Secondly, there was a war going on and there was always the chance of being killed.

On the other hand, I was excited. I had these vision of walking patrols in the bush, carrying a radio on my back and being a hero. Fat chance of that.

We flew up from Waterkloof Air Base near Pretoria and landed a few hours later in Grootfontein.

The military base at Grootfontein was huge. It was basically the headquarters for the entire operational area. The airport was very large and the base had just about everything you could think of. There must have been thousands of people stationed there. It had its own hospital and even its own post office.

It also had some impressive recreational facilities. There was a large swimming pool, tennis courts, squash courts, a theatre for movies and shows, and numerous pubs. There was even a place called SAWI or SADFI, which was a type of su-

permarket. There was only one entrance and exit gate to the entire base.

Some of our group were sent out to other bases in the operational area. The majority of us, however, were told that we would be staying in Grootfontein. We were now members of 101 Signal Unit.

We had our own fenced off camp within the main camp. Accommodation consisted of bungalows which consisted of a bathroom with toilets, basins and showers. There were also six open rooms that slept eight people.

We also had a mess and pub for national service troops and NCOs, a mess and pub for permanent force troops and NCOs, and an officers mess and pub. We had our own tennis court and our own swimming pool.

My job at 101 Signals Unit was to work in the comcen, or communications centre. The comcen was situated in the main headquarters block at the base. All communication between South Africa and the operational area would go through this comcen.

101 Signals Unit consisted of an office for the commanding officer, who was a commandant, an office for the adjutant, and a duty office. Then there was the



actual comcen. This consisted of a reception area with a counter. There was a large strong room that was the crypto office. This was where all secret and top secret communications were either coded or decoded. Only certain qualified personnel had access to this area.

Further down the passage was the radio room. This was usually manned by one or two people. Very little communication was done via radio. Most of it was done via telex machines.

The comcen room consisted of a number of telex machines. If I remember correctly, there were ten telex machines.

Most communication would come from the main comcen situated in Pretoria. We had one machine that received telex messages from Pretoria, and one for us to send messages to them.

There were also telex machines to send and receive messages from Oshikati, Rundu, Katima Mulilo and Windhoek.

Let's say, for example, that someone in Western Province Command in Cape Town wanted to send a message to someone at Oshivello base in Ovamboland.

They would send a telex

message through to Pretoria. Pretoria would then send this message through to us in Grootfontein. We would in turn send it through to Oshikati. Finally they would send it through to Oshivello.

Likewise, any messages from anywhere in the operational area would be sent through to us and we would send them

through to Pretoria.

When you received a telex message it would be printed onto a roll of paper. This message would then be torn off and filed. The message also produced a series of holes punched into a roll of telex tape. We would then take this tape, load it into the relevant telex machine, and then send it on.

At the top of each message was a series of information. It would inform you of where the message was originally from, when it was sent, and who it had to be sent to. It would also inform the recipient of the message of its priority.

If a telex was marked RR it meant that it was a Routine message and the recipient had 24 hours to react to it.

A PP message meant it was a Priority message and they had 12 hours to react. An OO message meant that it was an Immediate message and they had one hour to react.

There was also a ZZ message which meant that it was a Flash transmission. In my 18 months of working in the comcen I never saw a ZZ message.

Now as you can imagine, the comcen was buzzing 24 hours a day. So it had to be manned at all times.

Now, let me tell you the best thing about working in the comcen. We had two shifts and each worked a 12 hour shift from Sunday to Friday. One shift started at 06:00 and worked until 18:00 and the other from 18:00 to 06:00.

Okay, so at least we had Saturday off. No we didn't. On a Saturday one shift would work from 06:00 to 12:00. They would then come back on shift at 18:00 and work through to 06:00 the next morning. This meant on Saturdays you worked an 18 hour day. That worked out at 90 hours a month. The only time we had off was when we went back home on our seven-day pass.

To crown everything, towards the end of 1977, when we had only a few months left of our national service, the government decided to extend national service to two years. This meant we had to do an extra year. But at least during that year we received a 14 day pass.

What I remember of my national service was always being tired. You came on shift, worked your butt off, went off shift, had something to eat, and then slept. Free time was just an illusion to us.

Although we were on the border, Grootfontein was not regarded as an operational area. So we never received 'danger pay'. We did, however, receive the Pro Patria medal.

So although I spent 18 months on the border, I never saw any action, didn't fight in any war, not was I ever a hero.

But I do think that what we did was valuable, and no-one can take that away from me.

# Job Maseko - World War II Warrior

*How does a man not officially allowed to carry firearms go on to win the Military Medal for gallantry? Job Maseko was one of those that achieved this feat.*

It is a sad fact that we know very little about the early life of Job Maseko. I have no idea of when or even where he was born.

What we do know is that shortly before World War II he worked as a delivery man in Springs in what was then the Transvaal.

He volunteered for service with the South African Native Military Corps (NMC) and, after completing basic training, was sent to North Africa as part of the 2nd South African Infantry Division.

There was, however, a catch. Members of the NMC were only given non-combat roles. They were used as drivers, cooks, stretcher bearers and so on.

South African race laws at the time provided that serving 'black' men could not carry firearms, they were however issued spears as a 'traditional weapon' for guard and ceremonial duty.

Maseko was not alone. Nearly 40% of the standing army consisted of 'black' South African volunteers. About 128,000 of them in fact.

In June 1942 Tobruk, the port city on Libya's eastern Mediterranean coast, near the border of Egypt, was under siege. The Allied garrison at Tobruk, under the command of South African Major General Hendrik Klopper, had repulsed several attacks by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps.

It was in this maelstrom that Job Maseko found himself. He was working as a stretcher bearer, rescuing wounded men, often while under enemy fire.

As the situation became more desperate the restrictions of black troops being given rifles went out of the window. Maseko and other black colleagues were given rifles and expected to fight on the front line with everyone else.

On 21 June 1942 General Klopper surrendered to Rommel and 32,000 Allied troops became prisoners of war. This included 10,722 South Africans of the 2nd Division, of whom 1,200 were members of the Native Military Corps. Job Maseko was one of them.

Maseko and many others were force marched across the desert to an Italian POW camp.

The Italian treatment of POWs was disgusting, especially

ly the treatment reserved for members of the Native Military Corps. German and Italian forces displayed a complete disregard for the rights of coloured or black POWs as they did not view them as regular troops.

At the Tobruk camp black South African POWs were forced "under threat of death" to do war work, which was contrary to the Geneva Convention. More over their food was totally inadequate – they were only given one packet of biscuits per day and water rations were kept to a minimum.

Desperate for food, some of the black POWs would escape from the camp perimeter at night in an effort to scrounge for food in the town. They would sometimes return to the camp with 'acquired' sacks of mielie meal.

Maseko was none to pleased with the treatment of black POWs. He felt compelled to take action against his captors. To quote him, "because of our ill-treatment by the enemy, especially the Italians, and because I felt it a duty in this way to assist my own people".

Part of Maseko's duties was off-loading cargo from ships docked in the harbour.

With the help of fellow prisoners Andrew Mohudi, Sam Police and Koos Williams, Maseko assembled a bomb using a condensed milk tin, cordite taken from bullets and an extremely long fuse.

While off-loading cargo, he placed his home-made bomb deep inside the hold of a German freight ship (probably an 'F' Boat).

He placed the bomb next to fuel barrels, lit the fuse, and left the ship. As he waited and watched, the ship shuddered from a huge explosion and almost immediately sank into the harbour. If he had been discovered Maseko would have been shot, probably after first being tortured.

After the war Maseko was able to point out where the ship had been berthed. When divers went down to investigate the found the ship resting on the sea bed exactly where he said it would be.

Maseko later escaped from Tobruk and spent three weeks walking through the desert, much of the way through enemy lines.

While still a POW he had found and repaired an old German radio. He heard about General Montgomery's epic and tide turning victory at El Alamein. Maseko was heading for El Alamein, intent on joining the battle.

For his actions Job Maseko was later presented with the Military Medal (MM) by Major-General F H Theron. The citation reads:

*The King has been graciously pleased to approve the following award in recognition of gallant and distinguished service in the Middle East.*

## **Military Medal**

*No N 4448 L/Cpl Job Masego [sic] – Native Military Corps Citation*

*For meritorious and courageous action in that on or about the 21st July, while a Prisoner of War, he, Job Masego, sank a fully laden enemy steamer – probably an "F" boat – while moored in Tobruk Harbour.*

*This he did by placing a small tin filled with gunpowder in among drums of petrol in the hold, leading a fuse therefrom to the hatch and lighting the fuse upon closing the hatch.*

*In carrying out this deliberately planned action, Job Masego displayed ingenuity, determination and complete disregard of personal safety from punishment by the enemy or from the ensuing explosion which set the vessel alight.'*

For his actions Job Maseko was initially recommended for a Victoria Cross but according to Neville Lewis, the first official war artist for South Africa during the Second World War, Job Maseko was awarded the Military Medal instead as he was 'only an African'.

After being released Lance Corporal Job Maseko returned to South Africa. Shortly after the war ended apartheid was implemented and his legacy slipped away from the general consciousness.

Job Maseko died in 1952 after being stuck by a train. At the time he was so poor that they had to borrow money to bury him.

Today this unassuming hero has a primary school in KwaThema township named after him. The main road of the township has also been named after him.

The South African Navy strike-craft SAS Kobie Coetzee was renamed the SAS Job Maseko.

Job Maseko was a warrior, a hero, and a South African. We will remember him.



# Job Maseko - World War II Warrior

How does a man not officially allowed to carry firearms go on to win the Military Medal for gallantry? Job Maseko was one of those that achieved this feat.

Pierre Johan Fourie was born in the little town of Elliot in the Eastern Cape on 11 December 1951.

He started his schooling at De Vos Malan in King Williams Town and also matriculated there in 1970.

He commenced his basic military training at 1 Signal Regiment, Pretoria on 7 July 1971 and a few days later, on 26 July, transferred to the School of Signals on instructor's course

where he served until 16 June 1972.

Thereafter, he was transferred to 7 Signal Squadron, Pretoria on 31 October 1972, to 202 Signal Squadron in Port Elizabeth on 31 September 1975, where after he was further transferred to Northern Transvaal Command Signal Unit on 9 March 1976 and finally to Western Province Signal Unit on 1 January 1989.

Pierre did border duty from 9 June 1980 for three months and was thus awarded the Pro Patria Medal. On 1 December 1989 he was awarded his 10 year Good Service Medal.

Pierre joined 71 Signal Unit on 30 March 1995 where he served until 2016 when he was obliged to retire at the age of 65.

He was awarded his 20 year Good Service Medal on 14 April 2015.

P i e r r e



was a very active and dedicated member of the Management Committee of the Signals Association and served as Chairman from 19 March 2012 to 25 March 2013.

He also served on the Warrant Officers' Association of the Western Cape and on the Executive Committee of the Cape Town branch of the SA Legion until June 2022.

Pierre was a qualified and registered tour guide and spent much time for a tour operating company taking overseas tourists to view various places of interest around South Africa.

He was married to Ramona for the past 46 years and they have a 40 year old son Charl who is a keen Photographer working a Digital Strategist for an IT company.

A large number of fellow association members commented via Whatsapp and sent their condolences to Ramona, their son Charl and the Fourie family and those who have recorded special sentiments described Pierre as "a Remarkable and Special individual", "*n Besonderse mens*" and "Fine man with a life well lived" also as "a Legend who fell."

The Association's Secretary General highlighted the word *Mench* which is a word Jewish people reserve for people like Pierre. It means people with integrity, morality, dignity and has a sense of what's right and responsible. To be supportive,

to be a Friend and to be calm in troubled times.

Member Adri Brits submitted a Poem which is rather fitting for Pierre's sad death. It reads:

## When I go

Don't learn to live without me  
Just learn to live with my love  
in a different way

And, if you need to see me,  
Close your eyes  
Or look in you shadow  
when the sun shines

I'm there

Sit with me in the quiet  
And you will know that I did  
not leave

There is no leaving  
when one soul is blended with  
another

When I go  
Don't learn to live without me  
Just learn to look for me  
in the moments

I WILL be there



## Signals Association

**They shall not grow old, as we that are left  
grow old,  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years  
condemn,  
At the going down of the sun, and in the  
morning,  
We will remember them**

**And so, we WILL remember Pierre Johan Fourie**

## 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](#)**

## Standard issue Assault Rifles

This month we compare the standard issue assault rifles for what are rated as the ten most powerful military forces in the world in 2022.

No fewer than 142 countries maintain a military force of some sort. Some of these are little more than a token.

Take Bhutan for example. They have an army of 8,000 men. They have no tanks, no artillery and have to make do with 27 armoured vehicles. Their air force consists of two unarmed helicopters.

However, we are looking at the ten most powerful military forces in the world. These were the global rankings at the start of 2022. It is more than likely that some of these rankings will look different in 2023.

Russia, for example, was

rated as the second most powerful military force at the start of 2022. There is a more than good chance that they will slip down the rankings after their poor showing during the current war with the Ukraine.

The global rankings for 2022 were as follows:

1. United States of America
2. Russia
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. South Korea
7. France
8. United Kingdom
9. Pakistan
10. Brazil

In this Head-to-Head we are

going to look at the assault rifles that are standard issue for each of these countries.

We will look at factors such as weight, length, calibre, rate of fire, effective firing range, and ammunition capacity.

Some of these countries are planning on upgrading these weapons in the near future. Some of these weapons will even be replaced shortly. But we are looking at those weapons currently in use, and currently the standard issue.

Ask yourself the question - if I was going into a fire-fight, which of these weapons would I like to be armed with?

### 10. Brazil

The IMBEL MD series (MD-1, MD-2, MD-3 and the recent MD-4) of assault rifles are the standard-issue rifles of the Brazilian Army.

These rifles are manufactured by IMBEL (*Indústria de Material Bélico do Brasil*) and are based on the 7.62mm NATO FN FAL, which was previously manufactured by IMBEL for many years under licence as the Brazilian Army's standard service rifle.

The first prototype, the MD-1, appeared in around 1983. Further development resulted in the MD-2 and MD-3 series, which still closely resemble

their FAL parent.

#### Details

- Manufacturer: IMBEL
- Weight: 4.04 kg
- Length: 1,010 mm stock extended; 764 mm stock collapsed
- Cartridge: 5.56×45 mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, rotat-



**IMBEL MD-1**

- ing bolt
- Rate of fire: 700 rpm
- Effective firing range: 300 metres
- Feed system: Various STANAG Magazines
- Sights: Aperture rear sight, hooded post front sight

### 9. Pakistan

The Heckler & Koch G3 (*Gewehr 3*) is a 7.62×51mm NATO, select-fire battle rifle developed in the 1950s by the German armament manufacturer Heckler & Koch (H&K).

It is manufactured under license by Pakistan Ordnance Factories and is known as the G3P4.

#### Details

- Manufacturer: Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF)



**Heckler & Koch G3**

- Weight: 4.38 kg
- Length: 1,025 mm
- Cartridge: 7.62×51mm NATO
- Action: Roller-delayed blowback
- Rate of fire: 500–600 rpm
- Effective firing range: 200–400 metres
- Feed system: 5-, 10-, 20-, 30-, or 40-round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Rear: rotary diopter; front: hooded post

### 8. United Kingdom

The SA80 (Small Arms for the 1980s) is a British family of 5.56×45mm NATO service weapons used by the British Army.

The L85 Rifle variant has been the standard issue service rifle of the British Armed Forces since 1987, replacing the L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle.

#### Details

- Manufacturer: RSAF Enfield



**SA80**

- Weight: 4.98 kg
- Length: 785 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 610–775 rpm
- Effective firing range: 300–1,200 metres depending on weapon
- Feed system: 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Rear: Telescopic SUSAT, ACOG and ELCAN LDS scopes, aperture iron sights

### 7. France

The FAMAS (*Fusil d'Assaut de la Manufacture d'Armes de Saint-Étienne*) is a bullpup assault rifle designed and manufactured in France by MAS in 1978, a year after the Austrian Steyr AUG. It is known by French troops as *Le Clairon* (The Bugle) due to its distinctive shape.

#### Details

- Manufacturer: GIAT Industries



**FAMAS**

- Weight: 3.61 kg
- Length: 757 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Lever-delayed blowback
- Rate of fire: 900–1,100 rpm
- Effective firing range: 300 metres
- Feed system: 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Rear aperture fitted with tritium night inserts, front post

## 6. South Korea

Daewoo Precision Industries K2 assault rifle is the standard service rifle of the South Korean military.

The K2 supplanted the M16A1 assault rifle as the primary infantry weapon for the South Korean military since its adoption in 1985.

### Details

- Manufacturer: S&T Motiv



**Daewoo Precision Industries K2**

- Weight: 3.3 kg
- Length: 980 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Gas operated, Rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700–900 rpm
- Effective firing range: 600 metres
- Feed system: Various STANAG Magazines
- Sights: Iron sights

## 5. Japan

The Howa Type 89 Assault Rifle, referred to as the Type 89 5.56mm Rifle, is a Japanese assault rifle used by the Japan Self-Defense Forces, the Japan Coast Guard's Special Security Team units, and the Special Assault Team.

It has never been exported outside Japan due to its strict Japanese Arms Export Ban. It is known in JGSDF service as Buddy.



**Howa Type 89**

### Details

- Manufacturer: Howa
- Weight: 3.5 kg
- Length: 916 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Short stroke gas piston, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 750 rpm
- Effective firing range: 500 metres
- Feed system: 20/30 round detachable STANAG magazines
- Sights: Rear: Iron sights

## 4. India

INSAS or Indian Small Arms System is a family of infantry arms consisting of an assault rifle and a light machine gun (LMG).

It was designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment and manufactured by the Ordnance Factories Board at its various factories.

The INSAS assault rifle was the standard infantry weapon of the Indian Armed Forces for al-



**INSAS**

most three decades.

### Details

- Manufacturer: ARD
- Weight: 4.018 kg
- Length: 960 mm
- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Gas operated, Rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 600–650 rpm
- Effective firing range: 400 metres
- Feed system: 20 or 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Iron sights

## 3. China

The Type 95 automatic rifle or QBZ-95 is a bullpup assault rifle designed and manufactured by Norinco, and issued since 1995 as the service rifle for the People's Liberation Army, People's Armed Police and various paramilitary law enforcement agencies in the People's Republic of China.

### Details

- Manufacturer: Norinco
- Weight: 3.25 kg



**QBZ-95**

- Length: 745 mm
- Cartridge: 5.8×42 mm DBP87
- Action: Short-stroke piston, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 650 rpm
- Effective firing range: 400 metres
- Feed system: 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Hooded post front sight and aperture rear sight

## 2. Russia

The AK-12 is a Russian assault rifle chambered in 5.45×39mm designed and manufactured by the Kalashnikov Concern.

Compact variants of the AK-12 and AK-15 are also under development, respectively the AK-12K and AK-15K, which feature a shorter barrel.

### Details

- Manufacturer: RSAF Enfield



**AK-12**

- Weight: 3.5 kg
- Length: 922 mm
- Cartridge: 5.45×39 mm
- Action: Gas-operated, long stroke gas piston, rotating bolt
- Rate of fire: 700 rpm
- Effective firing range: 440 metres
- Feed system: 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Back-up iron sights and integrated Picatinny rail for various optical sights

## 1. USA

The M4 carbine (officially Carbine, Caliber 5.56 mm, M4) is a 5.56×45mm NATO, gas-operated, magazine-fed carbine developed in the United States during the 1980s. It is a shortened version of the M16A2 assault rifle.

### Details

- Manufacturer: Colt
- Weight: 3.52 kg
- Length: 838 mm - stock extended



**M4**

- Cartridge: 5.56×45mm NATO
- Action: Gas-operated, closed rotating bolt, Stoner expanding gas
- Rate of fire: 700–950 rpm
- Effective firing range: 500 metres
- Feed system: 30 round detachable box magazine
- Sights: Iron sights or various optics

# Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich

*Veteran of World War I, SS Commander in World War II, Adolf Hitler's chauffeur and bodyguard, and German politician. While respected and admired by many, others had a different opinion. This was Sepp Dietrich*

Josef "Sepp" Dietrich was born on 28 May 1892 in Hawangen, near Memmingen in the Kingdom of Bavaria, German Empire.

There is not much information on his early life but it is known that he left primary school to become a butcher's apprentice.

In 1911 he joined the Bavarian Army with the 4. Bayerische Feldartillerie-Regiment "König" (4th Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment) in Augsburg.

## World War I

At some stage Dietrich left the Bavarian Army but returned to service in August 1914, fighting with several artillery units.

During the spring of 1918, he served in one of the only German units equipped with German-made A7V tanks, before finishing the war as a crewman with captured British tanks.

Dietrich earned the rare First World War Tank Combat Badge, and was one of the few re-

ipients to fight in the Second World War.

He was promoted to *Gefreiter* (corporal) in 1917 and awarded the Iron Cross 2nd class. In 1918 he was promoted to *Unteroffizier* (sergeant). Last Bavarian army record lists Dietrich as recipient of Iron Cross 1st class.

## Interwar period

After the war, in 1919, Dietrich joined the Bavarian Police and rose rapidly in rank due to his experience as an NCO during the war.

He gained additional military experience by simultaneously joining the *Freikorps "Oberland."* He took leave from his police duties at various times to join the *Freikorps* on campaigns, including fighting the Poles in Upper Silesia.

Dietrich was with the *Freikorps* when it participated in the 9 November 1923, "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich, and this doesn't seem to have damaged his civil career, as he was promoted to police captain the next year.

From this early start, Dietrich became acquainted with many leading Nazi party personalities, although he didn't join the NSDAP until 1 May 1928, becoming an SS member four days later.

He had left the police during 1927, and forged a new career as an SS leader and National Socialist politician (gaining a seat in the *Reichstag* from 1932-1945).

In his free time, he indulged his passions of hunting and auto racing, earning a reputation as a sportsman.

Even as he immersed

himself in politics, soldiering was Dietrich's goal, and he was able to attain a semi-military status by heading Hitler's bodyguard detachment from 1929 onward.

With the National Socialist ascension to power on 30 January 1933, this force was reorganized on 17 March, with 117 carefully selected volunteers forming the SS-Staff Guard "Berlin."

This was the origin of the unit which expanded throughout 1933, and on 13 April 1934, received the title "*Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*" (LAN).

Later that year, the force was ordered to take part in the murder of SA leaders during the "Night of the Long Knives." Dietrich had gained first-hand experience of the darker side of Nazi politics.

## World War II

The SS-LAH developed into a motorized infantry regiment, but it was soon apparent that Dietrich's leadership qualities far exceeded his tactical abilities.

He was a proud man, and it took until 1938 before he accepted the outside influence of Hausser to bring the parade-perfect SS-LAH to a state of combat competence.

Highly-experienced professional officers were assigned to assist Dietrich for the remainder of the war, beginning with Willi Bittrich and Wilhelm Keilhaus.

This arrangement, later in-

volving younger officers such as Max Wünsche and Rudolf Lehmann, proved highly successful. While Dietrich served as a public figure, and often personally intervened in combat at crisis spots, his staff officers quietly directed the military operations of the unit.

Dietrich, seemingly a flawed leader from an outside point of view, always received the highest admiration and respect from the men of the SS-LAH, with many of his subordinate commanders having served in the unit since 1933.

They recognized his limitations but never questioned his personal courage, demonstrated in both wars, and appreciated the constant concern he showed for the welfare of his men.

His admirers were quick to point out that Dietrich was the living embodiment of the traditional Prussian system in which a revered commander such as Blücher or Hindenburg owed his success to his chief of staff.

Dietrich commanded the SS-LAH as a reinforced regiment in Poland and France. It was small division by the time it fought in Greece and then the Soviet Union during 1941.

He won the Knight's Cross on 5 July 1940, and the Oakleaves to it on the last day of 1941. During 1942, SSLAH expanded into a full armoured division, and Dietrich won the Swords to his Knight's Cross with Oakleaves on 16 March

1943, for his unit's distinguished role in the Kharkov campaign.

After this, during the late spring of 1943, Dietrich left his division to begin forming the headquarters of the I SS-Panzer Corps *Leibstandarte*, which was to include the SS-LAH and its new sister division, *SS Hitlerjugend*.

*Heer* (Army) staff officer Fritz Kraemer transferred to the Waffen-SS to become the corps chief of staff, and he and Dietrich developed a fine working relationship.

The corps fought in Normandy from June 1944, and Dietrich was awarded the Diamonds to his Knight's Cross with Swords and Oakleaves on 6 August 1944. This was the second and final such decoration within the Waffen-SS.

Days earlier, on 1 August, he had joined Hausser as the second Waffen-SS man to attain the rank of SS-(Four-Star) General (*SS-Oberstgruppenführer*). In recognition of his lengthy experience in armoured warfare, his military SS rank was honorarily listed as "*Panzer-Generaloberst der Waffen-SS.*"

Dietrich took command of the *Heer* 5th Panzer Army in Normandy on 9 August 1944. A month later, on 14 September, he was ordered to form the 6th Panzer Army, based around the I and II SS-Panzer Corps.

Kraemer joined him again as chief of staff for the rest of the war, as the army, retitled the



6th SS-Panzer Army, fought in the Ardennes and then in Hungary.

In March 1945 Dietrich's 6th Panzer Army and the LSSAH spearheaded Operation Spring Awakening, an offensive in Hungary near Lake Balaton aimed at securing the last oil reserves still available to Germany.

Despite early gains, the offensive was too ambitious in scope and failed. After that failure, the 6th SS Panzer Army (and LSSAH) retreated to the Vienna area.

As a mark of disgrace, the Waffen-SS units involved in the battle were ordered by Hitler to remove their treasured cuff titles. Dietrich did not relay the order to his troops.

Shortly thereafter, Dietrich's troops were forced to retreat from Vienna by Soviet Army forces. Dietrich, accompanied by his wife, surrendered on 9 May 1945 to the U.S. 36th Infantry Division in Austria.

**Assessment**

Dietrich had the complete confidence of the Führer because of his plain-speaking loyalty; the old political fighter was one of Hitler's favourites. He therefore enjoyed much lavish publicity, numerous decorations and a rapid series of promotions.

Dietrich often took gambles, much to the dislike of the OKW, such as when he sent the Leibstandarte division "charging into Rostov" without orders "purely to gain a prestige

victory".

Once Dietrich was promoted to a Corps command he was at least assisted by competent staff officers transferred from the army; still, the army command had to take some pains to keep him in line.

By 1944 there were clear signs that he had been elevated above his military competence. He reportedly had never been taught how to read a military map. Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt considered him to be "decent but stupid" and was especially critical of Dietrich's handling of the 6th Panzer Army in the Ardennes. Even Dietrich's principal staff officer conceded that he was "no strategic genius".

Dietrich's long, personal acquaintance with Hitler allowed him to be more frank than other senior officers in his interactions with Hitler. He was reported by a fellow general to have "railed against the Führer and [his] entourage" with promises to let Hitler know that he was "leading us all to destruction".

**War Crimes**

Dietrich was tried as Defendant No. 11 by the U.S. Military Tribunal at Dachau ("United States of America vs. Valentin Bersin et al.", Case No. 6-24), from 16 May 1946 until 16 July 1946.

On that day he was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Malmedy massacre trial for his involvement in ordering the execution of U.S. prisoners

of war.

Due to testimony in his defence by other German officers, his sentence was shortened to 25 years. He was imprisoned at the Landsberg Prison in Bavaria. Dietrich served only ten years and was released on parole on 22 October 1955.

He was re-arrested in Ludwigsburg in August 1956. He was charged by the *Landgericht München I* and tried from 6 to 14 May 1957 for his role in the killing of SA leaders during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934.

He was sentenced to 19 months for his part in that purge and returned to the U.S. military prison at Landsberg.

He was released due to a heart condition and circulation problems in his legs on 2 February 1958. By then he had already served almost his entire 19 month sentence.

**Later life**

Upon his release from prison he took an active part in the activities of HIAG, an organization and lobby group of former Waffen-SS members. Founded by former high-ranking Waffen-SS personnel, it campaigned for the legal, economic and historical rehabilitation of the Waffen-SS, with limited success.

On 21 April 1966 Dietrich died of a heart attack. He was 74 years old. Six thousand people, including many former SS men, attended his funeral.



**Jets**

Since first introduced over the skies of Europe in World War II, jets have ruled the sky since then. We show you 15 of them, you tell us what they are. You'll find the answers to the quiz on page 84.

1 	2 	3 
4 	5 	6 
7 	8 	9 
10 	11 	12 
13 	14 	15 



# Stalin's Organ

*With its distinctive whine the Katyusha was a weapon that sowed terror and confusion among the Germans during their invasion of the Soviet Union. It was a weapon that was forged in battle.*

Ask any South African that took part in combat operations in Angola or the then South West Africa to describe the sound of the war and they will probably tell you that it was the sound of the 282 hp turbo-charged diesel engine of the Ratel.

Ask any American that fought in Vietnam the same question and they will tell you that it was the 'thump-thump' of the Bell UH-1 Iroquois 'Huey' helicopter.

Yet for anyone that fought on the Eastern Front during World War II, the distinctive whine of the Soviet Katyusha rocket is

a sound they will never forget. And it is a sound that, to this day, is still just as frightening to those on the receiving end.

## Background

Invented in Voronezh, Russia, Katyusha rocket launchers were mounted on many platforms during World War II, including on trucks, artillery tractors, tanks, and armoured trains, as well as on naval and riverine vessels as assault support weapons.

Soviet engineers also mounted single Katyusha rockets on lengths of railway track to serve in urban combat.

The design was relatively simple, consisting of racks of parallel rails on which rockets were mounted, with a folding frame to raise the rails to launch position. Each truck had 14 to 48 launchers. The M-13 rocket of the BM-13 system was 80 cm long, 13.2 cm in diameter and weighed 42 kg.

In June 1938, the Soviet Reaction-Engine Scientific Research Institute (RNII) in Moscow was authorized by the Main Artillery Directorate (GAU) to develop a multiple rocket launcher for the RS-132 aircraft rocket (RS for *Reaktivnyy Snaryad*, ('rocket-powered shell')).

I. Gvay led a design team in Chelyabinsk, Russia, which built several prototype launchers firing the modified 132 mm M-132 rockets over the sides of ZiS-5 trucks.

These proved unstable, and V.N. Galkovskiy proposed mounting the launch rails longitudinally. In August 1939, the result was the BM-13 (*boyevaya mashina*).

The first large-scale testing of the rocket launchers took place at the end of 1938, when 233 rounds of various types were used.

A salvo of rockets could completely straddle a target at a range of 5,500 metres. But the artillery branch was not fond of the Katyusha, because it took up to 50 minutes to load and fire 24 rounds, while a conventional howitzer could fire 95 to 150 rounds in the same time.

Testing with various rockets was conducted through 1940, and the BM-13-16 with launch rails for sixteen rockets was au-

thorized for production. Only forty launchers were built before Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.

After their success in the first month of the war, mass production was ordered and the development of other models proceeded. The Katyusha was inexpensive and could be manufactured in light industrial installations which did not have the heavy equipment to build conventional artillery gun barrels.

By the end of 1942, 3,237 Katyusha launchers of all types had been built, and by the end of the war total production reached about 10,000.

The truck-mounted Katyushas were installed on ZiS-6 6x4 trucks, as well as the two-axle ZiS-5 and ZiS-5V. In 1941, a small number of BM-13 launchers were mounted on STZ-5 artillery tractors.

A few were also tried on KV tank chassis as the KV-1K, but this was a needless waste of

heavy armour. Starting in 1942, they were also mounted on various British, Canadian and U.S. Lend-Lease trucks, in which case they were sometimes referred to as BM-13S.

The cross-country performance of the Studebaker US6 2½-ton 6x6 truck was so good that it became the GAU's standard mounting in 1943, designated BM-13N (*normalizovanniy*, 'standardized'), and more than 1,800 of this model were manufactured by the end of World War II.

After World War II, BM-13s were based on Soviet-built ZiS-151 trucks.

Initially, the BM-13 mobile rocket launcher was such a closely guarded secret, only specially cleared NKVD (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del - People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) state police units were permitted to operate the weapons. The technology would remain classified well into the war.



## Nicknames

Initially, concerns for secrecy kept the military designation of the Katyushas from being known by the soldiers who operated them. They were called by code names such as Kostikov guns, after the head of the RNII, the Reaction-Engine Scientific Research Institute, and finally classed as Guards Mortars.

The name BM-13 was only allowed into secret documents in 1942, and remained classified until after the war.

Because they were marked with the letter K (for *Voronezh Komintern* Factory), Red Army troops adopted a nickname from Mikhail Isakovsky's popular wartime song, "[Katyusha](#)" (Click the underlined link to listen to the song), about a girl longing for her absent beloved, who has gone away on military service.

Katyusha is the Russian equivalent of Katie, an endearing diminutive form of the name Katherine: *Yekaterina - Katya - Katyusha*.

The Germans had their own name for the Katyusha. Comparing the visual resemblance of the launch array and the distinctive howling sound of the weapon's rocket motors, the German's nicknamed it *Stalinorgel* (Stalin's Organ).

When South African troops first encountered the 122 mm BM-21 Grad multiple-rocket launcher during Operation Savannah in 1975, they soon gave it their own nickname - *die rooi oog* (the red eye) - due to the red glare of the rockets when firing.



**STALIN'S ORGAN:** To listen to the sound of Katyusha's firing, click on the image above.

## World War II

On 7 July 1941, only 15 days after Germany had launched Operation Barbarossa and invaded the Soviet Union, the Katyusha made its combat debut.

This was not perfect timing by any means. The first and only existing battery consisted of only seven BM-13 launchers and 600 M-13 rockets. More over they only had four days of training. This was a time when the existence of the Katyusha was a secret, so every possible precaution was taken to hide the launchers until they were fired in combat.

The target of the first launch of Katyusha rockets was an incoming formation of German troops near the river Berezina. The screaming wail of the rockets was enough to demoralize both battle-hardened troops and new recruits alike.

As the deluge of high explosives rained down on them the Germans panicked, and the steel fragments from the rockets added to the injuries and confusion.

The battery saw further action and in October they found themselves surrounded by the attacking Germans. Unfortunately for the Germans they were unable

to capture anything intact. The retreating Russian rocket crew had destroyed all the launchers and rockets to protect their precious new weapon from falling into enemy hands.

The Russian top brass were thrilled at how well the BM-13 had performed and this resulted in mass production.

By the end of the war over 10,000 Katyusha launchers along with 12 million rockets had been produced by about 200 factories.

It saw action from the defence of the Soviet Union after the Germans invaded, right through until the final battle for Berlin.

## Post World War II

The success of the Katyusha in combat, its simple design and cost effectiveness ensured its ongoing development after the war. The term Katyusha is still used as a generic name to describe Russian MLRS of different calibres along with the prefix BM.

In 1952 the BM-14 went into service. It has 16 barrels and can fire a 140 mm rocket a maximum distance of 9.8 kilometres. It fires three different rockets of the M-14 series - a high-explosive fragmentation warhead

containing 3.68 kilograms of TNT. A smoke warhead containing white phosphorus. A chemical warhead containing 2.2 kilograms of sarin.

The most famous variant, post WWII is the BM-21 *Grad* (Hail) which entered service in 1962 and is still widely used. It has 40 barrels that can fire a 122 mm rocket a distance of between 30 and 45 kilometres.

The BM-27 *Uragan* (Hurricane) went into service in 1975 and was the first modern spin and fin stabilized heavy multiple rocket launcher. It has 16 barrels that can fire a 220 mm rocket a distance of 35 kilometres. It can use HE-FRAG, chemical, explosive or scatterable mine (PTM-3 or PFM-1) sub-munition equipped rockets, all of which are detonated by electric timing fuses.

The BM-30 *Smerch* (Whirlwind) went into service in 1989. It has 12 barrels that can fire a 300 mm rocket a distance of 90 kilometres. Various warheads have been developed for the *Smerch* MLRS.

The 9A52-4 Tornado was unveiled in 2007 and was designed as a lightweight and universal version of the BM-30 *Smerch*. Its six barrels can fire all current *Smerch* rockets, including HE-FRAG, incendiary, thermobaric, cluster with anti-personnel or anti-tank mines. Cluster rounds may also carry self-targeting anti-tank munitions. Launcher pods are designed for use with 122-mm and 220-mm rockets. The weapons system is equipped with an automated laying and fire control system, along with an autonomous satellite navigation and positioning system.



**BM-21 Grad**



**BM-27 Uragan**



**9A52-4 Tornado**

*The Americans called it 'The Mog' - Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. In October a raid planned to capture key members of Mohamed Farrah Aidid militia went horribly wrong. The subsequent battle become known as 'Black Hawk Down'.*

The Battle of Mogadishu took place on 3 and 4 October 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia. It was fought between forces of the United States - supported by UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia II) - and Somali militiamen loyal to the self-proclaimed president-to-be Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had support from armed fighters.

The battle was part of Operation Gothic Serpent and is also referred to as the First Battle of Mogadishu, to distinguish it amongst the nine major Battles of Mogadishu during the decades-long Somali Civil War.

The battle resulted in the loss of 21 US/UN troops, including 19 American, 82 wounded, and one captured. The Somali's lost between 2,000 and 4,000 militia and volunteers.

**Background**

Task Force Ranger was created in August 1993, and deployed to Somalia. It consisted of various elite special operations units from Army, Air Force and Navy special services: U.S. Army Rangers from Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment; C Squadron, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (1st SFOD-D), better known as "Delta Force"; helicopters flown by 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment; Air Force Combat Controllers; Air Force Pararescuemen; and Navy SEALs.

As a multi-disciplinary joint special forces operation, Task Force Ranger reported to Joint Special Operations Command, led by Major General William F. Garrison.

On 3 October 1993, Task Force Ranger began an operation that involved traveling from their compound on the city's outskirts to the center with the aim of capturing the leaders of the Habr Gidr clan, led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The assault force consisted of nineteen aircraft, twelve vehicles (including nine Humvees), and 160 men. The operation was intended to last no

longer than one hour.

**The plan**

On Sunday 3 October 1993, Task Force Ranger, U.S. special operations forces composed mainly of Bravo Company 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (better known as "Delta Force") operators, and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) ("The Night Stalkers"), attempted to capture Aidid's foreign minister Omar Salad Elmi and his top political advisor, Mohamed Hassan Awale.

The plan was that Delta operators would assault the target building (using MH-6 Little Bird helicopters) and secure the targets inside the building while four Ranger chinks (sticks or sections) would fast rope down from hovering MH-60L Black Hawk helicopters.

The Rangers would then create a four-corner defensive perimeter around the target building to isolate it and ensure that no enemy could get in or out, while a column of nine HM-MWVs and three M939 five-ton trucks would arrive at the building to take the entire assault team and their prisoners back to base. The entire operation was estimated to take no longer than 30 minutes.

The ground-extraction convoy was supposed to reach the

captive targets a few minutes after the operation's beginning, but it ran into delays.

Somali citizens and local militia formed barricades along Mogadishu's streets with rocks, wreckage, rubbish and burning tires, blocking the convoy from reaching the Rangers and their captives.

Aidid militiamen with megaphones were shouting, "*Kasoo-baxa guryaha oo iska celsa cadowga!*" ("Come out and defend your homes!").

**The raid**

At 15:42, the MH-6 assault Little Birds carrying the Delta operators hit the target, the wave of dust becoming so bad that one was forced to go around again and land out of position.

Next, the two Black Hawks carrying the second Delta assault team led by DELTA officer Capt Austin "Scott" Miller came into position and dropped their teams as the four Ranger chinks prepared to rope onto the four corners surrounding the target building.

Chalk Four being carried by Black Hawk callsign Super 67, piloted by CW3 Jeff Niklaus, was accidentally put a block north of their intended point. Declining the pilot's offer to move them back down due to

the time it would take to do so, leaving the helicopter too exposed, Chalk Four intended to move down to the planned position, but intense ground fire prevented them from doing so.

The ground convoy arrived ten minutes later near the Olympic Hotel and waited for Delta and Rangers to complete their mission (target building).

During the operation's first moments, Ranger PFC Todd Blackburn, from Chalk Four, fell while fast-roping from his Black Hawk Super 67 while it was hovering 21 metres above the streets. Blackburn suffered an injury to his head and back of his neck and required evacuation by Sgt Jeff Struecker's column of three Humvees.

While taking PFC Todd Blackburn back to base, Sgt Dominick Pilla, assigned to Sgt Struecker's Humvee, was killed instantly when a bullet struck his head.

When Sgt Struecker's Humvee column reached the base and safety, all three vehicles were riddled with bullet holes and were smoking.

**Black Hawk down**

At about 16:20, one of the Black Hawk helicopters, callsign Super 61 piloted by CW3

Cliff "Elvis" Wolcott and CW3 Donovan "Bull" Briley, was shot down by an RPG. Both pilots were killed in the resulting crash and two of the crew chiefs were severely wounded. S/Sgt Daniel Busch and Sgt Jim Smith, both Delta snipers, survived the crash and began defending the site.

An MH-6, callsign Star 41 and piloted by CW3 Karl Maier and CW5 Keith Jones, landed nearby and Jones left the helicopter and carried Busch to the safety of the helicopter while Maier provided cover fire from the Little Bird's cockpit, repeatedly denying orders to lift off while his co-pilot was not in the Bird. He nearly hit Chalk One's Lt DiTomasso arriving with Rangers and Delta operators to secure the site. Jones and Maier evacuated S/Sgt Busch and Sgt Smith, though SSG Busch later died of his injuries, having been shot four times while defending the crash site.

A Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) team, led by Delta Operator Capt Bill J. Coultrup and Air Force Pararescueman Master Sgt Scott C. Fales, were able to fast rope down to Super 61's crash site despite an RPG hit that crippled their helicopter, Super 68, piloted by CW3



Dan Jollota.

Despite the damage, Super 68 did make it back to base. The CSAR team found both the pilots dead and two wounded inside the crashed helicopter. Under intense fire, the team moved the wounded men to a nearby collection point, where they built a makeshift shelter using Kevlar armour plates salvaged from Super 61's wreckage.

There was confusion between the ground convoy and the assault team. The assault team and the ground convoy waited for 20 minutes to receive their orders to move out. Both units were under the mistaken impression that they were to be first contacted by the other.

### Another Black Hawk down

During the wait, a second Black Hawk helicopter, callsign Super 64 and piloted by CW3 Michael Durant, was shot down by an RPG-7 at around 16:40.

Most of the assault team went to the first crash site for a rescue operation. Upon reaching the site, about 90 Rangers and Delta Force operators found themselves under heavy fire. Despite air support, the assault team was effectively trapped for the night. With a growing number of wounded needing shelter, they occupied several nearby houses and confined the occupants for the battle's duration. Outside, a stiff breeze stirred up blinding, brown clouds of dust.

At the second crash site, two Delta snipers, Master Sgt Gary Gordon and SFC Randy Shughart, were inserted by Black Hawk Super 62 - piloted by CW3 Mike Goffena.

Their first two requests to be



**TECHNICAL:** One of the challenges faced by the Americans in Mogadishu was the Somali 'Technical'. These are Toyota pickups armed with anything from a 106 recoilless rifle to 12,7 mm heavy machine guns.

inserted were denied, but they were finally granted permission upon their third request. They inflicted heavy casualties on the approaching Somali mob.

Super 62 had kept up their fire support for Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart, but an RPG struck Super 62. Despite the damage, Super 62 managed to land at New Port safely. When Master Sgt Gordon was eventually killed, SFC Shughart picked up Gordon's CAR-15 and gave it to Super 64 pilot CW3 Michael Durant.

SFC Shughart went back around the helicopter's nose and held off the mob for about 10 more minutes before he was killed.

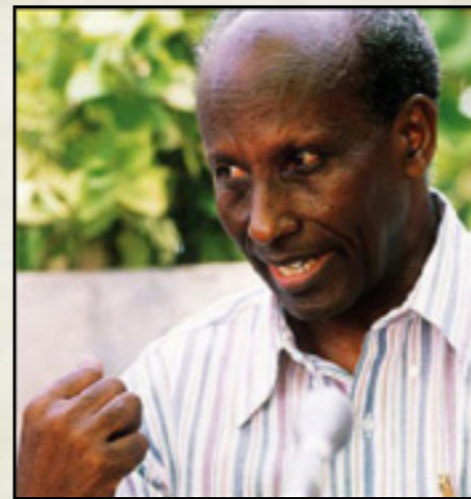
The Somalis then overran the crash site and killed all but Durant. He was nearly beaten to death, but was saved when members of Aidid's militia came to take him prisoner. For their actions, Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart were posthu-

mously awarded the Medal of Honour, the first awarded since the Vietnam War.

Repeated attempts by the Somalis to mass forces and overrun the American positions in a series of firefights near the first crash site were neutralized by aggressive small arms fire and by strafing runs and rocket attacks from AH-6J Little Bird helicopter gunships of the Nightstalkers, the only air unit equipped and trained for night fighting.

### Relief column

A relief convoy with elements from the Task Force 2-14 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division, accompanied by Malaysian and Pakistani U.N. forces, arrived at the first crash site at around 02:00. No contingency planning or coordination with U.N. forces had been arranged prior to the operation; consequently, the recovery of the surrounded American troops was signifi-



**Mohamed Farrah Aidid**

cantly complicated and delayed.

Determined to protect all of the rescue convoy's members, General Garrison made sure that the convoy would roll out in force. When the convoy finally pushed into the city, it consisted of more than 100 U.N. vehicles including Malaysian forces' German-made Condor APCs, four Pakistani tanks (M48s), American Humvees and several M939 five-ton flatbed trucks.

This two-mile-long column was supported by several other Black Hawks and Cobra assault helicopters stationed with the 10th Mountain Division. Meanwhile, Task Force Ranger's "Little Birds" continued their defense of Super 61's downed crew and rescuers.

The American assault force sustained heavy casualties, including several killed, and a Malaysian soldier died when an RPG hit his Condor vehicle. Seven Malaysians and two Pakistanis were wounded. The battle was over by 06:30 on Monday, 4 October. U.S. forces were finally evacuated to the U.N. base by the armored convoy.

While leaving the crash site, a group of Rangers and Delta operators led by S/Sgt John R.

Dycus realised that there was no room left in the vehicles for them and were forced to depart the city on foot to a rendezvous point on National Street. This has been commonly referred to as the "Mogadishu Mile".

In all, 19 U.S. soldiers were killed in action during the battle or shortly after, and another 73 were wounded in action. The Malaysian forces lost one soldier and had seven injured, while the Pakistanis also lost one soldier and suffered two injured. Somali casualties were heavy, with estimates of fatalities ranging from 315 to over 2,000 combatants. The Somali casualties were a mixture of militiamen and local civilians. Somali civilians suffered heavy casualties due to the dense urban character of that portion of Mogadishu.

On 6 October, a mortar round fell on the U.S. compound, making Delta Operator SFC Matthew L. Rierson the 19th U.S. soldier killed in the battle while injuring another twelve. That same day, a team on special mission to Durant's Super 64 helicopter had two wounded.

Two weeks after the battle, General Garrison officially accepted responsibility.

In a handwritten letter to President Clinton, Garrison took full responsibility for the battle's outcome. He wrote that Task Force Ranger had adequate intelligence for the mission and that their objective (capturing targets from the Olympic Hotel) was met.

### Aftermath

After the battle, the bodies

of several of the conflict's US casualties (Black Hawk Super 64's crew members and their defenders, Delta Force soldiers Master Sgt Gordon and SFC Shughart) were dragged through Mogadishu's streets by crowds of local civilians and SNA forces.

Through negotiation and threats to the Habr Gidr clan leaders by Special Envoy for Somalia, Robert B. Oakley, all the bodies were eventually recovered. The bodies were returned in poor condition, one with a severed head.

Michael Durant was released after 11 days of captivity. On the beach near the base, a memorial was held for those who were killed in combat.

A total of two Medals of Honour, seven Silver Stars, and 11 Bronze Stars were awarded to those that took part in the battle.

At the time the battle was the bloodiest involving U.S. troops since the Vietnam War, and it remained so until the Second Battle of Fallujah in 2004.

On 25 March 1994 the United States withdrew all of their troops from Somalia. Just over a year later, on 28 March 1995, the United Nations also withdrew from Somalia.

On 24 July 1996, Mohamed Farrah Aidid was wounded during a firefight between his militia and forces loyal to former Aidid allies, Ali Mahdi Muhammad and Osman Ali Atto.

He suffered a fatal heart attack on 1 August 1996, either during or after surgery to treat his wounds. The following day, General Garrison retired.



*As if things weren't bad enough, Comrade Matt O' Brien heads to the Eastern Front and Stalingrad. After only a week on the front lines he is awarded a medal - by the Germans.*

People will sometimes ask me, "Matt, aren't you a little old to be playing games." It's a question I can answer with one word, "No."

While I really enjoy gaming they have to be games that interest and challenge me. In fact the vast majority of the games I play have a military theme to them.

So the games that I will be reviewing for this magazine will obviously also have a military theme to them.

Games can broadly be divided into a number of categories. You get first-person shooters (FPS), real time strategy (RTS), role playing games (RPG) and simulations (Sims).

First-person shooters are often referred to as 'running and gunning' games. You are armed with various weapons and you have goals to achieve. They are normally not very realistic and I won't be reviewing any of them for this magazine.

The type of games I will focus on are real time strategy and simulation games. Think of these as chess on a much more complicated scale.

The first game I want to look at is Company of Heroes 2. This is a real time strategy game set during World War II.

When it was released back in 2006, Company of Heroes

was one of the best WWII RTS games around. Built around the concepts of cover and directional fire, suppression and morale, you had to use actual battlefield strategies if you wanted to succeed.

In Company of Heroes 2 the action moves to the Eastern Front. In the single player campaign you control the Soviet Army from Operation Barbarossa to the Battle of Berlin.

Where the game really comes into its own is in skirmish mode. You can play multi-player, co-op, or even go up against the AI (Artificial Intelligence). What's also cool is that you can play as the Russians or the Germans.

Each side starts with a headquarters building which allows you to recruit engineers. The map is divided up into a number of territories that you need to capture to secure the area. You also need to capture ammunition and fuel points. These points are spent recruiting new units, building structures and vehicles, and developing new tactics. As you built new structures, capture new territory and engage in combat you are awarded command points. These allow you access to better units, buildings, vehicles and equipment.

Your engineers can construct a barracks which then allows

you to recruit infantry. A support centre will allow you to build or recruit better infantry, anti-tank guns, artillery, mortars and heavy machine guns. The vehicle centre allows you to build light vehicles and armoured cars. Finally the tank hall allows you to build armour such as tanks and self propelled guns.

There are many new innovations in the game, such as the cold weather that can kill your troops and that you can cross rivers that have frozen. Get caught in a blizzard and your troops will start dropping like flies.

You will need to build a temporary camp, or transport them back to an existing one. Snow can also change the geography of the landscape. The new and more accurate line-of-sight system also rewards clever placement of units, and commanders with the nerve to keep to their hiding places.

Your engineers can repair vehicles and structures and can also be armed with demolition charges. You can build bunkers, tank traps and observation towers. They can also lay mines or barbed wire. Infantry can also dig trenches for cover.

Most vehicles and units can be upgraded with better equipment. Those that survive com-



**FRONTAL ASSAULT:** The American Forces launch an assault against German positions. Actual battlefield tactics plays a big part in being successful at the game.

bat engagements gain experience and can become veterans, giving them more benefits.

Company of Heroes 2 released a number of add-ons for the game. The good news is that the game now comes complete with all the add-ons.

### The Western Front Armies

This added the American forces to the game. It also added Oberkommando West to the Axis forces. The Oberkommando faction is intended to represent Germany's military situation near the end of the Second World War.

This add-on also comes with a new campaign, but once again it is skirmish mode where you will get the most enjoyment.

### Ardennes Assault

While this did not add any new factions to the game it did have a new campaign that was set in Belgium. It is based on the Battle of the Bulge.

### The British Forces

The final add-on saw the introduction of the British Forces.

They operate slightly different to the other factions in

that they do not have buildings. They have trucks that act as their headquarters, barracks, support centre and tank hall.

This means that they can be packed up and then moved to a new location.

If you plan on being successful in skirmishes you will have to make the best use of your faction's strengths and use the correct tactics.

The Soviet Union places emphasis on cheap yet effective units, embodied by units such as the T-34 Medium Tank and the expendable Conscript Infantry Squads.

Unlike the Soviets, the German army relies on a well-trained versatile army. Their tanks are generally considered superior to the Soviet tanks, but they are fewer in numbers. This applies for most German units. Fewer in squad size/more expensive, but superior compared to their Soviet counterpart.

The US faction emphasizes versatility and flexibility, designed to bend but not break under enemy pressure. The USF is somewhat better at holding territory points than the Soviet

Red Army as they can construct fighting positions and tank traps. US vehicles have vehicle crews that can disembark to carry out repairs or escape their doomed vehicle.

The Oberkommando faction is intended to represent Germany's military situation near the end of the Second World War. As a faction, they have access to cutting-edge military innovations, such as STG.44 Infrared scopes and the Jagdtiger heavy tank destroyer.

The British Forces have an emphasis on versatile and well trained infantry, supported by powerful artillery and highly durable but slow tanks.

Company of Heroes 2 is one of the better RTS games around. It's not that difficult to learn to play the game and with skirmish mode it will provide hours and hours of entertainment.



Publisher	-	Relic
Genre	-	RTS
Platform	-	PC
Score	-	8/10
Price	-	R199



## Movie Review

# Black Hawk Down

Released: 2001  
Running time: 144 minutes  
Directed by: Ridley Scott

**B**lack Hawk Down is a 2001 war film produced and directed by Ridley Scott from a screenplay by Ken Nolan. It is based on the 1999 non-fiction book of the same name by journalist Mark Bowden.

As an embedded journalist, he covered the 1993 raid in Mogadishu by the U.S. military, aimed at capturing faction leader Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The ensuing firefight became known as the Battle of Mogadishu.

Following the ousting of the central government in 1993 amid a civil war that had started in 1991, the United Nations Security Council authorized a military operation in Somalia with a peacekeeping mandate. After the bulk of the peacekeepers were withdrawn, the Mogadishu-based militia loyal to Mohamed Farrah Aidid declared war on the remaining UN personnel. In response, the U.S. Army deployed three of its special operations forces – 75th Rangers, Delta Force counter-terrorist operators, and 160th SOAR - Night Stalkers aviators – to Mogadishu to capture Aidid, who has proclaimed himself president of the country.

To consolidate his power and subdue the population in the south, Aidid and his militia seize Red Cross food ship-

ments, while the UN forces are powerless to intervene directly. Outside Mogadishu, Rangers and Delta Force capture Osman Ali Atto, a faction leader selling arms to Aidid's militia. While in custody, Atto attempts to convince Major General William Garrison that the Somali Civil War is a Somali matter, not one of international importance to the United Nations and the United States, but Garrison tells him off, reminding him of the genocide of 300,000 plus civilian casualties that have resulted from the civil war. The US plans a mission to capture Omar Salad Elmi and Abdi Hassan Awale Qeybdiid, two of Aidid's top advisers.

The operation begins and Delta Force operators capture Aidid's advisers inside the target building, while the Rangers and helicopters escorting the ground-extraction convoy take heavy fire. Blackburn is severely injured when he falls from one of the Black Hawk helicopters, so three Humvees led by Staff Sergeant Jeff Struecker are detached from the convoy to return Blackburn to the UN-held Mogadishu Airport.

Things begin to go wrong when a Black Hawk helicopter is shot down by a Somali RPG rocket. Later a second Black Hawk is shot down.

The ground forces are rerouted to converge on the crash site.

The Somali militia erects road-blocks and a vicious firefight erupts.

The column relinquish their attempt to reach Six-One's crash site and return to base with their prisoners and the casualties. The men prepare to go back to extract the Rangers and the fallen pilots.

As night falls, Aidid's militia launch a sustained assault on the trapped Americans at Super Six-One's crash site.

The film stars Josh Hartnett, Ewan McGregor, Tom Sizemore, Orlando Bloom and Sam Shepard.

Although not 100% accurate, it's still a decent movie.



*Click on the box cover to watch a trailer of the film.*

# Eagle Strike!

**T**his is the story of an audacious, airborne assault, on 4 May 1978, on a SWAPO fortified base containing its military headquarters, logistical support, reserves and training facilities.

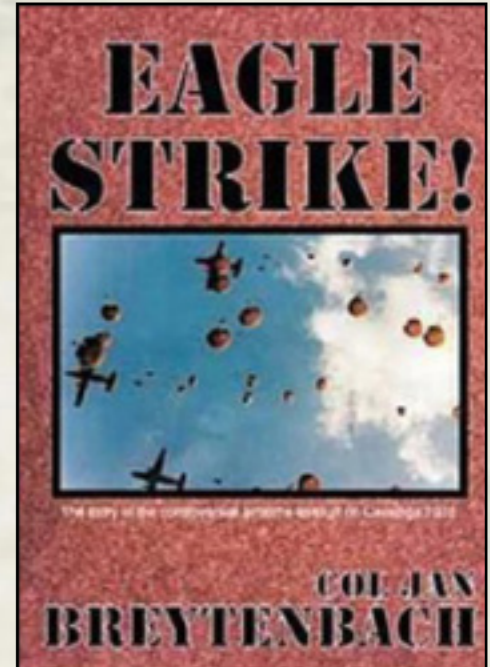
The assault was supported by a very strong air strike by bombers and fighters as well as by air transport to drop the paratroopers into battle in one of the major, post World War paratroops, 250kms deep behind enemy lines, swarm of helicopters to extract the paratroopers back to safety, this execution of the whole intricate operation through a joint HQ deployed in the field. Unfortunately the subsequent uproar in the international media, based on alle-

gations that this assault was a brutal attack on a refugee camp, did much to detract from the incredible victory the SADF had claimed.

Was it a refugee camp, a SWAPO HQ and strategic military establishment, or a mixture of both.

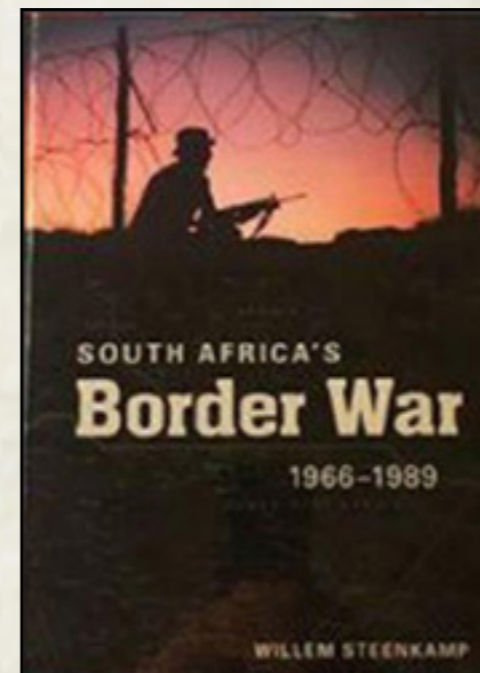
This is the only personal account ever written by somebody on the SADF side who 'was actually there' and who was the commander of the paratroopers.

It also brings to light much more than this brief outline, especially the dangerous nature of the whole enterprise through personal experiences, by paratroopers and air crews, and how and why it nearly became the most disastrous undertaking of

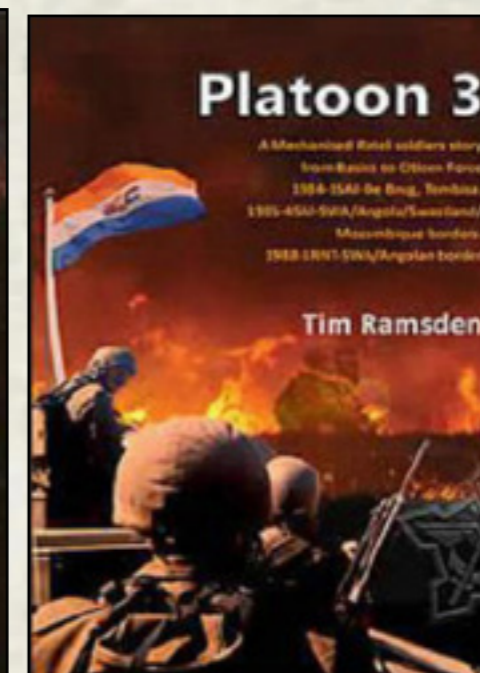


the whole 'bush war' era through uncalled for meddling by an outsider who should not have been there.

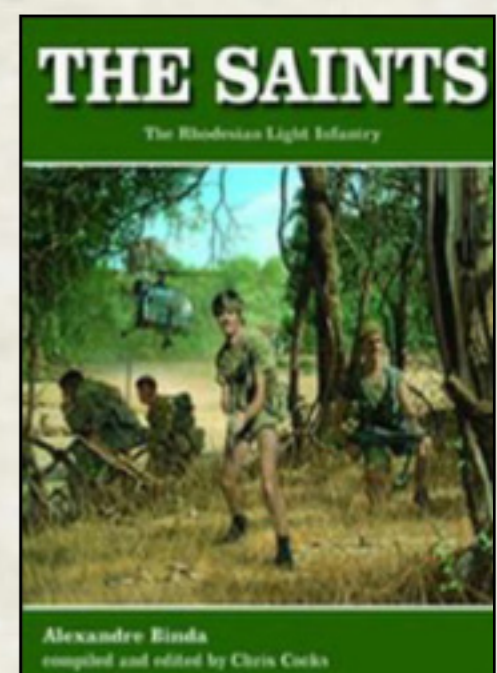
Softcover, 640 pages  
Cost: R800



Border War 1966 - 1989  
R425



Platoon 3  
R330



The Saints  
R480

All books are available from [Bush War Books](#)

Some of the significant military events that happened in January. Highlighted in blue are the names of those members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) that lost their lives during the month of January.

## 1 January

- **1776** - During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag in America.
- **1776** - British seaborne raiders torch Norfolk, Virginia.
- **1887** - Wilhelm Canaris, German admiral and spy-master, who was executed by Hitler, 1945, was born on this day.
- **1915** - During World War I, the British Battleship Formidable was hit by a torpedo in the English Channel, killing 547 crewmen.
- **1915** - The first known act of German sabotage in the U.S.: The John A. Roebling Munitions Plant in Trenton is destroyed by fire.
- **1920** - Basil L. Plumley, Sgt Maj, US, veteran of three wars and five combat jumps, hero of the Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam, was born on this day.
- **1942** - Twenty six countries signed the Declaration of the United Nations, in Washington, D.C., reaffirming their opposition to the Axis powers and confirming that no single nation would make a separate peace.
- **1950** - Indo-China: Viet Minh open a major offensive against the French.
- **1951** - Massive Chinese/North Korean assault on UN lines.
- **1959** - Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba after leading a revolution that drove out Dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro then established a Communist dictatorship.
- **1962** - The US Navy SEALs were established on this day.
- **1964** - Lieutenant Johannes Stephanus Steenkamp Enslin from 28 Squadron was critically injured when he accidentally fell from the 2nd floor balcony of the Edward Hotel during New Year's Eve celebrations. He succumbed to his injuries in 1 Military Hospital later that evening. He was 41.
- **1969** - Ian Fleming, former Royal Navy Commander and creator of James Bond, died at the age of 56.
- **1977** - Rifleman Joao Joaquim from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion during operations against enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 31.
- **1977** - Lance Corporal Geoffrey Allan Lawrie from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces near Omunduangilo, North of Beacon 28. He was 24.
- **1977** - Two members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. They were: Rifleman Thomas Amalati (26). Rifleman Joao Mathais (25).
- **1978** - Sergeant H. Daniel from 32 Battalion died from a gunshot wound apparently self-inflicted while he was stationed at Nkongo. He was 39.
- **1983** - Sapper David Batten from 97 Ammunition Depot collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack at the Unit. He was 27.
- **1984** - Airman Johannes Hendrik Kok from Air Logistics Command was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ondangwa Town. He was 20.
- **1987** - Two members from 44 Parachute Regiment were killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Isingolweni when the Mamba vehicle in which they were passengers, overturned. The casualties were: Rifleman Abram Welile Zumane (24). Rifleman Matthew Damon Seekoei (23).
- **1990** - General Johan van der Merwe is appointed as new commissioner of police.
- **1991** - Sergeant Willie Kruger from Air Force Base Swartkop collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 26.
- **1991** - The Defence Special Tribunal Act, 1998, providing for the expeditious adjudication of disputes concerning military institutions

- and the rationalisation process of the Department of Defence, becomes effective.
  - **1992** - Rifleman Paulus Malesela Matlakala from 116 Battalion was Killed in Action when he was shot dead by persons unknown while on guard duty at Messina. He was 24.
  - **1994** - Rifleman Bernard Maditsi Lekalakala from 115 Battalion was Killed in Action when he was shot dead by persons unknown while manning a road block at Vosloorus. He was 20.
  - **2008** - The last German veteran of WWI, Erich Kaestner, dies at the age of 107.
- ## 2 January
- **1776** - The four corner stones of the castle (Kasteel de Goede Hoop) at the Cape are laid by Zacharias Wagenaer, Johan van Arckel, Gabbema and Lacus.
  - **1837** - Voortrekker leaders Andries Hendrik Potgieter and Gerrit (Gert) Maritz, each with his own men, leave for Western Transvaal to punish Mzilikazi for the Ndebele attack on the Voortrekkers at Vechtkop (Vegkop).
  - **1883** - Battle of Boschberg during the Mapoch War takes place.
  - **1896** - Sir Leander Starr Jameson and about 500 Rhodesian police surrender at Doornkop, near Krugersdorp, after the failure of the Jameson Raid.
  - **1904** - Draft dodger and radical socialist Benito Mussolini reports for conscription into the Italian Army under an amnesty.
  - **1905** - The Russians surrendered to the Japanese after the Battle of Port Arthur during the Russian-Japanese War.
  - **1933** - US Marines withdraw from Nicaragua after a 20 year occupation.
  - **1942** - During World War II in the Pacific, the Japanese captured the Philippines capital of Manila and the nearby air base at Cavite.
  - **1942** - German troops in Bardia surrender.
  - **1944** - New Guinea: Allies land on Saidor, isolating 12,000 Japanese troops.
  - **1945** - US Navy convoys depart Leyte to invade Luzon, while beating off Kamikaze.
  - **1945** - Admiral Sir Bertram Home Ramsay, mastermind of Dunkirk, dies at the age of 61.
  - **1967** - Operation Bolo: In the largest air combat action of the Vietnam War, 28 F-4C Phantoms engage 9 MiG-21s; US aircraft down 7-9 MiGs with no loss.
  - **1977** - Sergeant A.D.B. Bernardo from 31 Battalion SWATF was killed after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge from a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 32.
  - **1981** - Rifleman Jose Joao from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action in a landmine explosion during counter-insurgency operations in Southern Angola. He was 21.
  - **1984** - Rifleman Petrus Daniel from 101 Battalion SWATF accidentally drowned during a river crossing in the Operational Area. He was 22.
  - **1984** - Major-General Muhammadu Buhari is declared Head of State in Nigeria, following a military coup.
  - **1988** - Major General Bantu Holomisa, who became head of a military state in Transkei after a coup in December 1987, lifts martial law and reinstates part of the constitution.
  - **1988** - Right-wing guerrillas ambush a train near Mozambique's western border, killing at least twenty-two people and injuring seventy-one.
  - **2001** - Richard Winters, who led "The Band of Brothers", Company E, 506th Parachute Infantry, dies 19 days short of his 93rd birthday.

Ian Fleming



**3 January**

- **1926** - Mussolini assumes the Ministries of War, Navy, & Air.
- **1931** - Joseph "Papa" Joffre, Marshal of France, dies aged 78.
- **1935** - Ethiopia asks League of Nations to guarantee peace with Italy.
- **1941** - World War 2: North Africa. Australian troops take 5,000 prisoners during a major assault on Italian forces at Bardia.
- **1946** - An Englishman known during World War II as "Lord Haw Haw" (William Joyce) was hanged for treason in London. Joyce had broadcast Nazi propaganda via radio from Germany to Britain during the war.
- **1976** - 2nd Lieutenant Daryl Quinton Brandon from 5 SAI Died of Wounds during Ops Savannah while leading a patrol in a contact against a numerically superior enemy force in Central Angola approximately 30km North of Cela. He was 19.
- **1984** - Corporal Adelino Aurelio from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola. He was 29.
- **1989** - Lance Corporal Khazamula Obed Mathebula from 907 Special Services Company stationed at Arton Villa, Messina (Soutpanberg Military Area) was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during an

armed patrol between Masisi and Mabelikwe just outside the Western border of the Kruger National Park. He was 28.

- **1990** - Manuel Noriega, the deposed leader of Panama, surrendered to American authorities on charges of drug trafficking after spending 10 days hiding in the Vatican embassy following the U.S. invasion of Panama.
- **1993** - President George Bush and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the Start-II (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) Treaty, eliminating about two-thirds of each country's long range nuclear weapons.

**4 January**

- **1943** - Japanese GHQ orders the evacuation of Guadalcanal.
- **1944** - Operation Carpetbagger begins, the Allied campaign to airdrop arms and supplies to the Resistance in Europe.
- **1945** - Luzon: 3rd Fleet hit by kamikaze, USS 'Ommaney Bay' (CVE-79) is lost.
- **1951** - Chinese and North Korean forces capture Seoul.
- **1966** - Lieutenant-Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana deposes President Maurice Yaméogo of Burkina Faso in a military coup.
- **1976** - Four members of the SADF were killed during Ops Savannah when an Aérospatiale SA 330C Puma Helicopter from 19 Squad-

- ron that was flying Staff Officers between Mussende & Carriango in Central Angola, was mistaken for a hostile enemy helicopter and shot down by friendly 20mm anti-aircraft gun fire. The casualties were: Brigadier Johan Diederik Potgieter SM (40). Captain Ferdinand Immelman (30). Captain Constant Daniel de Wit (26). Sergeant George William Kellet (26).
- **1976** - Rifleman Pieter Willem Marais Snyman from 5 SAI, part of Battle Group Orange, Died of wounds received when an enemy hand grenade exploded in his position near Dondo in Central Angola during an attack by MPLA and Cuban Forces. He was evacuated by helicopter with other wounded, to Silva Porta, but succumbed to his wounds en-route. He was 18.
- **1978** - Two members from 1 and 5 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action during counter-insurgency operations in Mocambique as part of Operation Melon (SADF Name (Operation Acrobat). They were attached to "D" Squadron Rhodesian Special Air Service when their patrol walked into 30-man strong Frelimo ambush in the Gaza Province of Mozambique. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Cecil Ian Mennicke (24). Lance Corporal Christiaan Louis De Wilzem (20).
- **1984** - Six Members from

- 4 SAI were Killed in action when their Ratel 20, Call-sign 13B was knocked out near Cuvelai by a 100mm High Explosive Soviet T-55 tank projectile during Ops Askari. They were: Lance Corporal Wouter Theron Steenkamp (19). Rifleman George Alexander Lennox (19). Rifleman Brian Geen (18). Rifleman Hendrik Andre Heyns (22). Rifleman Daniel Abraham Louw (19). Rifleman Johannes Lodewicus Pretorius (18).
- **1981** - Corporal Gerald Christian Gildenhuys from the Technical Service Corps, was found gassed in his private motor vehicle in Bellville. No foul play was suspected. He was 27.
- **1984** - Two Members from 4 SAI, Ratel 12A (Platoon Two) were Killed in action during fierce close-quarter fighting while clearing enemy trenches near Cuvelai during Ops Askari.
- **1989** - Airman Johan Nel from the Test Flight Development Centre was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 18.
- **1989** - Second Gulf of Sidra Incident: two US Navy F-14s down two Libyan MiG-23s.
- **2010** - Tsutomu Yamaguchi, who survived both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, dies at the age of 93.

**5 January**

- **1919** - The German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbe-

- iterpartei) was founded by Anton Drexler in Munich.
- **1920** - Adolf Hitler became member No. 7 and changed the name in April of 1920 to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) commonly shortened to Nazi or Nazi Party.
- **1968** - Lt Clarence W. Cote becomes the first male officer in the Navy Nurse Corps.
- **1978** - Corporal Gert Jacobus Erasmus Goosen from 11 Technical Stores Depot was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident while on his way to Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. He was 27.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Pieter Swanepoel from the SWA SPES Bike Squad was Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland when his motorcycle detonated a boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine. He was 19.
- **1982** - Three members from 19 & 31 Squadron were Killed in Action when their Aérospatiale SA330H Puma was shot down by hostile small-arms fire not long after crossing the cut-line into Southern Angola en-route to Ongiva after dropping off troops. They were: Captain John Allen Robinson (27). Lieutenant Michael John Earp (26). Flight Sergeant Kenneth George Dalgleish

- (26).
- **1982** - The forty-five mercenaries alleged to have commandeered an Air India Boeing and forced it to fly to Durban, after attempting a coup in the Seychelles in November 1981, appear in magistrates' courts in five South African cities. They are all to go on trial in South Africa.
- **1983** - WO 1 Leonard Philip Rodney from the 1 Military Town Management Fire Department in Voortrekkerhoogte collapsed and died after suffering a fatal heart attack. He was 47.
- **1984** - Special Sergeant Benfried Markus from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1985** - Private Gregory Grant Swain from Northern Transvaal Medical Command was killed instant-



**William Joyce**



ly while on Guard Duty in Pretoria when he was shot through the heart as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 20.

- **1987** - Special Sergeant Uatuapeke Kandji from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 29
- **1988** - Lance Corporal John Adam Lotriet from 10 Armoured Car Squadron was killed in Northern Owamboland after being struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **1989** - The ANC agrees to close its military training base in Angola and in return South Africa must stop aid to the rebel Angolan UNITA movement, the Angolan president, Jose Eduardo dos Santos says in an interview.

### 6 January

- **1412** - Joan of Arc is born in France on this day.
- **1900** - The Battle of Waggon Hill (Platrand), south of Ladysmith, takes place, in which the Boer forces make an unsuccessful attempt to bring about the fall of Ladysmith.
- **1842** - Afghanistan: Anglo-Indian forces begin a disastrous retreat from Kabul; all but one of 4,500

troops & 12,000 camp followers will be lost or captured.

- **1940** - Germans massacre Poles in Poznan.
- **1943** - Papua: US and Australian troops mass for a final assault on Sanananda.
- **1961** - Nikita Khrushchev declares that the Soviet Union will back Third World "wars of national liberation".
- **1973** - Captain Rudolf Albert Hammann from Air Force Headquarters died in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. He was suffering from Cancer. He was 26.
- **1980** - Rifleman Jan Pieter Uys from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland, crushing him under the vehicle. He was 18.
- **1983** - Eight men from Group 34 were Killed in Action or later Died of Wounds when their Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a double boosted anti-tank mine near the Okangwati Military Base. The casualties were: Corporal Richard Alexander Ede (27). Rifleman Abraham Aboud (22). Rifleman Johannes Hermanus Diedericks (24). Rifleman Bartholomeus Jacobus Du Toit (26). Rifleman Floris Marthinus Griesel (27). Rifleman Johannes Lodewikus van der Merwe (26). Rifleman Gerald Pereira Da Silva (28) and Rifleman Peter Uzzel (26) succumbed to

wounds on the 7th and 8th January respectively.

- **1984** - Rifleman Raymond Frederick Hildebrandt from Special Forces Headquarters was killed instantly while on guard duty at the Headquarters when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge from an R4 assault rifle that a fellow soldier was in the process of making safe. He was 19.
- **1985** - Candidate Officer (Miss) Shirley Louise Mansfield from Air Force Base Pietersburg was accidentally killed in a civilian sky-diving incident in Pietersburg when her parachute failed to open during a Sunday practice jump. She was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman Valentinus Sikerete from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 24.
- **1986** - Special Constable Simon Phillipus 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 34.
- **1988** - General Bantu Holomisa, who ousted Stella Sigcau in a coup, appoints himself as the Transkei's military and government chief.

### 7 January

- **1903** - The Boer generals re-

port back in Pretoria after a campaign in Europe to procure aid for the reconstruction of the country after the Second Anglo-Boer War.

- **1941** - Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto proposes a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour.
- **1943** - Guadalcanal: US strength reaches 50,000, Japanese less than 25,000.
- **1945** - British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery tells a press conference that he won the Battle of the Bulge.
- **1953** - US President Truman announces development of the hydrogen bomb.
- **1973** - Private Johannes Jacobus Potgieter from 86 Technical Stores Depot died from a sport injury received during training while at Nyamandhlovu. He was 20.
- **1979** - Vietnamese forces capture Phnom Penh from the Khmer Rouge.
- **1982** - Candidate Officer Derek William Evans from Central Flying School Dunottar was killed when his Harvard AT-6 crashed between Endicott and Delmas while on a solo general flying training flight. He was 18.
- **1983** - Rifleman Gerald Pereira Da Silva from the Sandriver Commando attached to Group 34 Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being critically wounded in a landmine explosion near the Okangwati Military Base on 06 January

1983. He was 28.

- **1984** - Rifleman Josephat Johannes Levi from SWATF was killed in a shooting incident at Tsintsabis. He was 20.
- **1986** - Special Constable Abiud Kenahana 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.
- **1986** - The ANC in exile in Lusaka calls on its supporters to take the struggle into White areas.
- **1987** - The British army suggests that 600 troops returning from a tour in Kenya should take an AIDS test.
- **1989** - Emperor Hirohito of Japan, who ruled Japan during World War II died after a long illness. He had ruled for 62 years and was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Akihito.
- **1994** - Rifleman Dario David Marco Vervey from Natal Command was killed when he accidentally fell off the back of a moving Buffel Troop Carrier in Durban. He was 19.
- **2015** - Islamist terrorists attack the office of the magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' in Paris, killing 12 and wounding several others.

### 8 January

- **794** - First Viking raid on Britain, Lindisfarne Abbey is destroyed.
- **1806** - The Battle of Blaauwberg takes place, and part of the defending force capitulates two days later. Cape Governor Janssens and the rest of the force capitulated on 18 January, after which the second British occupation of the Cape started.
- **1815** - The Battle of New Orleans occurred as General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties. Both sides in this battle were unaware that peace had been declared two weeks earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812.
- **1918** - Amid the ongoing World War in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson proposed his Fourteen Points, calling for a reduction of arms, self determination for governments, and the creation of a League of Nations, all intended to serve as a ba-



**Bernard Montgomery**

sis for resolving the conflict and establishing a lasting peace in Europe.

- **1941** - Lord Robert Baden-Powell, British general during the siege of Mafeking during the Second Anglo-Boer War and founder of the Boy Scouts, dies in Nyeri, Kenya.
- **1943** - British turn control of Madagascar over to the Free French.
- **1966** - Two members from 17 Squadron together with a Portuguese Army Sergeant and two Portuguese Army Corporal's were killed when their Alouette III crashed east of Boane, near Lourenço Marques (Maputo), Mozambique while carrying out rescue operations at the Umbeluzi Pumping Station. The SADF casualties were: Captain Guillame Nel Shawe (43). Air Corporal Frederick Hermanus Moolman (23).
- **1973** - Two South African policemen are killed and five policemen (two South African and three Rhodesian) injured in an explosion near the Zambezi River in north-western Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).
- **1973** - Secret peace talks between US & North Vietnam resume near Paris.
- **1975** - Rifleman Adriaan Albertus Le Grange from 5 SAI was Reported Missing at Bagani while travelling as a passenger in a military vehicle that accidentally drove off the edge of the pont ferry and overturned into the

river. Despite an intensive search, his body was never recovered. He has no known grave and remains unaccounted for. He was 18.

- **1983** - Private Gerald Jeffrey Pieters from Air Force Base Swartkop suffered severe head injuries sustained in a private motor vehicle accident near Estcourt on 7 January 1983. He was admitted to the Wentworth Hospital in Durban where he sadly succumbed to his injuries on 08 January 1983. He was 23.
- **1983** - Rifleman Peter Uzzel from the Goudveld Commando attached to Group 34, Died of Wounds in 1 Military Hospital after being critically wounded in a landmine explosion near the Okangwati Military Base on 06 Jan 1983. He was 26.
- **1984** - South African security forces begin withdrawal from southern Angola.
- **1987** - Nine members from 101 Battalion Battalion Romeo Mike Team SWATF together with two attached personnel, were Killed in Action and 65 wounded during a contact with a numerically superior enemy force near Vinticet in Southern Angola. The eleven members Killed in Action were: Lieutenant Michael Cornelius Machiel Dreyer (24). Lance Corporal Emil Tamsen (18). Sapper Eugen Albert Meyer (19). Lance Corporal M. Fernando (24). Rifleman L. Alweendo (27). Rifleman P. Cerement (26). Rifleman E.

Leonard (24). Rifleman M. Ndjolonimu (23). Rifleman E. Nyawala (26). Rifleman S. Jacob (25). Rifleman J. Nangolo (23).

- **1989** - The ANC announces it will dismantle its guerrilla camps in Angola in support of peace.
- **1989** - Soviet Union promises to eliminate stockpiles of chemical weapons.
- **2007** - A United States military gunship launches air raids against hideouts of prominent members of the al-Qaeda network in southern Somalia.

### 9 January

- **1805** - Lord Nelson is entombed in the crypt of St. Paul's, London.
- **1861** - First Shot of the American Civil War: US steamer 'Star of the West' is fired on by South Carolina militia batteries off Charleston.
- **1916** - Gallipoli Campaign ends as the last allied troops evacuate the peninsula.
- **1936** - Garand M-1 semi-automatic rifle adopted by the US Army.
- **1941** - 6,000 Jews slaughtered in Bucharest, Romania.
- **1970** - France agrees to sell Mirage military jets to revolutionary regime in Libya.
- **1973** - Rhodesia closes its borders with Zambia to try to cut off Black liberation forces.
- **1978** - Lance Corporal Steven Leamy from Regiment

of civil war.

### 10 January

- **1806** - Signing of the second and final surrender of the Cape to the British under Gen. David Baird at Papendorp (presently Woodstock) after the defeat of Gen. J.W. Janssens.
- **1879** - British troops enter Zululand and the Anglo-Zulu war starts.
- **1879** - The 22-year-old Prince Imperial of France, Eugene Louis Jean Joseph Napoleon, who studied in England at the Royal Military Academy and joined the British forces, was killed in the Anglo-Zulu War.
- **1900** - Lord Frederick S. Roberts arrives at the Cape, replacing Sir Redvers Buller as commander-in-chief of the British forces in South Africa. Herbert H. Kitchenner as his chief-of-staff accompanies him.
- **1942** - Heinz Hitler (19), nephew of Adolf Hitler, is captured on the Eastern Front while serving as an NCO in the 23rd Artillery; dies in a Soviet POW camp.
- **1943** - Guadalcanal: U.S. forces begin a general offensive to eliminate Japanese.
- **1946** - The League of Nations dissolves after twenty-six years and is replaced by the United Nations, with its first meeting in London.
- **1965** - Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa, the Sudanese prime minister, admits to providing aid to Congolese rebels.
- **1972** - 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Daniel Burger from 6 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard, Serial No. 7034 crashed near George during a routine cross-country and tactical navigation flight. He was 22.
- **1976** - Rifleman Andries Jacobus Rautenbach from 8 SAI was killed when struck by a bullet as a result of an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle while he was stationed at Rundu. He was 18.
- **1981** - Mozambique and Zimbabwe sign a defence and security agreement under which an attack by SA on either country will be taken as an assault on both.
- **1982** - Rifleman Abel Albertus van Wyk from 1 Parachute Battalion was killed instantly after being struck

- **1978** - Rifleman Donald William Paterson from 1 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident at Bloemfontein. He was 21.
- **1979** - Two members from 24 Squadron were killed when their Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S-50 crashed at Roedtan near Marble Hall during a night training exercise. The crew were: Captain Kenneth Brian Duncan (25). Lieutenant Pierre Paul Wahl (21).
- **1980** - Rifleman Pedro Komengo from 102 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action when the vehicle in which he was travelling detonated a landmine in Northern Owamboland. He was 22.
- **1993** - Angolan government troops capture the headquarters of UNITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi in central Angola. Savimbi, however, escapes.
- **1996** - The National Crime Information Management Centre releases figures confirming South Africa's designation as the most violent country in the world outside a war zone.
- **2005** - After nearly three years of negotiations, Sudan's government and main rebel group sign the final agreement to the Naivasha, Kenya, peace accord to end more than twenty-one years



Jonas Savimbi

in the head by a bullet that resulted from an accidental discharge of a MAG light machine-gun during a training exercise outside Oshivello.

### 11 January

- **1904** - The Herero of German Southwest Africa revolt against colonial domination.
- **1944** - Krakow-Plaszow Concentration Camp established.
- **1970** - The 32-month-old secessionist Biafran regime collapses under onslaughts by Nigerian military.
- **1976** - Military coup in Ecuador ousts Dictator/President Guillermo Rodriguez Lara.
- **1979** - Rifleman Nicolaas Johannes Myburgh from the Botha Regiment was critically injured in a private motor vehicle accident and admitted to the Hospital in Messina with bleeding on the brain. He succumbed to his injuries not long after admission. He was 25.
- **1980** - Lance Corporal Derick James Evans from 61 Mechanised Battalion Group was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned while on patrol in the Etosha Pan Game Reserve. He was 18.
- **1984** - Two members from 32 Battalion were Killed in Action during a contact with enemy forces in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. They were: Rifleman Joao Dala (31). Rifleman Isaac

Malonga (35).

- **1989** - 140 nations agree to ban chemical weapons.
- **1991** - US Congress authorizes President G.H.W. Bush to undertake offensive operations against Iraq.

### 12 January

- **1893** - WW I flying ace and future Head of the Nazi Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, is born on this day.
- **1915** - South African forces invade German South-West Africa at Ramansdrift.
- **1940** - Daniël Hermanus (Dan) Pienaar is appointed to command the First South African Infantry Brigade.
- **1944** - Churchill and de Gaulle confer in Marrakech.
- **1964** - One month after independence, a bloody uprising by the black majority ousts the Arab ruling minority of Zanzibar, installing a government that shortly unites with Tanganyika to form Tanzania.
- **1965** - Lieutenant Richard Johannes Oltman from 5 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard crashed near Bulwer during a night cross country flight. He was 30.
- **1974** - Corporal Willem Jacobus Reynolds from 2 SAI was accidentally killed at Ondangwa when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He was 19.
- **1979** - Two members from 5 SAI, both attached to 54

Battalion were Killed in Action when their Buffel Troop Carrier detonated two Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mines that were boosted with a Soviet TM-57 Anti-Tank Mine while they were traveling from Eenhana to Ondangwa. The casualties were: Rifleman Charles Deon Bekker (19). Rifleman Christo Gerhardus Krog (20).

- **1981** - Lance Corporal Benjamin Karl Steenkamp from the Personnel Service Corps attached to Southern Cape Command Headquarters was killed in a military vehicle accident near Peddie in the Eastern Cape. He was 18.
- **1987** - Prince Edward resigns from the Royal Marines.
- **1988** - Gunner Kevin Alan Roberts from the Artillery School in Potchefstroom was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident between Vereeniging and Johannesburg. He was 27.
- **1988** - Airman Stefan Oliver Jedlika from 3 Satellite Radar Station at Klippan, Mafeking, died after suffering a cerebral haemorrhage. He was 19.
- **1992** - Algerian government cancels second round of voting in parliamentary elections that an Islamic party looks set to win. The Islamists take to arms, and ten thousands of Algerians die in the next few years.
- **2008** - Bill Stone, Royal

Navy veteran, last surviving Briton to have served in both world wars, dies at 108.

### 13 January

- **1915** - South African troops occupy Swakopmund, German South-West Africa.
- **1935** - The population of the Saar region bordering France and Germany voted for incorporation into Hitler's Reich.
- **1943** - General Philippe Leclerc's Free French troops merge with the British army under the command of Montgomery.
- **1943** - Hitler declares Germany must wage "Total War".
- **1961** - Fighting erupts between UN troops and supporters of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo.
- **1963** - Sgt Gnassingbe Eyadema murders West African Republic of Togo's President Sylvanus Olympio in a military coup.
- **1964** - Two members from 8 Squadron were killed when their AT-6 Harvard crashed near Bloemfontein. They were: 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Theodorus Brits (19). Air Mechanic Louis Johannes Lodewyk Rothman (20).
- **1968** - Beginning of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam.
- **1972** - A group of junior officers overthrows civilian government of Ghana in West Africa.
- **1979** - A clash between police and suspected guerrillas

is reported near the Botswana border. Botswana denies that it is being used as a springboard for attacks on his neighbours.

- **1982** - Corporal Daniel Jacobus Steenkamp from 400 Airfield Maintenance Unit (SAAF) was killed in a Military Vehicle accident in Pretoria. He was 25.
- **1986** - Thomas Chilunku was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 25.
- **1986** - Bloody coup overthrows government of South Yemen.
- **1987** - Airman Craig Anthony Lucarne from 508 SAAF Security Squadron, Air Force Base Durban, was killed when his Rhino Armoured Personnel Carrier overturned on the N3 near Louis Botha Airport in Durban. He was 19.

### 14 January

- **1867** - Alfred Nobel makes the first public demonstration of dynamite.
- **1942** - Malaya: Japanese capture Malacca.
- **1943** - President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at Casablanca in Morocco to work on strategy during World War II.

- **1967** - New York Times reports the Army is conducting secret germ warfare experiments on the public.
- **1969** - Fire aboard USS 'Enterprise' (CVN-65), off Vietnam, 28 die, 344 injured.
- **1971** - Britain proposes the sale of arms to South Africa.
- **1978** - Corporal Alan Gordon-Bennet from Northern Transvaal Command was killed in a military vehicle accident at Nelspruit. He was 21.
- **1981** - Rifleman C. Cabonga from 32 Battalion who was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 25.

### 15 January

- **1926** - John Harling, the last known veteran of the "Charge of the Light Brigade", dies aged 93.
- **1942** - Japanese Southern Army invades Burma from



**Dan Pienaar**

- Thailand.
- **1945** - Red Army liberates the Krakow-Plaszow concentration camp.
- **1949** - Mao's Red army captures Tientsin.
- **1966** - Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa is killed in Nigeria's first military coup.
- **1973** - US President Nixon suspends all US offensive action over North Vietnam.
- **1981** - Two members from 1 Parachute Battalion were Killed in Action during a fierce contact with a numerically superior FAPLA and PLAN force while supporting 32 Battalion elements during the Battle of Cuamato in Southern Angola. They were: Sergeant Louis Theodorus Hermanus Wesels (22). Rifleman Leonard Truter (22).
- **1982** - Rifleman Faustinus Mushanambango from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insurgents. He was 25.
- **1984** - Gunner Gilderoy Kruger from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment Died of Wounds accidentally sustained at Oshivello. He was 18.
- **1986** - A military coup deposes the Lesotho Government.
- **1987** - Two members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a contact with PLAN insur-

gents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Constable Mathais Fesango (27). Special Constable Shivelekeni Dhilimbulukweni (29).

### 16 January

- **1900** - British troops under General Neville Lyttelton and General Charles Warren cross the Tugela River.
- **1904** - Herero Revolt: Gobabis is besieged. A German company from Outjo is ambushed at Okanjande near present-day Otjiwarongo.
- **1941** - The US War Department forms a squadron for black aviation cadets.
- **1944** - General Eisenhower takes command of Operation Overlord.
- **1951** - Viet Minh offensive at Hanoi.
- **1963** - Khrushchev claims to have a 100-megaton nuclear bomb.
- **1966** - Nigerian Army chief, General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, briefly takes power in a military coup. Over fifty government officials are killed, including the existing prime minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.
- **1968** - 2nd Lieutenant Brian John Poorter from 5 Squadron was killed when his AT-6 Harvard, Serial No 7127 suffered engine failure while on a routine low level training flight and crashed into trees. He was 19.
- **1970** - Col Kadhaffi becomes premier of Libya.
- **1976** - Trooper Trevor Don-

- ald Bodhill from 2 Special Service Battalion was killed while traveling along the Chitado road in Southern Angola to set up a vehicle ambush position. He was 19.
- **1977** - Mercenaries mount an unsuccessful military coup in Benin.
- **1983** - Signaler Joel Johanne Schutte from the South West Africa Command Signal Unit SWATF was killed in a private motorcycle accident in Windhoek. He was 19.
- **1986** - Sergeant John Christopher van Graan from the Far North Command Provost Unit was accidentally killed near Messina while attempting to recover a broken-down vehicle. He was 26.
- **1988** - Rifleman Manuel Thomas from 32 Battalion was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in the Caprivi Strip. He was 37.
- **1991** - The war against Iraq began as Allied aircraft conducted a major raid against Iraqi air defenses. The air raid on Baghdad was broadcast live to a global audience by CNN correspondents as operation Desert Shield became Desert Storm.
- **1992** - The twelve-year civil war in El Salvador ended with the signing of a peace treaty in Mexico City. The conflict had claimed over 75,000 lives.
- **2014** - Hiroo Onoda, Japanese Army officer who did not surrender until 1974, on his 52nd birthday. dies at the

age of 91.

### 17 January

- **1837** - The Voortrekkers under Hendrik Potgieter and Gerrit Maritz defeat the Ndebele under Mzilikazi at Mosega, near the present Zeerust. The Ndebele flee north and the majority cross the Limpopo River.
- **1879** - On the afternoon of 17 January 1879 the Zulu king Cetshwayo (Cetewayo) addresses 20,000 of his warriors at the great military kraal of Nodwengu: "I am sending you out against the Whites, who have invaded Zululand and driven away our cattle. You are to go against the column at Rorke's Drift and drive it back into Natal."
- **1885** - In the desperate hand to hand Battle of Abu Klea, the British under General Sir Herbert Stewart repulse the Sudanese Camel Corp of 10,000 under Command of Mohammed Ahmed.
- **1944** - HM Corvette 'Violet' sinks 'U-641' in Atlantic Ocean.
- **1945** - During World War II, Warsaw, Poland, was liberated by Soviet Russian troops.
- **1951** - China refuses cease fire in Korea.
- **1966** - A Hydrogen bomb accident occurred over Palomares, Spain, as an American B-52 jet collided with its refueling plane. Eight crewmen were killed and the bomber then released its

H-bomb into the Atlantic.

- **1977** - Rifleman Johannes Jesajus Botha from Springs Commando was critically wounded during July 1976 while stationed at Katima Mulilo when he was struck in the abdomen by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldier's rifle. He succumbed to his wounds nearly six months later on 17 January 1977 after complications set in. He was 21.
- **1977** - Rifleman Edward Leslie Mayo from 5 SAI was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier while preparing an ambush east of the Kwando River. He was 19.
- **1985** - Special Constable Shopeke Hatutale from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Unit: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 32.
- **1988** - Rifleman Dumisani Ngubani from 121 Battalion was killed in a military vehicle accident in Durban. He was 24.
- **1990** - Rifleman Johan Bush from the 2nd Battalion South African Cape Corps was killed in a military vehicle accident between Bray

and Mosita. He was 17.

- **1991** - Operation Desert Storm: Coalition air offensive is unleashed over Iraq, US pilot Jeffrey Zahn is shot down and captured.

### 18 January

- **1900** - Mafeking siege: Two Black cattle-herds are captured and summarily executed at Mafeking by burghers, in accordance with a council of war decision on cattle-rustlers. President Kruger immediately repudiates this decision and orders this practice to cease forthwith.
- **1900** - The 104mm field-gun known as 'Long Cecil' is test fired for the first time.
- **1902** - Commandant Gideon Scheepers is executed by a firing squad near Graaff-Reinet after being found guilty by a British military court on charges of murder, arson and demolishing trains during the South African War.
- **1904** - The German bat-



Hiroo Onoda

tleship "Habicht" lands at Swakopmund, bringing fresh German troops who proceed into the interior under the command of Second Lieutenant Gygas.

- **1919** - Versailles Peace Conference begins.
- **1943** - Warsaw Ghetto uprising begins.
- **1960** - US & Japan sign joint defence treaty.
- **1976** - 2nd Lieutenant Andries Muller from the School of Armour Died of Wounds during a contact with enemy forces during Ops Savannah. He was 19.
- **1978** - Rifleman Antonio Cassamano from 32 Battalion was Killed in Action during a contact with the enemy forces when his patrol was ambushed at a waterhole near Omalapapa in Southern Angola. He was 24.
- **1979** - Corporal Fritz August Ferreira from 3 SAI was killed when he accidentally electrocuted himself while stationed at Ondangwa. He was 18.
- **1980** - Two members from the 2 SAI Support Company Platoon were Killed in Action or Died of Wounds when their patrol was ambushed by a numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents just North of the Cut-line. They were: Lance Corporal Phillipus Rudolf Maritz (19). Rifleman Benjamin Arthur Froneman (19).
- **1984** - Corporal Jose Antonio from 32 Battalion suf-

fered a fatal heart attack and died while stationed at Buf-falo Base. He was 32.

- **1991** - Iraq launches SCUD missiles against Israel.

### 19 January

- **1807** - US Civil War Confederate General Robert E. Lee was born on this day.
- **1900** - Mafeking siege: General J.P. Snyman sends a starving group of Black women, who have been encouraged by the British to attempt a breakout, back under a White flag. Colonel Baden-Powell objects and threatens to commence hostilities if they should advance further.
- **1915** - Germans begin Zeppelin raids on Great Britain, bombing Great Yarmouth & King's Lynn. 20 people are killed.
- **1940** - General J.B.M. Hertzog, as leader of the Opposition, announces he will introduce a motion calling on the Union of South Africa to make a separate peace treaty with Germany.
- **1941** - The 1st SA Division enters Abyssinia from the south.
- **1941** - Kassala, on the Sudan-Eritrean border, is retaken by the British as Major General William Platt begins an offensive against Italian troops in Eritrea.
- **1943** - Guadalcanal: U.S. destroyers shell Japanese positions.
- **1964** - Major Jean de Wet

from 1 Squadron died as a result of a shooting incident at his home. He was 32.

- **1971** - Air Mechanic Jean le Roux from 35 Squadron was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Bellville. He was 20.
- **1979** - Private Martin Eugene Weideman from the Air Force Gymnasium died of natural causes in 1 Military Hospital. He was 19.
- **1982** - Rifleman Fernando José Gaspar De Sousa from 3 Parachute Battalion was critically injured on 5 January 1982 when he was accidentally driven over by a Buffel Troop Carrier at Ondangwa. Evacuated to 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria, he succumbed to his injuries on 19 January 1982. He was 28.
- **1982** - Two members from 4 SAI were Killed in Action near Etale Base. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Johannes Gerhardus Reyneke (19). Rifleman Dudley Nel (19).
- **1982** - Flight Sergeant John Williams from 15 Squadron was killed when his Alouette III helicopter crashed while conducting dagga operations in conjunction with the South African Police who were destroying dagga plantations in the Greytown and Tugela Ferry area. He was 29.
- **1983** - Former Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was arrested in Bolivia, South America.

- **1988** - Rifleman Johannes Petrus Barnard from 1 SAI was killed in action during Ops Hooper. He was 18.

### 20 January

- **1835** - Xhosa warriors overrun the Eastern Cape frontier.
- **1879** - British troops under Lord Chelmsford pitch their camp on the slopes of Isandhlawana, where Zulu warriors attack them two days later.
- **1900** - In the Battle of Tabanyama, Natal front, a group of Indian stretcher bearers, among whom the young Durban attorney Mohandas Ghandi, becomes intermingled with fighting troops. Six of them are killed and twelve wounded in the crossfire. The battle continued two more days.
- **1942** - During the Holocaust, Reinhard Heydrich, Himmler's second in command of the SS, convened the Wannsee Conference in Berlin with 15 top Nazi bureaucrats to coordinate the Final Solution (Endlösung) in which the Nazis would attempt to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe, an estimated 11 million persons.
- **1944** - Burma: Allies prepare major offensive to open the "Burma Road".
- **1944** - The Royal Air Force drops 2,500 tons of bombs on Berlin.
- **1951** - Fort Klapperkop and Fort Skanskop, Pretoria, are

opened to the public.

- **1964** - Army mutiny in Tanganyika over pay is put down with British assistance.
- **1965** - It is reported in London that the British government will not issue a permit for the export of the ground-to-air missiles South Africa requires.
- **1979** - Trooper Gregory Ernst Raaff from 1 Special Service Battalion died of injuries at Oshakati Hospital after being accidentally crushed between two vehicles at Ruacana. He was 20.
- **1981** - Corporal Donald Brooks from 3 SAI Died of Wounds received in action on 03 December 1980 when his company was based at Ondangwa. He was 19.
- **1982** - Three members from 1 Special Service Battalion, two of them twin brothers, were Killed in Action in Northern Owamboland during Ops Handsak while working with elements of 32 Battalion. The casualties were: Lance Corporal Ockert Petrus Kruger (18). Lance Corporal Pieter Kruger (18). Trooper Herman Fourie (19).
- **1983** - Two members from the Soutpansberg Military Area were Killed in a military vehicle accident on the Malala Drift Road about

46km from Messina. They were: Lance Corporal Japie Louis Nel (20). Rifleman Lovemore Phakati (22).

- **1986** - Rifleman R.M. Kröhne from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1987** - Rifleman P Rutjindo from 102 Battalion SWATF died in Hospital from Malaria contracted during operations in Southern Angola. He was 20.
- **1989** - Two members from Regiment Hillcrest were killed in a military vehicle accident. They were: Sergeant Anton Bela van der Merwe (23). Corporal Cornelius Johannes Stroebel (27).
- **1991** - During an Iraqi SCUD attack on Israel, US Patriot missiles are used for the first time, with mixed success.

### 21 January

- **1824** - American Civil War Confederate Army Gener-



**Reinhard Heydrich**

al "Stonewall" Jackson was born on this day.

- **1942** - Rommel begins a new offensive against the Allies in North Africa, hoping to push them back to the east.
- **1943** - Soviet forces recapture Worosjilowsk.
- **1945** - The Red Army destroys the German Tannenberg monument in East Prussia.
- **1954** - The USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered submarine, was launched at Groton, Connecticut.
- **1968** - B-52 bomber with nuclear weapons crashes in Greenland.
- **1968** - Battle of Khe Sanh begins.
- **1977** - Two members from 3 SAI and one member from 13 Maintenance Unit were killed in a military vehicle accident at Tobias. They were: Lance Corporal Leon Steyn (19). Rifleman Jacobus Marais (19). Rifleman Ettienne Pieter van der Westhuizen (20).
- **1977** - Private Stephen Trevor Parvess from 1 Maintenance Unit Collapsed and died from heat exhaustion during Basic Training at Potchefstroom. He was 18.
- **1978** - Corporal Andre van den Boogaard from the SADF Equestrian Centre was killed in a military vehicle accident on the Ventersdorp Road. He was 18,
- **1983** - Lieutenant Frederick Christiaan van Zyl from 8

SAI accidentally drowned in the Orange River while trying to assist three soldiers who had got into difficulties while swimming. He was 21.

- **1986** - Rifleman Joshua Isaac Kuvari from 102 Battalion SWATF was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in Northern Owamboland. He was 20.
- **1988** - According to Jane's Defence Weekly, Armscor, the South African armaments producer, is the country's largest single exporter. Armscor sales to twenty-three countries in 1987 amounted to R1,8-billion.
- **1988** - According to reports from Angola, the strategic town of Cuito Cuanavale is about to fall to an onslaught by South African and UNITA forces. The reports say South African and Cuban troops have clashed for the first time in twelve years.

## 22 January

- **1879** - Cetewayo's impi wipe out British troops at Isandhlwana in one of the worst disasters in British military history, stabbing 1272 soldiers to death. The impi of the Zulu king then descend on the trading post at Rorke's Drift. About 4000 Zulus attack the fortified buildings held by 130 men of the 24th regiment at about 4.30 p.m. At the end of the attack at about 4 a.m. early the next morning, more than 350 Zulus are killed,

while the defenders' casualties amount to seventeen dead and ten wounded. A record eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded to the defenders of Rorke's Drift.

- **1879** - The British (no 1) supply column moving up the North Coast towards Eshowe is attacked by about 5000 Zulus as they cross the Nyezane River. The attack is beaten off south of Eshowe, north of the Nyezane river.
- **1941** - The Australian 6th Division captures Tobruk from the Italians.
- **1943** - Axis forces pull out of Tripoli and head back towards Tunisia.
- **1943** - During World War II in the Pacific, Japanese resistance ended in New Guinea, resulting in the first land victory of the war for Allied forces.
- **1944** - Operation Shingle: Allies land at Anzio.
- **1957** - Israeli forces withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula.
- **1981** - Rifleman Marthinus Christoffel Barnard from Infantry School suffered a fatal heart attack and died at Oudtshoorn while lifting weights in the Infantry School gymnasium. He was 21.
- **1983** - Leading Marine Hendrik Jacobus Kemp from 111 Harbour Protection Unit, South African Marine Corps was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a double boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese

mine in Southern Angola near the Cut-line. He was 20.

- **1983** - Staff Sergeant Hermanus Jacobus Petrus Barkhuizen from the Technical Service Corps died in 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria after suffering a fatal heart attack at his Unit. He was 33.
- **1984** - Corporal Terence van den Dool from 3 SAI was Reported Missing while swimming with his friends at Hippo Pools, Ruacana. For administrative purposes, he was officially declared dead in 1986. He was 19.
- **1987** - Two members from 1 SWA Engineer Regiment SWATF were Killed in Action when their Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a double boosted Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine on the Eupupa Road in Southern Angola. They were: Corporal Jose Miguel Rodrigues Carreira (20). Lance Corporal Nicolaas Willem Barnard (20).
- **2005** - Carlo Orelli, last Italian combat veteran to have served throughout WW I, dies at the age of 110.

## 23 January

- **1900** - Battle of Spion Kop: Boers defeat the British; Winston Churchill & Mohandas Gandhi are both present, but do not meet.
- **1932** - El Salvador's army kills 4,000 protesting farmers
- **1935** - Abyssinian tribesmen in Somaliland massacre

French colonial troops.

- **1903** - Colonel Arthur Alfred Lynch is found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death for leading the "Irish Commando" against British forces in the South African War. The death sentence is commuted to life imprisonment on 24th January 1904.
- **1943** - In North Africa, British forces under General Bernard Montgomery captured Tripoli in Libya.
- **1943** - Casablanca Conference: FDR & Churchill agree on the "unconditional surrender" of the Axis.
- **1962** - Kim Philby, long-term spy in Britain, defects to the USSR.
- **1968** - The American ship USS Pueblo was seized by North Koreans in the Sea of Japan amid claims the Navy ship was spying. The ship was confiscated and its crew held in captivity until December, with one fatality.
- **1971** - After a compromise is reached at a Commonwealth Conference, Britain is allowed to sell weapons to South Africa, though African leaders oppose the step.
- **1981** - Rifleman Aubrey John Botha from 11 Commando Regiment died from gunshot wounds accidentally sustained while on special duty at Umtata. He was 19.
- **1981** - Rifleman Dieter Otto Haase from the South West

Africa Infantry Battalion SWATF was killed in a private motor vehicle accident. He was 20.

- **1982** - Private (Miss) Karen Mona van Rensburg from the Administrative Service Corps was killed in a private motor vehicle accident in Voortrekkerhoogte while on official duty. She was 19.
- **1984** - Corporal Johannes Hendrik Roets from 4SAI was Killed in Action when his Buffel Troop Carrier detonated a landmine at Techamutete in Southern Angola during Ops Askari. He was 19.
- **1986** - Rifleman Deon Francis Du Toit from 3 SAI was killed in a military vehicle accident. He was 19.
- **1987** - Corporal Marthinus Petrus van Loggerenberg from 4 SAI died from injuries received when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in the Kabokweni Township near Nelspruit during anti-riot patrol duties. He was 19.
- **1988** - Four members from

**Kim Philby**



54 Battalion were Killed in Action during a fierce engagement with a numerically superior force of FAPLA and SWAPO/PLAN troops in South Eastern Angola. The casualties were: Corporal Dawid Petersen (22). Rifleman Joseph Brian Harker (25). Rifleman Phillip Dawid Matroos (22). Rifleman Alfred Snyders (23).

- **1989** - Seaman (Marine) P. Thangavalu from the South African Marines was killed instantly as a result of a gunshot wound to the head, accidentally self-inflicted shortly after he returned to the Marine Base at Wenela after completing a Patrol. He was 19.
- **1991** - Rifleman Fanie Johan Jeneke from the South African Cape Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Scottburgh. He was 18.

## 24 January

- **1891** - Capain. Kurt von Francois arrives as leader of a small German regiment in South West Africa to suppress the Herero rebellion.
- **1891** - Walter Model, German Field Marshal, is born on this day.
- **1900** - The British, under General Warren, surrenders to General Botha at Spioenkop. At least 1,000 British and sixty Boer soldiers die in this battle.
- **1901** - Emily Hobhouse, English nurse who visited

the Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics during the South African War, reports that she found 2,000 women and children in shocking circumstances in the concentration camp at Bloemfontein.

- **1915** - Battle of Dogger Bank: Royal Navy defeats the Germans in the North Sea.
- **1923** - The Italian Air Force was formed as the Regia Aerea.
- **1941** - British troops invade Italian East Africa.
- **1961** - A B-52 breaks up over the North Carolina coast, losing two H-bombs, one of which is still missing.
- **1964** - British troops are flown in to Uganda to suppress an army mutiny over low pay.
- **1965** - Winston Spencer Churchill, British Prime Minister during World War II, dies at the age of 88.
- **1978** - Private Cornelius Jacobus Borchardt from the Administrative Service Corps was killed in a military vehicle accident, at Otjiwarongo. He was 23.
- **1979** - Rifleman Gerald Wayne Williams from 6 SAI accidentally drowned during a training exercise at the Base. He was 22.
- **1981** - Trooper Eugene Margo Nel from 4 Vehicle Reserve Park was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned at Kroonstad. He was 19.
- **1984** - Corporal Dawid

Lambert van Niekerk from Regiment De Wet was killed instantly after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm while in the field. He was 25.

- **1985** - Corporal Jacobus Petrus Hall from 1 Parachute Battalion was accidentally shot dead by a fellow soldier who was on guard duty while the patrol was in a TB for the night North of Okankolo. He was 19.
- **1985** - Rifleman Saul Frederick de Kock from the South African Cape Corps was killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned during a follow-up operation against SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Southern Angola. He was 26.
- **1985** - Rifleman J.H. Filipus from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN Insurgents. He was 22.
- **1987** - Rifleman William Viljoen from 8 SAI was accidentally killed when his Buffel Troop Carrier overturned after losing a front wheel 3km South of Ondangwa. He was thrown out of the vehicle which then rolled over him. He was 20.
- **1988** - Sergeant Ockert Barendse from the School of Artillery accidentally drowned in Potchefstroom. He was 28.
- **1986** - Guerrillas advance into Ugandan capital of Kampala as army opposition crumbles, pushing mil-

itary government to edge of collapse.

- **1991** - US Navy helicopters liberate Kuwaiti offshore oil rigs from the Iraqis.
- **1993** - Three Somalis are killed and at least five are wounded in clashes with troops of a US-led coalition trying to safeguard efforts to feed the country's starving.

## 25 January

- **1916** - Montenegro surrenders to Austria-Hungary.
- **1919** - At the end of the war, the Paris Peace Conference accepts the proposal to create the League of Nations. The League was eventually established by Part I of the Treaty of Versailles, which was signed on 28 June 1919.
- **1940** - Nazis decree the establishment of a Jewish ghetto in Lodz Poland.
- **1943** - Guadalcanal: Japanese in full retreat, closely pursued by U.S. forces.
- **1945** - Audie Murphy earns the Medal of Honour.
- **1951** - UN begins counter offensive in Korea.
- **1961** - Military coup in El Salvador.
- **1971** - General Idi Amin Dada takes power in Uganda by military coup while the existing president, Milton Obote, is at a Commonwealth meeting in Singapore.
- **1980** - Three MK operatives entered the Volkskas Bank in Silverton (Silverton Bank Siege) and took 25 members

of Staff and customers hostage. In the ensuing gun battle with Security Police, two civilians were killed, 5 civilians were wounded and all three MK Operatives were shot dead.

- **1981** - Rifleman Stephen Stuart Whittaker from 3 SAI was Reported Missing while hitch hiking back to his Unit in Potchefstroom. He was picked up by a motorist, Mr Pieter Du Plessis and they stopped at the Laingsburg bridge for a travel break. Unfortunately, it was that time when the river came down in flood and they were both washed away. Their bodies were never located and they remain unaccounted for. For administrative, both men were officially declared dead by Judge C.F.W. van Zyl on 03 June 1981. He was 18.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Patrick Louis Walsh from the Air Force Gymnasium was killed instantly when he was struck by a bullet resulting from an accidental discharge of a fellow soldiers rifle during musketry training at Haakdoringlaagte. He was 20.
- **1983** - Two members from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K Division (Koevoet) were Killed in Action during a Contact with SWAPO/

PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Constable T. Matais (33). Special Constable K. Tjimbua (31).

- **1987** - Four members from 101 Battalion SWATF were Killed in Action during a fierce engagement with SWAPO/PLAN and FAPLA forces in Southern Angola. During the attack on Mongua, friendly mortar fire fell short of the target and landed on their position. They were: Sergeant Johan Martin (35) Corporal H Alugodhi (24). Rifleman W Shitongeni (26). Rifleman G Shilulu (23).
- **1987** - Sapper T. Seibib from 1 South West Africa Engineer Regiment was Killed in Action in a Landmine explosion in the Kaokoveld. He was 24.
- **1988** - Airman John Hendri Flemming from the Air Force Gymnasium collapsed and died after experiencing respiratory and heart fail-



Winston Churchill

ure during physical training exercises at the Air Force Gymnasium. He was 18.

**26 January**

- **1880** - General Douglas MacArthur was born on this day.
- **1885** - The Mahdist forces take Khartoum in Sudan after a nine-month siege and slaughter most inhabitants and the British garrison, including General Gordon.
- **1901** - General Christiaan de Wet, accompanied by President M.T. Steyn, starts his journey at Doornberg, near Winburg, to invade the Cape Colony for the second time.
- **1902** - General Ben Viljoen and seven men are ambushed and captured by the British. His pocket book saves his life by warding off a bullet and preventing it to strike his chest.
- **1934** - Nazi Germany and Poland sign ten year non-aggression pact.
- **1939** - Franco's Spanish Nationalists capture Barcelona.
- **1943** - Nazis began using Hitler Youths to operate anti-aircraft batteries in Germany following heavy Allied bombing of Berlin and other cities.
- **1950** - India becomes a republic within the British Commonwealth, converts the Victoria Cross to the Param Vir Chakra, 14 of the 21 awarded have been posthumous.

- **1952** - Egypt is placed under martial law in response to wide-spread riots against the British.
- **1977** - Rifleman Sabino Luciano from 32 Battalion was killed in a shooting incident in the residential camp at Buffalo. He was 25.
- **1977** - Rifleman Isak Nel Myburgh from 6 SAI Died of Wounds received in Northern Owamboland. He was 19.
- **1978** - Rifleman Petrus Wilhelmus Prinsloo from Middelburg Commando accidentally drowned in the Assegai River at Amsterdam. He was 20.
- **1980** - 2nd Lieutenant Johannes Lodewicus Buys from 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was killed in a Military Vehicle accident near Grootfontein. He was 22.
- **1980** - Rifleman Hendrik Christoffel Janse van Rensburg from SWA SPES was accidentally shot dead during the night at their TB by a guard who mistook him for a SWAPO/PLAN insurgent. He was 18.
- **1981** - Lance Corporal Jacobus Adriaan Smuts Louw from 1 SAI was killed instantly when he detonated a booby-trapped Yugoslavian TMA-3 Cheese Mine while returning from a patrol on the Cut-line. He was 19.
- **1983** - At a special press conference it is announced that a senior South African

naval officer, commanding Simon's Town dockyard, Commodore Dieter Gerhardt and his wife, have been detained for questioning in connection with alleged espionage.

- **1986** - Two Members from 5 SAI were killed when their Buffel Troop Carrier overturned in wet weather near Nkurenkuru. The casualties were: Corporal Jan Daniel Schmidt (23). Rifleman Johannes Gerhardus Janse van Rensburg (18).
- **1986** - The National Resistance Army takes over the Ugandan capital of Kampala.
- **1991** - Rebels overrun the Somalian capital of Mogadishu.
- **1992** - Russia announces it will no longer target US cities with nuclear weapons.
- **1994** - Romania became the first former Cold War foe to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

**27 January**

- **1859** - German Kaiser Wilhelm II was born on this day.
- **1915** - US Marines begin occupation of Haiti.
- **1943** - SA prime minister, General Jan Smuts, asks parliament's approval to send troops to Europe, contrary to his promise in 1939 that SA troops would only fight in Africa.
- **1943** - The U.S. 8th Air

Force conducted the first all-American bombing raid on Germany as 55 bombers targeted Wilhelmshaven, losing three planes while claiming to have shot down 22 German fighters. The success of this first mission encouraged U.S. military planners to begin regular daylight bombing raids, which eventually resulted in high casualty rates for the American crewmen involved.

- **1944** - Russian Army General Govorov announced the lifting of the Nazi blockade of Leningrad. During the 900-day siege, an estimated one million Russian civilians inside the city died of disease, starvation and relentless German shelling.
- **1944** - U.S. issues a report on "The Bataan Death March".
- **1945** - The Russian Army liberated Auschwitz death camp near Krakow in Poland, where the Nazis had systematically murdered an estimated 2,000,000 persons, including 1,500,000 Jews.
- **1967** - Treaty signed banning military use of nuclear weapons in space.
- **1973** - U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended as North Vietnamese and American representatives signed an agreement in Paris.
- **1984** - Corporal Johannes Adam De Beer from 8 SAI was Killed in Action after

stepping on an enemy Anti-Personnel Mine while on Patrol in Southern Angola. He was 19.

- **1984** - Special Constable Paulino Kangombe 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 32.
- **1991** - President Mohamed Siad Barre of Somalia flees the capital, Mogadishu, as a coalition of rebels seize power. The country plunges into virtual anarchy.
- **1996** - Niger's first democratically elected president, Mahamane Ousmane, is ousted in a coup and army Colonel Barre Mainassara Ibrahim takes over as head of state.
- **2002** - Munitions at an army base in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, explode, sending fireballs and shrapnel into the air and forcing hundreds of area residents to flee. As many as 600 people drown in a canal that blocked their way to safety.

**28 January**

- **1871** - The Franco-Prussian War ended as Paris surrendered to the Germans after a four month siege.

- **1871** - The British forces are defeated and 83 British soldiers under Sir George Colley are killed and 111 wounded in the battle of Laings Nek in the Anglo-Transvaal War, caused by the refusal of the Transvaal Boers to submit to British authority as proclaimed by Shepstone in 1877.
- **1885** - British relief force reaches Khartoum, and the Sudan is evacuated.
- **1916** - German colony of Cameroon surrenders to Britain & France.
- **1932** - Japanese capture Shanghai.
- **1942** - Five power stations are blown up by pro-Axis saboteurs in an attempt to destabilise the Rand gold mines.
- **1942** - German troops capture Benghazi, Libya.
- **1944** - RAF puts 683 bombers over Berlin.
- **1970** - Cairo suburbs are attacked by Israeli jet fighters.
- **1976** - Rifleman Chris Kruger Moorcroft from 1 Parachute Battalion died from

Jan Smuts





bronchial pneumonia and renal failure in 3 Military Hospital, Bloemfontein. He was 20.

- **1977** - Sergeant Abraham Jacobus Smith from 32 Battalion died from injuries received when a private Piper PA28 Cherokee aircraft in which he was travelling as a passenger, crashed at Grootfontein. He was 34.
- **1978** - Rifleman Domingos Augusto from 32 Battalion was killed instantly from a gunshot wound accidentally self-inflicted during operations in Southern Angola. He was 35.
- **1978** - Corporal Manuel Antonio Infante Ganhão from 1 Reconnaissance Regiment was Killed in Action during an engagement with FRELIMO Troops at a railway siding south of Mapai in Gaza Province, Moçambique during Operation Melon (SADF Name Operation Acrobat). He was 28.
- **1982** - Rifleman Jacobus Frederick De Beer from 61 Base Workshops was critically injured on 25 January 1982 when he accidentally fell off the back of a moving military vehicle. He was evacuated to 1 Military Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on 28 January 1982. He was 18.
- **1982** - Two members from 5 SAI were Killed in Action near Elundu when their patrol was ambushed by numerically superior force of SWAPO/PLAN insurgents.

The casualties were: Rifleman William Robert Dawson (20). Rifleman Alexander Forbes (19).

- **1983** - Private Peter Alan Beard from the South African Medical Corps Headquarters was killed in a Military Vehicle accident at Mooi River. He was 19.
- **1985** - Sergeant Willem Johan Gouws from Air Force Base Hoedspruit was killed in a Military Vehicle Accident at Pilgrims Rest. He was 40.
- **1993** - Troops in Zaire run riot, killing the French Ambassador.

### 29 January

- **1915** - Erwin Rommel is awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, for action in the Argonne.
- **1916** - During World War I, the first aerial bombings of Paris by German Zeppelins took place.
- **1943** - HMNZS 'Kiwi' rams & sinks Japanese sub 'I-1' off Guadalcanal.
- **1944** - Heavy Luftwaffe raid on London.
- **1979** - Rifleman Gary James Rautenbach from 6 SAI Died of Wounds after being critically injured in a landmine explosion at Endobe on the 20 Jan 1979. He succumbed to his wounds in 1 Military Hospital on 29 January 1979. He was 20.
- **1982** - Rifleman George Edmond Jacobson from the Kimberley Regiment

was killed at Katima Mulilo when he was run over by a private civilian vehicle while manning a control check point. He was 22.

- **1987** - Private Charel Andries Fourie from 5 Maintenance Unit was killed in a military vehicle accident at Ogongo. He was 22.
- **1987** - Three members of the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) were killed in a military vehicle accident in Northern Owamboland. They were: Special Sergeant Tulengepo Lungameni (36). Special Sergeant Petrus Pius (35). Constable Willem Christiaan Scheepers (24).
- **1991** - Battle of Khafji, Saudi Arabia: Iraqis capture the town.
- **1993** - French marines land in Kinshasa, Zaire, to free French nationals confined to the embassy.
- **1996** - Two serving members of the army and a third man are arrested in connection with the attack on St James's Church in Cape Town in July 1993.

### 30 January

- **1882** - Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born on this day.
- **1902** - Anglo-Japanese alliance formed.
- **1911** - The Royal Canadian Navy was founded on this day.
- **1915** - German submarine attack on Le Havre.

- **1930** - Magnus André De Merindol Malan, former Chief of the SADF and SA Minister of Defence, is born in Pretoria on this day.
- **1933** - Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Paul von Hindenburg.
- **1939** - Hitler calls for the extermination of the Jews.
- **1943** - Hitler promotes Friedrich Paulus, commanding the Sixth Army, surrounded at Stalingrad, to field marshal, with a hint that he should commit suicide.
- **1945** - Danzig: Soviet sub sinks German ship 'Wilhelm Gustloff'. More than 7,700 die, making it the worst loss of life in a single sinking in history.
- **1952** - Martial law is imposed in Egypt as King Farouk dismisses the premier Nahas Pasha and his Wafdist government.
- **1964** - Two members from 5 SAI accidentally drowned in a boating accident at Ladysmith. They were: Rifleman Johannes Frederick Kies (19). Rifleman Cornelius Marthinus Du Plooy (19).
- **1964** - Military coup by Gen Nguyen Khanh in South-Vietnam.
- **1968** - Beginning of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam as North Vietnamese troops attacked 36 provincial capitals and 5 major cities in South Vietnam, including an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the presidential

palace.

- **1972** - In Londonderry, Northern Ireland, 13 Roman Catholics were killed by British troops during a banned civil rights march. The event became known as Bloody Sunday.
- **1981** - Twenty-four people are killed in Operation Beanbag, an attack by the South African army on the ANC and PAC in Matola, a suburb of Maputo, Mozambique. A Portuguese engineer, Jose Ramos, is "mistakenly identified" as Joe Slovo, one of the raid's main targets, by the South African forces and is shot at a roadblock. Numbers killed vary. Some sources state that twelve were killed and three abducted.
- **1981** - Two members of 6 Reconnaissance Regiment were Killed in Action and one Reported Missing during a Special Forces Raid on the African National Congress Headquarters in Maputo, Moçambique during Operation Bean Bag. They were: Sergeant Robert Louis Hutchinson (24). Sergeant Ian Suttill (22). Lance Corporal James King Park (21). The body of Sergeant Robert Louis Hutchinson was never recovered. He has known grave and remains unaccounted for.

• **1983** - Rifleman R.R. Kufuna from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 23.

• **1992** - Argentina allowed access to numerous files of Nazis who had fled to South America from Germany after World War II, thus aiding the hunt for Nazi war criminals.

### 31 January

- **1901** - Generals Smuts and Liebenberg captures Modderfontein, Transvaal.
- **1915** - Battle of Bolimów: The Germans stage the first major poison gas attack, but the Russians hold.
- **1917** - Germany notifies the US that it will resume unrestricted submarine warfare.
- **1943** - German troops surrendered at Stalingrad, marking the first big defeat of Hitler's armies in World War II. During the Battle of Stalingrad, 160,000 Ger-



**Adolf Hitler**

- mans were killed and 90,000 taken prisoner, including the commander, Friedrich von Paulus, the first German field marshal ever to surrender. The captured Germans were forced to march to Siberia, with few ever returning to Germany.
- **1945** - Eddie Slovik, a 24 year-old U.S. Army private, was executed by a firing squad after being sentenced to death for desertion, the first such occurrence in the U.S. Army since the Civil War.
- **1972** - Military coup ousts civilian government of Ghana.
- **1982** - Sergeant (Mrs) Elizabeth Mostert from the Orange Free State Command Headquarters was killed while on duty in Voortrekkerhoogte, Pretoria when she was accidentally run over by a police vehicle. She was 50.

- **1985** - Sergeant Willem van As from the South West Africa Police Counter-Insurgency Wing: Ops-K (Koevoet) was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents in Northern Owamboland. He was 27.
- **1985** - Rifleman K.E. Mbambo from 202 Battalion SWATF was Killed in Action during a contact with SWAPO/PLAN insurgents. He was 22.

- **1986** - Commandant Marshall Aubrey Joseph Facer from the Highveld Air Space Control Sector at Devon was killed in a private motor vehicle accident at Delmas. He was 39.
- **1987** - Corporal Charles John Oram from 5 Reconnaissance Regiment was killed in a private motor vehicle Accident between Phalaborwa and Hoedspruit. He was 26.
- **1994** - In Mogadishu, US Marines in a convoy carrying American diplomats open fire near a crowded food distribution centre. At least five Somalis are killed and many wounded.



**The execution of Private Eddie Slovik.**

# 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.

**The editor and staff of Military Despatches would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy, safe and productive New Year.**



# Jets

1. Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21
2. Impala MkII
3. Lockheed F-117 Night-hawk
4. McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle
5. Messerschmitt Me 262A
6. Grumman F-14 Tomcat
7. Gloster Meteor
8. Lockheed Martin/Boeing F-22 Raptor
9. Saab JAS 39 Gripen
10. General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon
11. Dassault Mirage III
12. McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II
13. Sukhoi Su-57
14. Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt
15. English Electric Canberra



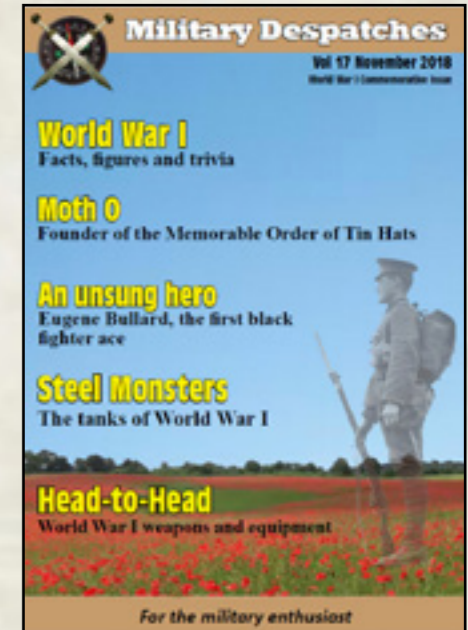
## Useful links

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.



# Military Despatches Website



“Things don’t have to change the world to be important.”  
*Steve Jobs*

Our aim is to make the Military Despatches website easy to use. Even more important to us, we want to make the website informative and interesting. The latest edition of the magazine will be available, as will all the previous editions. More over, there will be links to videos, websites, and articles that our readers may find interesting. So check out the website, bookmark it, and pass the URL on to everyone that you think may be interested.

Have you checked out the bookshelf on the website? Here you can gain access to individual articles.

You will find articles on numerous different topics that have been published over the past four years as well as video clips and documentaries.



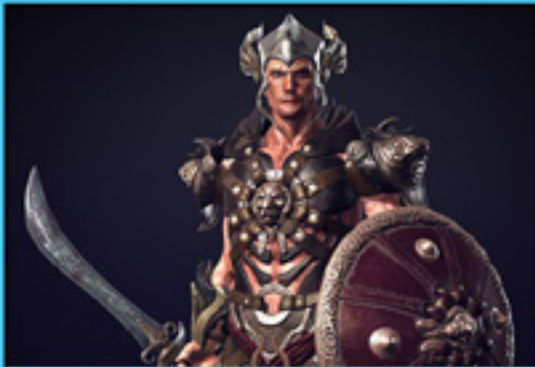
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